



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)

## M.L. 2018 ENRTF Work Plan (Main Document)

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**Today's Date:** August 30, 2018

**Date of Next Status Update Report:** July 1, 2019

**Date of Work Plan Approval:**

**Project Completion Date:** June 30, 2022

**Does this submission include an amendment request?** \_\_\_

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**PROJECT TITLE:** Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Program

**Project Manager:** Dave Rickert

**Organization:** Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

**Mailing Address:** 520 Lafayette Road North

**City/State/Zip Code:** St. Paul, MN 55155

**Telephone Number:** (651) 539-2569

**Email Address:** dave.rickert@state.mn.us

**Web Address:** www.bwsr.state.mn.us

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**Location:**

**Region:** Central, Metro, Northwest, Southwest, Southeast

**Counties:** Becker, Big Stone, Blue Earth, Brown, Carver, Chippewa, Clay, Cottonwood, Dakota, Dodge, Douglas, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Grant, Hennepin, Houston, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Le Sueur, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, McLeod, Meeker, Mower, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Olmsted, Otter Tail, Pipestone, Pope, Redwood, Renville, Rice, Rock, Scott, Sibley, Stearns, Steele, Stevens, Swift, Todd, Traverse, Wabasha, Waseca, Watonwan, Wilkin, Winona, Wright, Yellow Medicine

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**Total Project Budget:** \$10,000,000

**Amount Spent:** \$0

**Balance:** \$10,000,000

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**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2018, Chap. 214, Art. 6, Sec. 4, Subd. 7.

**Appropriation Language:**

**Subd. 7.**

**Board of Water and Soil Resources**

**To the Board of Water and Soil Resources for the purposes specified in this section.**

**Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Program**    10,000,000

(a) To acquire conservation easements from landowners to preserve, restore, create, and enhance wetlands and associated uplands of prairie and grasslands, and restore and enhance rivers and streams, riparian lands, and associated uplands of prairie and grasslands in order to protect soil and water quality, support fish and wildlife habitat, reduce flood damage, and provide other public benefits. The provisions of Minnesota Statutes, section 103F.515, apply to this program.

(b) The board shall give priority to leveraging federal money by enrolling targeted new lands or enrolling environmentally sensitive lands that have expiring federal conservation agreements.

(c) The board is authorized to enter into new agreements and amend past agreements with landowners as required by Minnesota Statutes, section 103F.515, subdivision 5, to allow for restoration.

(d) Of this appropriation, up to five percent may be used for restoration, rehabilitation, and enhancement; and no more than \$1,000,000 may be used to acquire working lands easements.

## **I. PROJECT STATEMENT:**

The Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (MN CREP) is a federal and state partnership designed to improve water quality and provide habitat in the 54 County area through establishing buffers, restoring wetlands, and protecting groundwater resources. The primary objectives of this entire CREP are to reduce phosphorus by 19,200 pounds per year, nitrogen by 1,220,000 pounds per year, and sediment runoff by 123,000 tons per year. Total annual load reductions for the 2,550 acres include 1,300 lbs. of total Phosphorus, 100,800 lbs. of total nitrogen and 8,600 tons of sediment.

This program will also reduce hydrological impacts to surface waters and increase infiltration for groundwater recharge. The establishment of riparian buffers and restoration of wetlands will reduce flood damage by reducing the peak, timing, and duration of flood events. An expansion of wetland and prairie habitat availability through this program may alleviate pressure on those species that are most sensitive to habitat changes occurring on the landscape. The MN CREP will target 60,000 acres in areas of southern and western Minnesota facing significant water quality challenges, to protect and improve our natural resources for future generations.

