



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

RIM Priority Habitat
ML 2027 Request for Funding

General Information

Date: 06/24/2026

Proposal Title: RIM Priority Habitat

Funds Requested: \$5,000,000

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

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Forest

Prairie

Habitat

Wetlands

Narrative**Abstract**

BWSR's RIM Priority Habitat Easement Program will protect and restore 385 acres through seven easements targeting habitat blocks adjacent to or near permanently protected public lands. The program combines Outdoor Heritage Fund habitat priorities with locally identified conservation priorities to strategically secure easements in areas with the greatest potential for positive habitat impacts. By integrating science-based planning together with local knowledge, the program advances the protection and restoration of priority habitats across all regions of Minnesota.

Design and Scope of Work

This BWSR RIM easement program prioritizes habitat protection and restoration across Minnesota, addressing priority habitat types not fully served through other BWSR RIM programs. The program fills important conservation gaps by protecting and restoring tallgrass prairies, oak savannas, blufflands, cold-water trout streams, re-meandered streams, wetlands, riparian corridors, central hardwood forests, and boreal forests.

The program integrates statewide habitat priorities with locally developed conservation plans to identify the highest-value habitats and habitat corridors for permanent protection. While statewide habitat plans effectively establish broad regional conservation goals, local Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans (CWMPs) provide finer-scale prioritization based on local input and modeling tools. Developed at the HUC-8 watershed scale, CWMPs identify priority habitat areas, water quality goals, and locally important habitat corridors that may not be fully captured in statewide plans. These local plans are updated more frequently and reflect the most up-to-date priority areas across the state.

Program scoring and ranking prioritizes easement locations that expand or connect existing habitat corridors and complexes, particularly those adjacent to permanently protected lands, including lands open to public recreation. This approach maximizes landscape connectivity, strengthens wildlife populations, and increases the long-term ecological value of protected lands. Projects that contribute to or create larger permanently protected habitat complexes receive additional priority.

All easement lands are evaluated for restoration potential to ensure each acre provides high-quality habitat benefits. Restoration activities will be tailored to site conditions and habitat goals, and all easements will include long-term management plans to maintain habitat quality in perpetuity.

The RIM easement program is administered by BWSR and implemented through local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), ensuring local expertise guides project development and landowner engagement. SWCDs submit landowner applications to BWSR, where projects are reviewed, ranked, and selected for funding.

Permanent easements are secured prior to restoration or enhancement activities.

Through this program, 385 acres will be permanently protected and restored through seven easements across Minnesota.

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

This proposal supports the protection, restoration, and enhancement of habitat for fish, game, wildlife, and threatened or endangered species through targeted, science-based habitat conservation strategies. By integrating statewide habitat priorities with locally developed conservation plans, the RIM Priority Habitat program focuses on protecting and restoring tallgrass prairies, oak savannas, blufflands, cold-water trout streams, re-meandered streams, wetlands, riparian corridors, central hardwood forests, and boreal forests.

This program expands habitat connectivity, strengthens ecological corridors, and increases opportunities for public recreation. Each easement is evaluated for restoration and vegetation enhancement potential, and restoration practices are implemented whenever feasible to maximize habitat quality and wildlife carrying capacity on protected acres.

Grassland restoration benefits more than 150 Species in Greatest Conservation Need (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 depend on healthy grassland systems for breeding, migration, and foraging habitat.

Forest-prairie transition and prairie regions: the proposal addresses habitat fragmentation, land conversion, and climate-related impacts affecting migratory birds, gray wolves, and northern long-eared bats by improving habitat quality and connectivity in priority landscapes. In Southeast Minnesota's blufflands, which contain some of the state's highest concentrations of SGCN diversity, the project will protect and enhance critical habitat resources that support these populations.

Northern forest regions: protection of cold-water aquatic habitats that support species such as cisco and lake trout, which are increasingly vulnerable to land conversion and climate impacts. The project also benefits cool-water fisheries, including walleye and northern pike, which face increasing competition from warm-water species. Protection and restoration of riparian corridors and sensitive shorelines will improve habitat for common loon, bald eagle, gray wolf, and more than 55 SGCN, including red-shouldered hawk, northern goshawk, black-throated blue warbler, wood turtle, and four-toed salamander.

Where overlap exists with other BWSR-held easement programs, this program serves a complementary role. The intent of the RIM Priority Habitat program is to target high-priority habitat types and conservation opportunities not already addressed through existing BWSR programs.

