



For Immediate Release

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\$26 million available for conservation easements on frequently flooded lands in southern Minnesota through the RIM-WRP partnership

St. Paul – The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced today that \$26 million is available to retire marginal or damaged cropland in southern Minnesota that is frequently or occasionally flooded. The highest priority sites will result in restoration of wetlands and grasslands through the RIM-WRP partnership. Most of these dollars will be focused in floodplain areas in the 29 counties that sustained damages as identified in the federal disaster declaration, FEMA-1941 DR, resulting from record rainfall events on September 22-23, 2010. The total amount includes \$10 million in state dollars appropriated for flood recovery in the 2010 Special Legislative Session, which is expected to leverage \$16 million in federal dollars.

“The primary goal of these state and federal dollars is to provide additional flood relief and protection on privately owned lands adjacent to water bodies,” said John Jaschke, BWSR Executive Director. “But the restored floodplains and grasslands will also provide multiple benefits for wildlife habitat and water quality.”

“These dollars will be used to acquire permanent conservation easements from willing landowners to restore and protect floodplain areas. Interested landowners should contact their SWCD or USDA Service Center” said Don Baloun, Minnesota NRCS State Conservationist.

You must own qualifying land in the following counties to be eligible to participate; Blue Earth, Brown, Carver, Cottonwood, Dodge, Faribault, Freeborn, Goodhue, Jackson, Le Sueur, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, Mower, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Olmsted, Pipestone, Redwood, Rice, Rock, Sibley, Steele, Wabasha, Waseca, Watonwan, Winona, Yellow Medicine.

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 NRCS and BWSR. Minnesota’s Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) implement the program at the local level.

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. With our help, people are better able to conserve, maintain, or improve their natural resources. As a result of our technical and financial assistance, land managers and communities take a comprehensive approach to the use and protection of natural resources in rural, suburban, urban, and developing areas.

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