The MN CREP is designed to help improve water quality and provide habitat in the 54 County area by establishing and maintaining buffers of permanent vegetation between eligible waterbodies and adjacent agricultural cropland, restoring and maintaining wetlands, establishing permanent vegetative cover in wellhead protection areas, and to establish beneficial habitat for terrestrial and aquatic habitat. Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) permanent conservation easements will be secured in combination with a 15 year CRP contract to provide permanent protection for these important natural resource benefits. This \$10 million proposal will leverage a significant USDA match to restore and protect approximately 2,550 acres with 40 individual landowners. This appropriation is planned for use on all four conservation practice types with acquisition of the more premier wetland restorations we will acquire through CREP.

Minnesota continues to see a net loss of grasslands and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres each year. This exodus is being driven by high land prices, increased pressure for alternative uses, and declining federal budgets for conservation programs. Minnesota's primary strategy to mitigate the loss of CRP is to target expiring contracts for enrollment into MN CREP, Continuous CRP practices and permanent easements.

BWSR staff undertook a review of CREP to determine its effectiveness and to identify any desirable and needed adjustments to achieve the program goals. As part of this process, in April 2018 BWSR staff held four MN CREP Engagement meetings to seek input from SWCDs throughout the project area. The purpose of these meetings was to provide an opportunity for district staff to share the feedback they've been hearing from landowners on what aspects of the MN CREP program are working well, and where adjustments are needed. On June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018, the BWSR Board authorized several adjustments for MN CREP, which includes updated payment rates and

allows for additional enrollment of adjacent lands with environmental benefits. This Work Plan accounts for these adjustments.

## **II. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:**

Due to this project containing only one activity, status updates will be provided under section III. Project Activities and Outcomes.

## **III. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:**

### **ACTIVITY 1 Title: Conservation Easement Acquisition & Restoration**

**Description:** This program will target certain riparian areas, wetlands and wellhead protection areas, providing multiple benefits to water quality and wildlife habitat. Through a combination of targeted outreach, eligibility screening, and a scoring and ranking process, 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. The scoring and ranking process used with this program places a preference on sites that reduce pollutant loads and protect vulnerable groundwater resources. A preference is also placed on sites that are in close proximity to other protected habitat, selecting sites that build complexes. Each site is considered on its benefit to the surrounding landscape, ability to build upon existing corridors and complexes, and site-specific features which highlight the benefits of selection for permanent protection and habitat.

Easements will be secured via Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) permanent easement acquisition, utilizing both a 15-year CRP contract and permanent RIM easement. Because the USDA pays the majority of landowner payments, which also include a portion of restoration costs, BWSR assumes a large proportion of administrative costs to acquire these easements.

Restoration activity occurs once an easement is acquired. Through the use of BWSR's Native Vegetation Guidelines, we will establish high diversity native plantings and restore hydrology when applicable. Easements acquired with these funds will exceed Buffer Law requirements.

This program will benefit from work conducted through the ENRTF CREP Outreach and Implementation appropriation, which provides funding for the employment of approximately 26 CREP Technicians to assist with marketing and landowner contacts, application procurement and submittal.

Positions funded with the assistance of the ENRTF CREP Outreach and Implementation appropriation will be used for the entirety of CREP, serving a role in additional contracts beyond the 40 easement scope of this \$10M appropriation. In addition to their support of effective marketing of this program, these positions will serve as the workforce to timely processing as federal staff positions dwindle. In summary, these positions focus on program marketing, application procurement and submittal, federal document processing, and restoration implementation. The LCCMR commitment already seen through the ENRTF CREP Outreach and Implementation appropriation will play an important role in the successful implementation of CREP.

Professional/Technical/Service Contracts will be used to pay SWCDs for their role in the processing of funded applications, including receiving landowner signature on Agreement and Easement documents, assistance during the title stage which may include assistance with clearing exceptions and receiving an acceptable final title policy to the state, and preparation of the RIM Conservation Plan or other advanced duties related to wetland restoration design and planning.

