



For Immediate Release

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State flood recovery dollars available for wetland restoration and water quality projects

St. Paul – The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) received \$13 million through the flood disaster relief law signed by Gov. Tim Pawlenty following the Oct. 18 Special Legislative Session. The money will pay for conservation projects on marginal, flood-prone lands that will prevent future flood-related damage to property in the 21 disaster-declared counties.

"These dollars will be used to install or repair conservation practices that provide additional flood storage and reduce soil erosion from flood events," said John Jaschke, BWSR Executive Director. "Interested landowners should contact their local soil and water conservation district, because they have the expertise to identify specific areas where a conservation practice, such as a water retention structure or a grassed waterway, can minimize flood damage to crops, roads and buildings. These kinds of projects often provide secondary benefits related to water quality and wildlife habitat."

The appropriation to BWSR includes

- \$10 million for the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve conservation easement program, and
- \$3 million to install, repair, or rehabilitate erosion and sediment control projects in the disaster area to protect soil and water quality and to support fish and wildlife habitat.

The RIM Reserve dollars will be used to acquire permanent easements from willing landowners to restore floodplains, riparian buffers and wetlands on marginal lands in order to provide flood attenuation and to protect soil and water quality per the provisions of Minnesota Statutes, section 103F.515. BWSR is pursuing supplemental, complementary or matching federal funds for these easements and will give priority for site selection and design to flood-prone areas or flood attenuation and retention areas identified in local water management plans or by local staff involved based on site assessments. Jaschke said the \$10 million for RIM Reserve is expected to leverage \$10 to \$15 million in federal dollars through the USDA Wetland Reserve Program or through other funds made available because of the federal disaster declaration.

Additional details, including an enrollment period for landowners to apply for RIM Reserve funds, will be announced by BWSR as soon as those details are available.

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources consists of 20 members, including local government representatives that deliver conservation programs, state agencies, and citizens. Board members are appointed by the governor to four-year terms. The board is the state's administrative agency for soil and water conservation districts, watershed districts, metropolitan watershed management organizations, and county water managers.

The BWSR mission: Improve and protect Minnesota's water and soil resources by working in partnership with local organizations and private landowners.

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