

Trout Stream Conservation Easement

(Administered by Division of Fish and Wildlife, Section of Fisheries)

Minnesota Statutes, section 97C.02 authorizes the acquisition of trout stream conservation easements.

1. **Easement Valuation.** Trout stream easements are generally valued by formula set forth in Minnesota Statutes, section 84.0272. The payment under the formula equals the linear feet of the stream within the easement corridor times \$5; plus the easement corridor acres times the estimated market value.
2. **Development Prevention.** There are standard terms in DNR's trout stream easements that prevent development. They prohibit structures, buildings, excavating, filling, dumping, tree cutting, vegetation damage or removal, mowing, burning or changing the stream course without prior written approval of the grantee. In addition, the easements require existing tillage to comply with county shoreland setback standards and no new tillage within the easement corridor is allowed.
3. **Building Envelopes.** Most local ordinances require buildings to be set back far enough from the stream so they are not within the easement corridor. Any existing buildings within the corridor are typically excluded from the easement.
4. **Existing and Future Structures.** See numbers 2 and 3 above.
5. **Agricultural Land and Active Agriculture.** See number 2 above.
6. **Wildlife Habitat Prioritization.** The decision to acquire a trout stream easement is based on numerous parameters, most of which are relative to instream and stream bank conditions. But connectivity to larger blocks of terrestrial habitat is factored in, as well as records of any rare plants or animals.
7. **Allowed vs. Prohibited Uses.** In addition to the easement terms described above, trout stream easements are only for public angling access and do not permit other recreational uses. The easements also provide MNDNR staff, successors and assigns access for fish management purposes.
8. **Natural Resource Management Requirements.** Natural resource management within trout stream easements typically involves both instream and riparian management. Instream management can include projects that reduce erosion and sedimentation, provide additional habitat via natural materials and in cases of extreme flooding, reduce incising of the stream and reconnect the channel to the flood plain to restore natural flow. Riparian management can include control of invasive species and enhance overhead cover. Eroding stream banks are often restored to a stable condition and stream morphology restored to a more healthy condition through standard trout habitat improvement techniques. Operational Orders 113, 124, 130 and 131 are followed to ensure a mix of native species found within the immediate project area or within the watershed are planted to restore or establish woody cover and wildlife habitat within the easement area administered by MNDNR.