### **ACTIVITY 1 ENRTF BUDGET: \$**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Acquire Conservation Easements (Projected number of easements: 40; Projected number of acres: 2,550)	June 30, 2021
2. Restore Acquired Conservation Easements	June 30, 2022

**First Update July 1, 2019**

**Second Update January 1, 2020**

**Third Update July 1, 2020**

**Fourth Update January 1, 2021**

**Fifth Update July 1, 2021**

**Sixth Update January 1, 2022**

**Final Report by August 15, 2022**

**IV. DISSEMINATION:**

**Description:** Throughout the CREP we will follow our CREP Communications Plan to disseminate information to partners and the general public. Communication channels will include email, print and broadcast media, web content, and printed literature. BWSR agrees to follow ENRTF acknowledgement guidelines for these communications.

BWSR’s CREP Outreach Webpage: <http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/crep/index.html>

**First Update July 1, 2019**

**Second Update January 1, 2020**

**Third Update July 1, 2020**

**Fourth Update January 1, 2021**

**Fifth Update July 1, 2021**

**Sixth Update January 1, 2022**

**Final Report by August 15, 2022**

**V. ADDITIONAL BUDGET INFORMATION:**

**A. Personnel and Capital Expenditures**

**Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$5,000:** N/A

**Explanation of Use of Classified Staff:** Consistent with approved work plans for previous ENRTF appropriations, this funding will be used to pay project-associated costs for classified and unclassified staff. These costs directly correlate with the staff needed to fill these services. Without these funds, these positions would not exist.

Direct and Necessary expenses are for Department Support Services (HR Support, Financial Support, Communications Support, and IT Support). These services are directly related to and necessary for the appropriation. Department Leadership services are not assessed, and BWSR does not require Planning Support or Safety Support. Direct Support Services were calculated based upon considerations used with the established DNR model, and using actual BWSR projections. BWSR's policy on calculating Direct & Necessary costs is currently under review by BWSR leadership. BWSR will share this policy with LCCMR staff as we finalize our calculator and policy. No Direct & Necessary costs will be drawn from this appropriation until this review and finalization of the policy occurs. Under current calculations, HR Support (~\$7,200), Financial Support (~\$22,700), Communications Support (~\$4,600), and IT Support (~\$16,500) are necessary to accomplish this funded project. The \$51,000 of Direct Support Services amount to 0.5% of this appropriation.

BWSR will periodically complete reconciliation between budgeted cost vs. actual costs during the appropriation. If we forecast there will be unspent funds for Direct Support Services, we may seek an amendment to shift some of these costs into the Permanent Easement Acquisition line or Conservation Plan Reimbursement line. Any unspent funds would be returned.

**Total Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Directly Funded with this ENRTF Appropriation:**

Enter Total Estimated Personnel Hours: 9,500	Divide by 2,080 = TOTAL FTE: 4.6
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**Total Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF Appropriation:**

Enter Total Estimated Personnel Hours: N/A	Divide by 2,080 = TOTAL FTE: N/A
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**B. Other Funds:**

SOURCE OF AND USE OF OTHER FUNDS	Amount Proposed	Amount Spent	Status and Timeframe
<b>Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b>			
USDA Funds	\$ 10,580,000	\$	USDA funds, in the form of CRP payments and conservation plan payments to landowners
<b>Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b>			
	\$	\$	
<b>In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:</b>			
	\$	\$	
<b>Past and Current ENRTF Appropriation:</b>			
CREP Outreach & Implementation, M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 08k	\$6,000,000	\$	This project will benefit from work conducted through the ENRTF CREP Outreach and Implementation appropriation, which provides funding for the employment of approximately 26 CREP Technicians to assist with tasks that include