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

Land values have plateaued across the state meaning demand for easements on private land is at its peak. Right now, we have a window of opportunity to secure easements on large tracts of land evidenced by easement applications and funded RIM easements over the past 2 years.

Funding from ML25 and for ML26 has been committed to new easements within the first month of funds becoming

available. It is critical we are funding private land conservation easements right now. The next time land values increase, demand for easements will decrease. Funding for ML27 is critical to secure large, high quality easements.

Additionally, over 178,603 acres of CRP contracts in Minnesota will expire in federal fiscal years 2026–2027, increasing habitat fragmentation due to farming pressures and lack of CRP acres available nationwide. Private land easements are a great option for landowners to permanently protect habitat.

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

RIM Priority Habitat prioritizes habitat corridors and combats fragmentation, guided by scoring and ranking criteria. It accounts for both locally identified priority areas and statewide goals, expanding opportunities to protect and restore habitat corridors and complexes statewide. Larger blocks of habitat and expansion of existing habitat corridors are priorities for ranking easements.

Additionally, easements near permanently protected habitats, public hunting lands, and areas with Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), endangered, or threatened species are prioritized.

Maximizing vegetative diversity on these easements increases the number of species the easement will host.

Measurable metrics track progress. In the forested region, for instance, keeping land disturbance below 25% supports high water quality and habitat integrity. Once protection of this level has been achieved, local priorities move to new areas. In the prairie and transition ecoregions of the state, habitat complex size is used to determine when we have reached a point of diminishing returns.

The BWSR scoring system prioritizes projects that strengthen habitat corridors, form complexes, and reduce fragmentation.

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 (CWMPs)

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:

This easement program will deliver a lasting conservation legacy by permanently protecting and restoring critical habitats for fish, game, and wildlife in local and statewide priority areas. Adding permanent protection and restoration of critical habitats will help build corridors that increase wildlife populations. By maximizing vegetative diversity, this program increases the amount of wildlife hosted on a given easement. This easement program is targeted at enrolling critical habitat complexes from willing landowners across the state where there is an approved CWMP.

If this project/program does not have permanent outcomes, describe why it is important to undertake at this time:

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 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:

Restored and enhanced upland habitats ~ A summary of upland 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.

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.

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 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 are \$10,000 per easement. This value is based on using SWCD staff for monitoring and preliminary enforcement. The amount includes costs of BWSR and local government unit staff time as well as costs for encouraging voluntary compliance, addressing potential violations and legal enforcement.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2027-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.
2027-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:

Generally, RIM priority areas are focused on rural communities across the state due to the nature of the program and payment rates. Review of the Environmental Justice map produced by the MPCA shows RIM easement programs overlap with many identified environmental justice areas across the state, particularly those areas that are identified by lower than state median incomes. Lower annual income areas of the state benefit from RIM in several ways, including financial benefits for landowners through easement payments. The individual program may also require seeding and wetland restoration work by local contractors. The work by SWCD staff also includes outreach, monitoring and maintenance which helps maintain and grow rural jobs and economies.

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, wildlife food plots are an allowable use on RIM easements as part of an approved Conservation Plan. Annual or perennial food plots may be allowed at the owner's expense. Food plots must be maintained annually. If a food plot is discontinued, it must be immediately replanted to appropriate high-quality, permanent native vegetative cover and the associated establishment cost is the responsibility of the landowner(s). Food plot size and the number of food plots allowed are based on the size of the easement. Food plots will not exceed more than 10% of the easement area or will not exceed a maximum acreage depending on the size of the easement.

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?

Yes

Describe the expected public use:

RIM easements do not require that private land is open to the public; however, this question is also evaluated on public benefit and RIM easements do provide a significant public benefit; often expand wildlife habitat near public lands. Many of these easements will be taken where there already is a large percentage of public land. Strategically placed easements improve habitat for wildlife that use wild rice water bodies in addition to improving terrestrial habitats located adjacent to these water bodies.

RIM easement land remains in private ownership and the landowner still pays property taxes. Statutory goals of the Outdoor Heritage Fund for protection and restoration of habitat. Minnesota Statute 97A.056 states “. . .the fund must be expended to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and

habitat for fish, game, and wildlife.” and “The council shall make recommendations . . . that directly relate to the restoration, protection, and enhancement of wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife, and that prevent forest fragmentation, encourage forest consolidation, and expand restored native prairie.”

