

What is it and how does it work?

A Landowner(s), or other entity in partnership with a landowner(s), submits a proposal on a cost per credit basis. The cost per credit is determined by the landowner but represents the Board of Water and Soil Resources' (BWSR) payment for the conservation easement and the improvements to the property to generate wetland credits. Respondents considering this method should be aware of the following restrictions:

- a. The restoration site cannot be protected by a perpetual conservation easement in favor of the State prior to execution of the agreement between the State and the landowner.
- b. Any credits proposed to be sold to the State must be deposited in the State Wetland Bank and available for transfer to a BWSR account no later than December 31, 2022.

Who can participate?

Any person or entity with the land ownership rights or interests to complete or commit to a wetland restoration project may respond to this announcement. The landowner of a proposed project location is not required to be the applicant, but applicants will be asked to demonstrate that they have sufficient legal interest in the property, or access to it, in order to complete the activities necessary to restore wetlands and manage the site long-term.

How much will BWSR pay?

There is no set minimum or maximum amount that BWSR will pay under this method. Proposals must include the cost information requested on the applicable form(s) and the required supporting information.

What criteria does BWSR use when evaluating projects?

Restoration projects will be evaluated using the following criteria. The percentage in parentheses is the contribution of the criterion towards the total score for the project:

1. Credit Yield (20%)
2. Technical Feasibility (20%)
3. Functional Benefit for the Watershed (10%)
4. Rare or Difficult to Replace Wetland Functions or Characteristics (10%)
5. Qualifications of the Applicant (10%)
6. Cost per Credit (30%)

Does the location of the site matter?

Yes, BWSR is restricting this solicitation to the following Wetland Bank Service Areas (BSAs) 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 9 (see Figure 1). This includes all or portions of the following counties: Aitkin, Anoka, Becker, Beltrami, Big Stone, Blue Earth, Brown, Carver, Carlton, Cass, Chippewa, Chisago, Clay, Clearwater, Cook, Cottonwood, Crow Wing, Dakota, Douglas, Faribault, Freeborn, Grant, Hennepin, Hubbard, Isanti, Itasca, Jackson, Kanabec, Kandiyohi, Kittson, Koochiching, Lac qui Parle, Lake, Lake of the Woods, Le Sueur, Lincoln, Lyon, Mahnommen, Marshall, Martin, McLeod, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Murray, Nicollet, Norman, Otter Tail, Pine, Pennington, Pipestone, Polk, Pope, Ramsey, Red Lake, Redwood, Renville, Rice, Roseau, Scott, Sibley, St. Louis, Steele, Stevens, Swift, Todd, Traverse, Wadena, Waseca, Washington, Watonwan, Wilkin, and Yellow Medicine.

How many sites will be selected for the program?

BWSR has approximately \$5.5 million dedicated for wetland credit development. Some or all of these funds may be used for third party projects. BWSR is also seeking applications for other project development options concurrent with this RFP and will make decisions between the options based on the selection criteria and the overall best value for the State. Additional funds may become available during the open period of this announcement and, if so, could increase the number of projects selected. BWSR has a goal of pursuing at least one project in each BSA shown on Figure 1 with the funds available. However, it is not possible to know exactly how many sites and associated projects that will be selected because we cannot reasonably predict the size, scope, and cost of potential projects that may be identified. Based on previous easement sign-ups and requests for proposals we anticipate that between seven and fifteen projects may be selected.

What is the process for deciding which sites/projects to fund?

The steps in the review and selection process relevant to the landowner/applicant are provided below:

Applications due on or before 2:30 PM on May 21, 2020

Initial screening, evaluation and agency coordination of application materials (May 22 to July 26, 2020)

Sites selected and notification provided to landowners August 27, 2020.

Depending on characteristics of the site and weather conditions, a field inspection/investigation may take place during the review of submitted applications.

Landowners may continue to utilize their property (cropping, haying, etc.) during this period. BWSR only requests that applicants allow the agency reasonable access to the site.

If my site is selected, what do I have to do?

BWSR will work with the applicant to draft an agreement that outlines the terms, conditions, and schedule for providing the credits. Once the agreement is signed by the State and the applicant the applicant is responsible for completing the restoration project and getting credits deposited in the State Wetland Bank in accordance with the schedule.

How do I apply?

Landowners or other entities interested can find application materials, including an applicant checklist, on the BWSR website at <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/local-government-road-wetland-replacement-program>. Specific questions about the submission requirements or the evaluation process should be directed to the BWSR staff identified below.

Applications submitted must be received by U.S. Mail or courier in the BWSR St. Paul Office no later than 2:30pm Central Time, May 21, 2020. Email and faxed proposals will not be considered.

Further Questions?

Questions can be directed to the SWCD where the project site is located or to the following BWSR Wetland Banking Staff

BWSR Staff: Dennis Rodacker, Wetland Mitigation Project Manager, dennis.rodacker@state.mn.us or (651) 666-0913 or Tim Smith, Wetland Mitigation Coordinator, tim.j.smith@state.mn.us .