			program marketing, application procurement/submittal, federal document processing, and restoration Implementation
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 08l, as amended M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 7 and as extended M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 20	\$13,500,000	\$	Easements will be secured via Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) permanent easement acquisition, utilizing both a 15 year CRP contract and permanent RIM easement. Professional/Technical/Service Contracts within this appropriation include local easement acquisition tasks, which include processing Agreement & Easement Documents, assistance with title insurance processing, RIM plan development, and advanced wetland restoration design/ planning duties
SUBTOTAL	\$30,080,000	\$	
<b>Other Funding History:</b>			
Clean Water Fund ML 2015, 1st Special Session, Art. 2, Sec. 7, Par. (l); ML 2015, 1st Special Session, Art. 2, Sec. 7, Par. (m); ML 2015, 1st Special Session, Art. 2, Sec. 7, Par. (f); ML 2017, Ch. 91, Art. 2, Sec. 7, par. (k); ML 2017, Ch. 91, Art. 2, Sec. 7, par. (g); ML 2017, Ch. 91, Art. 2, Sec. 7, par. (f)	\$46,000,000		Funds intended for use with the MN CREP effort
Outdoor Heritage Fund ML 2015, 1st Special Session, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 2, Par. (f); ML 2016, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 4, Par. (c); ML 2016, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 2, Par. (g); ML 2017, Ch. 91, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd. 2, par. (g); ML 2017, Ch. 91, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd. 4, par. (c); ML 2018, Ch. 208, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 2, Par. (g); ML 2018, Ch. 208, Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 4, Par. (c)	\$55,791,000		Funds intended for use with the MN CREP effort
Capital Investment ML 2017, 1st SS, Ch. 8, Sec. 8, subd. 2	\$10,000,000		Funds intended for use with the MN CREP effort
SUBTOTAL	\$111,791,000		

## **VI. PROJECT PARTNERS:**

### **A. Partners outside of project manager's organization receiving ENRTF funding**

- *SWCDs within the 54-County CREP Area, \$89,700, for easement processing*

### **B. Partners outside of project manager's organization NOT receiving ENRTF funding**

- *Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) technical assistance provider for CRP contracts.*
- *Farm Service Agency (FSA) enrollment, administrator and fiscal agent for CRP contracts.*

## **VII. LONG-TERM- IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:**

This program is the result of a five state agency effort, support from the Governor, and a large amount of local agency, organization, and farmer support for the MN CREP. A broad coalition of over 70 non-state organizations and groups supports this program.

By themselves, CRP practices provide a substantial amount of water quality and habitat benefits, but may be removed 10 to 15 years later. Through this MN CREP partnership, BWSR leverages the federal CRP program, adding a permanent RIM easement on this same area and ensuring these benefits are preserved in perpetuity.

Total annual load reductions for the 2,550 acres include 1,300 lbs. of total phosphorus, 100,800 lbs. of total nitrogen and 8,600 tons of sediment. Using Unit Area Load (UAL) calculations based on data, model simulation and reference to existing research data, BWSR and Tetra Tech developed a model by land cover type for Total Phosphorus (TP), Total Nitrogen (TN) and Total Suspended Sediments (TSS). Calculations have been made to consider before and after land cover for the CREP for each of the three pollutants.

Once a RIM easement is acquired, BWSR is responsible for monitoring and enforcement into perpetuity. 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.

## **VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

- The project is for 4 years, will begin on November 30, 2018, and end on June 30, 2022.
- Periodic project status update reports will be submitted January 31st and July 31st of each year.
- A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 15, 2022.

## **IX. SEE ADDITIONAL WORK PLAN COMPONENTS:**

- A. Budget Spreadsheet**
- B. Visual Component or Map**
- C. Parcel List Spreadsheet**
- D. Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration Requirements**
- E. Research Addendum N/A**