Criteria in all RIM program scoresheets used to evaluate and prioritize parcels funded include proximity of the easement land to lands that are in public ownership and/or open to public hunting. Parcels adjacent to public land or that would connect or expand larger existing habitat areas receive additional points in the scoring and ranking process. Wildlife typically travel far enough distances where a mixture of habitat on public and private land is necessary in order to maximize wildlife carrying capacity in that area. Private lands provide refuge in heavily pressured hunting areas as well.

Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed acquisition?

Yes

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

Though uncommon, new trails may be developed if they contribute to easement maintenance or benefit the easement site (fire breaks, berm maintenance, forest stewardship) and are noted on the conservation plan. Narrow mowed trails for personal use are allowed for landowner access on RIM easements. Unauthorized trails are a violation of the easement.

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished?

Under the terms of the easement, a conservation plan is developed with the landowner and maintained as part of each easement. Landowners are required to maintain compliance with the easement and the conservation plan. BWSR, in cooperation with SWCDs, implements a stewardship process to track, monitor quality and assure compliance with easement terms and the conservation plan.

Will the land that you acquire (fee or easement) be restored or enhanced within this proposal's funding and availability?

Yes

Previous OHF Appropriations

Have you received OHF dollars through LSOHC for this program or project in the past?

Yes

Are there any of these past appropriations still OPEN?

Yes

If needed, please include any explanation of unspent funds.

ML 2022 - All easement payment funding expended or encumbered. Restorations taking place
 ML 2023 - All easement payment funding expended, encumbered, or committed to approved applications. One easement cancelled moving restorations timelines back slightly.
 ML 2025 - \$700,000 committed to applications in process; \$1.5 million in easement payment funding encumbered (past easement agreement stage of acquisition).
 ML 2026 - Not yet appropriated. All funding expected to be committed to new applications by the end of July 2026.

Open OHF Appropriations - Data from Most Recent Status Update

Project	Funding Amount Received	Amount Spent to Date	Funding Remaining	% Spent to Date
ML 2026 - Integrating Habitat and Clean Water	\$1,803,000	-	\$1,803,000	0.0%
ML 2025 - Integrating Habitat and Clean Water Phase III	\$2,691,000	\$57,200	\$2,633,800	2.13%
ML 2023 - Integrating Habitat and Clean Water Phase 2	\$3,269,000	\$2,404,100	\$864,900	73.54%
ML 2022 - Integrating Habitat and Clean Water	\$2,358,000	\$2,279,100	\$78,900	96.65%
Totals	\$10,121,000	\$4,740,400	\$5,380,600	46.84%

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Easements recorded	June 30, 2031
Restorations complete	June 30, 2035

Budget

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	\$274,100	-	-	\$274,100
Contracts	\$21,900	-	-	\$21,900
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$4,526,400	-	-	\$4,526,400
Easement Stewardship	\$70,000	-	-	\$70,000
Travel	\$8,800	-	-	\$8,800
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$82,500	-	-	\$82,500
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$12,500	-	-	\$12,500
Supplies/Materials	\$3,800	-	-	\$3,800
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$5,000,000	-	-	\$5,000,000

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Total Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Engineering	0.06	4.0	\$40,200	-	-	\$40,200
Easements	0.42	4.0	\$233,900	-	-	\$233,900

Amount of Request: \$5,000,000

Amount of Leverage: -

Leverage as a percent of the Request: 0.0%

DSS + Personnel: \$356,600

As a % of the total request: 7.13%

Easement Stewardship: \$70,000

As a % of the Easement Acquisition: 1.55%

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.

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

A small portion of easement staff time specifically for appropriation and program management and reporting remains relatively consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

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.

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

A small portion of easement staff time specifically for appropriation and program management and reporting remains relatively consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

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

Clean Water Fund

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 contracts line is used for payments to SWCD staff for easement acquisition and technical assistance, as appropriate. Estimated restoration costs are included in the easement acquisition line.

Easement Stewardship

What is the number of easements anticipated, cost per easement for stewardship, and explain how that amount is calculated?

7 easements at \$10,000 per easement. The total stewardship amount will ultimately be dependent on the cost of easements and if the proposed easement number is reached. Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs are \$10,000 per easement. This value is based on using SWCD staff for monitoring and preliminary enforcement. The amount includes costs of BWSR and local government unit staff time as well as costs for encouraging voluntary compliance, addressing potential violations and legal 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 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 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 and the program staff time involved.

