



## 2016-2017 Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM)

### Local Government Biennial Budget Request Data Summary

March 2015

The Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) program is a nationally recognized conservation easement program. It's been successfully used to permanently protect habitat and water resources. RIM funding is used for land acquisition and processing fees as well as monitoring of existing easements. Funds for those costs have traditionally been provided through the legislative bonding process and, more recently, the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) and Clean Water Fund.

BWSR works with SWCDs to market and implement the RIM program as well as conduct easement compliance checks. SWCDs are vital partners in this effort due to their local connections with rural landowners.

The FY2016-17 BBR asked local governments to provide, for the first time, estimates for activities contained in local water management plans that could be implemented using funds other than Clean Water Fund Competitive grants or traditional SWCD or NRBG funding. Projects

Easement Program	
Easement Funds Budgeted	\$46,176,000
Leveraged Funds Identified	\$10,009,000

submitted are those that local governments believe can be accomplished during FY16-17 and do not reflect a comprehensive easement need.

Choice of funding source was likely influenced by how familiar local governments were with those programs. For instance, several LGUs identified easements on Wild Rice Lakes as an activity and chose LSOHC for their funding source instead of the general RIM category because they may have received money from that source in the past. Conversely, several LGUs chose RIM for streamside buffers when those have recently been funded through Clean Water Fund appropriations. Uncertainty about the status of the Federal Farm Bill at the time of the BBR may have influenced the amount of leveraged funds.

In addition to characterizing the type of activity, most likely funding source, and project location, local governments were asked to provide a narrative description of the activity and describe how it would be accomplished within the FY 16-17 biennium.

Examples of activity requests for easement projects include:

- Crow Wing County: Partner with private landowners in targeted area of the Pine River to complete riparian conservation easements.
- Douglas County: Continue efforts started by the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative securing conservation easements in the drained Crooked Lake area in Douglas County. Approximately 12 more easements need to be secured to be able to do the wetland restoration project.



- Buffalo-Red River Watershed District: Establish natural floodplain along lower reaches of the Wild Rice River. First phase in establishing setback levees and restoring the natural channel, estimated to be a 10-year, \$39,000,000 total effort. Acquire 850 acres of RIM easements for the Wolverton Creek and its drainage area to reduce flooding damages and sediment delivery to the waterway and for expanded/enhanced wildlife habitat.
- Carlton County: Acquire RIM conservation easements on priority Wild Rice waters.
- Clearwater County: Protect several lakes with native stands of wild rice.
- Wilkin County: Acquire RIM easements (1000 acres) for the channel restoration portion of a storage site development or flood damage reduction site easements.
- Olmsted County: Promote the SE MN Decorah Edge and Riparian Buffer RIM to Olmsted County landowners that meet the eligibility criteria, develop application for each site, complete GIS work and submit to BWSR on behalf of each landowner.
- Cass County: Target specific parcels for source water protection easement program.