**Attachment A:  
Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund  
M.L. 2018 Budget Spreadsheet**



**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2018, Chap. 214, Art. 6, Sec. 4, Subd. 7.

**Project Manager:** *Dave Rickert*

**Project Title:** Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Program

**Organization:** BWSR

**Project Budget:** \$10,000,000

**Project Length and Completion Date:** 4 Years, June 30, 2022

**Today's Date:** August 31, 2018

<b>ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND BUDGET</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Amount Spent</b>	<b>Balance</b>
<b>BUDGET ITEM</b>			
<b>Personnel (Wages and Benefits)</b>	\$422,900	\$0	\$422,900
<i>Assistant Easement Section Manager, \$110,000 (69% Salary, 31% benefits) 0.25FTE each year for 4 years</i>			
<i>State Program Administration Staff, \$107,800 (72% Salary, 28% benefits) 0.51FTE each year for 3 years</i>			
<i>Water Resources Engineer/Conservation Engineering Technician/Vegetation Specialist, \$205,100 (71% Salary, 29% benefits) 0.69FTE each year for 3 years</i>			
<b>Professional/Technical/Service Contracts</b>			
<i>SWCD easement processing of funded applications, including receiving landowner signature on Agreement and Easement documents, assistance during the title stage which may include assistance with clearing exceptions and receiving an acceptable final title policy to the state, and preparation of the RIM Conservation Plan or other advanced duties related to wetland restoration design and planning. Payments are made upon successful completion of tasks tied to the roles above and are administered through a work order process.</i>	\$89,700	\$0	\$89,700
<b>Equipment/Tools/Supplies</b>			
<i>Equipment &amp; supplies necessary to post signage or other supplies necessary for easement acquisition. Funds will be used for the purchase of signs used to identify easement boundaries, along with posts or other hardware necessary to post signs.</i>	\$32,700	\$0	\$32,700



<b>Permanent Easement Acquisition (Landowner Payments)</b>			
<i>Estimated 40 easements, totaling approximately 2,550 acres to be held by BWSR. Planned practices are buffers, wetland restorations, and wellhead protection. Estimated number of easements and acres are based on average easement size and average easement payment throughout the 54 County CREP Area. Total expected Federal match for Landowner Payments is \$8,433,000.</i>	\$6,994,800	\$0	\$6,994,800
<b>Conservation Plan Reimbursements on Acquired Acres</b>			
<i>Restoration costs for acquired easements, through reimbursement to landowners. BWSR estimated cost of approximately \$900 an acre for restoration on approximately 2,550 acres. When restoration occurs, BWSR will pay the State portion of restoration that both meets or exceeds BWSR Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines and meets or exceeds NRCS Practice Standards. Total expected Federal match for restoration is \$2,147,000.</i>	\$1,631,300	\$0	\$1,631,300
<i>Restoration and rehabilitation costs for existing easements (conducted according to above guidelines)-- per appropriation language, not to exceed 5% of appropriation or \$500,000.</i>	\$500,000	\$0	\$500,000
<b>Travel expenses in Minnesota</b>			
<i>In-state travel, mileage, lodging and meal. Travel Expenses are typically used to cover engineering staff costs for travel and lodging to assist with surveys or on-site meetings for projects.</i>	\$17,600	\$0	\$17,600
<b>Direct Support Services</b>			
<i>HR Support (~\$7,200), Financial Support (~\$22,700), Communications Support (~\$4,600), and IT Support (\$16,500) necessary to accomplish this funded project. BWSR's policy on calculating Direct &amp; Necessary costs is currently under review by BWSR leadership. BWSR will share this policy with LCCMR staff as we finalize our calculator and policy. No Direct &amp; Necessary costs will be drawn from this appropriation until this review and finalization of the policy occurs.</i>	\$51,000	\$0	\$51,000
<b>Easement Stewardship</b>			
<i>Perpetual stewardship costs have been calculated at \$6,500 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 SWCD regular monitoring, BWSR oversight, and enforcement.</i>	\$260,000	\$0	\$260,000
<b>COLUMN TOTAL</b>	\$10,000,000	\$0	\$10,000,000