Other Equipment/Tools

Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?

Steel posts and signs to mark 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	50	200	100	30	380
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0
Total	50	200	100	30	380

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

	RESTORE: Lands acquired in this proposal	RESTORE: Lands acquired with previous OHF appropriations (<5yrs old)	RESTORE Total	ENHANCE: Lands acquired in this proposal	ENHANCE: Lands acquired with previous OHF appropriations (<5yrs old)	ENHANCE Total
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	380	0	380	0	-	0
Total	380	0	380	0	-	0

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

	RESTORE: Lands acquired with OHF	RESTORE: Lands NOT acquired with OHF	ENHANCE: Lands acquired with OHF	ENHANCE: Lands NOT acquired with OHF
DNR Lands (WMA, State Forests, etc.)	-	-	-	-
Non-DNR Lands (city, state, federal, etc.)	-	-	-	-
Easements	0	-	-	-
Total	0	-	-	-

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	\$1,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$5,000,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$1,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$5,000,000

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	25	80	50	200	25	380
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	25	80	50	200	25	380

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	\$100,000	\$1,000,000	\$500,000	\$3,000,000	\$400,000	\$5,000,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$100,000	\$1,000,000	\$500,000	\$3,000,000	\$400,000	\$5,000,000

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	\$20,000	\$15,000	\$5,000	\$16,666
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	\$4,000	\$12,500	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$16,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

5000 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: Priority Habitat

ML27 Request for Funding

This Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) easement program acquires easements on land that meet priorities for habitat restoration and protection identified in state, regional or locally developed science-based plans. Typical habitats protected and restored through this RIM easement program include:

- Tallgrass prairies
- Oak savannas
- Blufflands
- Cold-water trout streams
- Re-meandered streams
- Wetlands
- Riparian areas
- Central hardwood forests
- Boreal forests



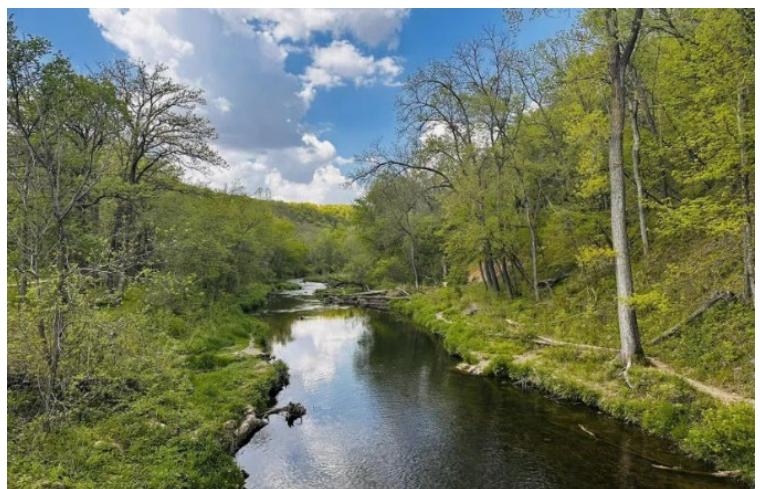
Tallgrass prairie restoration surrounding a wetland in central MN

Program Highlights:

- Expansion of habitat corridors and habitat complexes
- Local priorities guide easement locations
- Permanent protection and restoration of 840 acres through seven easements



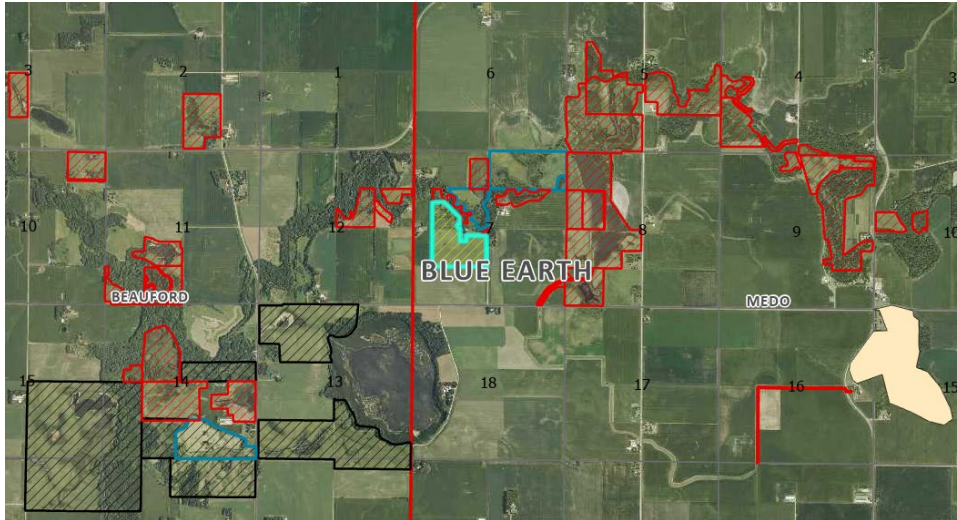
Oak savanna in forest-prairie transition zone of MN



