



For Immediate Release

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7,504 acres of wetlands and grasslands to be restored through RIM-WRP partnership

St. Paul – The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced today that 7,504 acres of wetlands and grasslands will be restored in Minnesota through the RIM-WRP program. A total of \$8.37 million in state funds was available, including \$6.895 million from the Outdoor Heritage Fund, based on a recommendation by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC). Those state dollars made it possible to leverage \$13.75 million in federal dollars through the NRCS Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP).

"More than 200 landowners statewide submitted applications to restore wetlands and native grasslands, and 62 applications have been approved for funding," said John Jaschke, BWSR Executive Director. "These wetland and grassland acres will permanently restore wildlife habitat in high-priority areas."

"Minnesota is a national leader in utilizing WRP dollars for wetland restoration, and this is in large part due to the great partnerships we have in Minnesota," said Don Baloun, Minnesota NRCS State Conservationist.

RIM-WRP is a local-state-federal partnership that combines the state's Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve conservation easement program with the USDA Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). Combining these two programs allows state funds to leverage federal funds that are available through the Federal Farm Bill. Funding for this partnership is through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). Minnesota's Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) implement the program at the local level.

This partnership is possible through collaboration among many local, state and federal partners, including Ducks Unlimited, the Minnesota Waterfowl Association, Pheasants Forever, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. Department of Interior – Fish and Wildlife Service.

"Restoring wetlands on privately owned lands provides many public benefits, such as enhancing wildlife habitat, improving water quality and reducing potential flood damages," said Bob Usgaard, Ducks Unlimited Regional Biologist, Minnesota.

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources is the state's administrative agency for SWCDs, watershed districts, metropolitan watershed management organizations, and county water managers. The BWSR mission is to improve and protect Minnesota's water and soil resources by working in partnership with local organizations and private landowners.

With the mission of "Helping People Help the Land," the NRCS provides products and services that enable people to be good stewards of the Nation's soil, water, and related natural resources on non-Federal lands.

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