**Attachment C: Acquisition and Restoration Parcel List**  
**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund**  
**M.L. 2018 Acquisition/Restoration Parcel List Spreadsheet**  
**Project Title:** Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Program  
**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2018, Chap. 214, Art. 6, Sec. 4, Subd. 7.  
**Project Manager:** Dave Rickert  
**M.L. 2018 ENRTF Appropriation:** \$10,000,000  
**Project Length and Completion Date:** 4 Years, June 30, 2022  
**Today's Date:** August 31, 2018



#	Acquisition or Restoration Parcel Name	Geographic Coordinates (preferably from the center of the parcel) Format: [Deg.]° [Min.]' [Sec.]" [Hemis.]		Estimated Cost	Estimated Annual PILT Liabilities	County	Site Significance (please include what ecosystem (e.g., prairie, forest, wetland, savanna) is represented as well as the ecological significance, site importance, conservation value, and public benefits)	Activity Description (e.g. fee title acquisition, conservation easement acquisition, site preparation, restoration)	# of Acres	# of Shoreline Miles	Type of Landowner (private individual or trust, non-profit organization, for-profit entity)	Proposed Fee Title or Easement Holder (if applicable)	Status of work (e.g. engaged in landowner negotiations, no longer in consideration, restoration activities underway)
		Latitude	Longitude										
<p><b>NOTES:</b> The MN CREP signup started on May 15th, 2017 and the list of parcels that will be funded through this appropriation will be determined through a scoring and ranking process. Scoresheets used for the MN CREP signup are available upon request. Conservation easements will be purchased using established RIM Rates and will be held by the Board of Water and Soil Resources. Parcel size will vary, with buffer strip easements averaging at a size less than 10 acres and wetland restoration or wellhead protection easements close to a 60 acre average size.</p>													

## Attachment D. Additional Work Plan Information for Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration



### Acquisition/Restoration Information:

#### Conservation Easement Acquisition

1. Describe the selection process for identifying and including proposed parcels on the parcel list, including explanation of the criteria and decision-making process used to rank and prioritize parcels.  
Through a combination of targeted outreach, eligibility screening, and a scoring and ranking process, 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. MN CREP uses a comprehensive scoring and ranking process and applications are chosen for funding at the end of specified batching periods. Scoresheets used for the MN CREP signup are available upon request.
2. List all adopted state, regional, or local natural resource plans in which the lands included in the parcel list are identified. Include a link to the plan if one is available.  
This appropriation will work toward goals mentioned in the following plans: Long Range Duck Recovery Plan, Long Range Plan for the Ring-Necked Pheasant in MN, U.S. Prairie Pothole Joint Venture Plan, Minnesota Nutrient Reduction Strategy, Minnesota Prairie Conservation Plan, Minnesota Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan, and the Sediment Reduction Strategy for the Minnesota River Basin and South Metro Mississippi River. Several Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) reports have been completed or are currently underway that recommend a strategy of securing permanent conservation easements on private lands. The list of parcels that will be funded through this appropriation will be determined through the MN CREP scoring and ranking process, and have not yet been identified.
3. For any conservation easement acquired, a restoration and management plan must be prepared. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for parcels acquired by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation, including how long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel will be financed into the future.  
Easements acquired through MN CREP will involve both a CRP plan and RIM Conservation Plan. The RIM Conservation Plan identifies practice areas and maximum cost-share available for practice installation, and also includes an Operation & Maintenance Plan. The easements secured under this project will be managed as part of the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) RIM Reserve Program that has over 6,500 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.
4. For each parcel to be conveyed to a State of Minnesota entity (e.g., DNR) after purchase, provide a statement confirming that county board approval will be obtained.  
Private ownership of the property continues after a RIM easement is acquired.
5. If applicable (see M.S. 116P.17), provide a statement confirming that written approval from the DNR Commissioner will be obtained 10 business days prior to any final acquisition transaction. A copy of the written approval should be provided to LCCMR.  
N/A