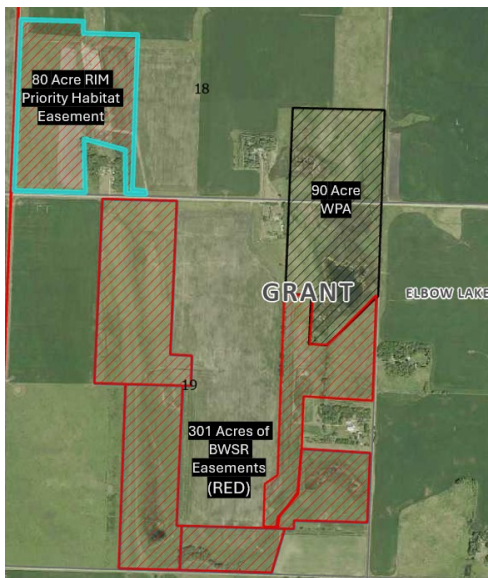
Bluffland protection and forest restoration surrounding a cold-water trout stream

RIM: Priority Habitat Project Examples

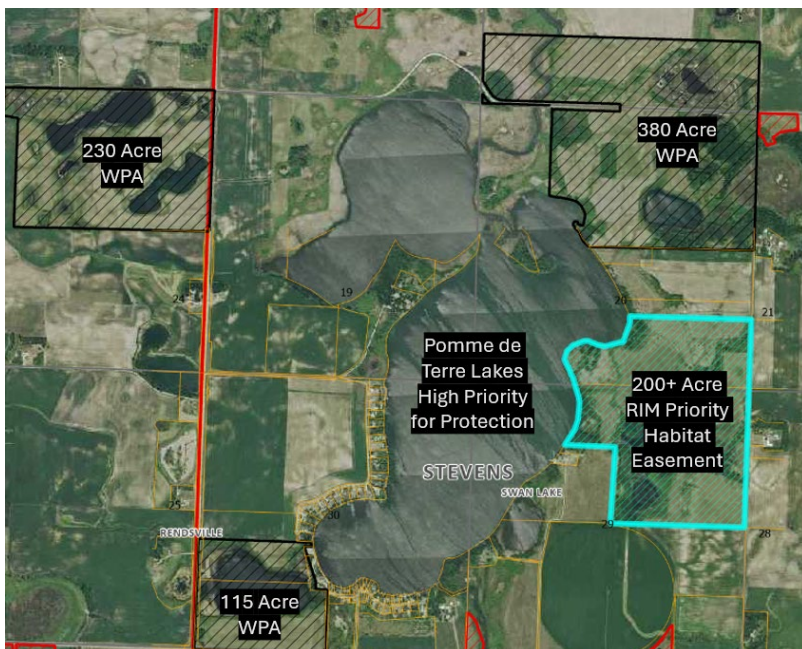
Below are examples of easements funded that expand habitat corridors based on local science-based priorities:



- **65-acre easement** in Blue Earth County funded by this program.
- Adds to habitat corridor
- Black = 812 acres of Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA)
- Red = Over 700 acres of BWSR RIM Easements
- Blue = 100 acres of NRCS Easements
- Orange = 158-acre Wildlife Management Area (WMA)



- **80-acre easement** in Grant County funded by this program
- 471-acre corridor
- 90-acre Waterfowl Production Area (Black) that includes tallgrass prairie restoration and wetland restoration.
- Tallgrass prairie restoration, wetland



- **200-acre proposed easement** for ML26 expanding on a habitat corridor in Stevens County
- 380-acre Waterfowl Production Area (Black) ½ mile north of the easement
- restoration and wetland restoration.
- Tallgrass prairie restoration, wetlands, native prairie protection