6. Provide a statement addressing how conservation easements will address specific water quality protection activities, such as keeping water on the landscape, reducing nutrient and contaminant loading, protecting groundwater, and not permitting artificial hydrological modifications.  
MN CREP will protect 60,000 acres of the highest priority areas across 54 counties. It will target riparian areas and marginal agricultural land, restore hydrology, increase infiltration, provide flood mitigation, and reduce nitrate loading in drinking water supplies. The primary objectives of this entire CREP are to reduce phosphorus by 19,200 pounds per year, Nitrogen by 1,220,000 pounds per year, and sediment runoff by 123,000 tons per year. This program will reduce hydrological impacts to surface waters and increase infiltration for groundwater recharge. There are 4 Conservation Practices in this CREP: CP-21 Filter Strips (buffers), CP-23 Floodplain Wetlands, CP-23a Non-floodplain Wetlands and CP-2 Wellhead Protection, all of which address water quality issues.
7. Describe the long-term monitoring and enforcement program for conservation easements acquired on parcels by your organization, including explanations of the process used for calculating conservation easement monitoring and enforcements costs, the process used for annual inspection and reporting on monitoring and enforcement activities, and the process used to ensure perpetual funding and implementation of monitoring and enforcement activities. Once a RIM easement is acquired, BWSR is responsible for monitoring and enforcement into perpetuity. The BWSR partners with local SWCDs to 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 partners' staff document findings. A non-compliance procedure is implemented when potential violations or problems are identified. Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs have been calculated at \$6,500 per easement. These calculations were derived using the elements described in MS 103B.103. BWSR uses local SWCD staff for monitoring and landowner relations which results in considerable cost savings.

### **Restoration**

1. Provide a statement confirming that all restoration activities completed with these funds will occur on land permanently protected by a conservation easement or public ownership.  
Restoration activities will occur on lands encumbered with a RIM easement.
2. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for the parcels to be restored by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation.  
Easements acquired through MN CREP will involve both a CRP plan and RIM Conservation Plan. The RIM Conservation Plan identifies practice areas and maximum cost-share available for practice installation, and also includes an Operation & Maintenance Plan. The easements secured under this project will be managed as part of the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) RIM Reserve Program that has over 6,500 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.
3. Describe how restoration efforts will utilize and follow the Board of Soil and Water Resources "Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines" in order to ensure ecological integrity and pollinator enhancement. BWSR policy requires following the Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines for all RIM restorations.

4. Describe how the long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel being restored with these funds will be met and financed into the future.

BWSR provides reimbursement to the landowner for original installation and establishment work on RIM Easement sites. In special circumstances, BWSR may cost-share for repair of any engineering structures and vegetative practices. Other than these special circumstances, any maintenance or management costs are typically borne by the landowner.

5. Describe how consideration will be given to contracting with Conservation Corps of Minnesota for any restoration activities.

BWSR does not contract restoration activities. It is the responsibility of the landowner to contract work and follow the restoration plan. SWCDs then inspect completed work and BWSR reimburses the landowner. BWSR provides SWCDs with CCM contact information to share with landowners as they consider vendors for restoration activity.

6. Provide a statement indicating that evaluations will be completed on parcels where activities were implemented both 1) initially after activity completion and 2) three years later as a follow-up. Evaluations should analyze improvements to the parcel and whether goals have been met, identify any problems with the implementation, and identify any findings that can be used to improve implementation of future restoration efforts at the site or elsewhere.

The easements secured under this project will be managed as part of the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) RIM Reserve Program that has over 6,500 easements currently in place. Easements are monitored annually for each of the first 5 years and then every 3rd year after that.

# Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Project Area

MN CREP will enroll up to 60,000 acres within the 54 County project area in southern and western Minnesota.

This effort prioritizes water quality and habitat through the restoration and protection of marginal cropland using the following conservation practices:

- Buffer Strips
- Wetland Restorations
- Wellhead Protection Areas

MN CREP is a voluntary program using a combination of the USDA-FSA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the nationally-recognized state Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) conservation easement program.

