

THE RIM RUNDOWN

July 2024

BWSR EASEMENT SECTION STAFF UPDATES

For the first time in many years, the Easement section is fully staffed!

Most recent staff updates include:

- Kevin Roth moved into an Easement Programs Coordinator position (Waite Park) in October 2023
- Sara Reagan was hired as an Easement Programs Coordinator (Marshall) in November 2023
- Alan Ritchie moved into an Assistant Program Analyst position (St. Paul) in January of 2024
- Dave Plagge was hired as an Easement Acquisitions Specialist (Marshall) in June 2024

See the table at the end of this update for a list of the best BWSR staff contact(s) by topic.

FOREST MANAGEMENT AND RIM

BWSR has developed a policy on how to handle Forest Stewardship Plans (aka Woodland Stewardship Plans) on RIM easements.

In forested regions of the state some landowners desire to implement forest management practices on their RIM easements. Forest Stewardship Plans (FSPs) are a commonly used method whereby a qualified plan writer provides management recommendations to landowners for appropriate management actions to ensure a healthy forest and are based on landowner goals. Generally, a menu of management options is proposed for each management unit. These recommendations can range from clear-cutting to doing nothing. Although a range of management recommendations provides useful information it also complicates giving blanket approval for FSPs on land encumbered by a RIM easement. Consequently, having a FSP does not grant permission to implement practice recommendations without pre-approval. Because of the nature of the easement and the restrictions placed by several funding sources any management actions that are implemented **MUST** be for habitat management purposes and must not undermine the purposes for which the easement was acquired.

For forested easements, a new or updated Forest Stewardship Plan will be required if the landowner wishes to conduct forest management practices. FSPs should be completed concurrently with or after the RIM easement has been recorded. The landowner must sign an acknowledgement form stating that they have read both the conservation easement and FSP, as well as acknowledge that the terms of the easement take precedence over the FSP. The landowner must also further acknowledge that the FSP does not provide authorization to implement management practices without an approved Action Plan.

The complete policy, procedures and associated forms can be found at <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/forest-management>. Contact Bill Penning, Easement Programs Coordinator, with questions (bill.penning@state.mn.us).



MASTER JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT

There is a new Master Joint Powers Agreement (MJPA) effective February 1, 2024. How is the new MJPA different from the old one?

- **Terms of Payment:** Invoices for services will no longer be required to be submitted prior to payment. When the work is complete, BWSR will make the payment.
- **Stewardship:** Formerly named Easement Delivery, payments for administering and inspecting easements have a higher payment cap. Payments will remain \$50 per easement until additional funding is identified.
- **Alterations and Amendments:** These additional listed duties allow districts to be paid for this work at \$2,500 per alteration and \$1,000 per amendment.
- **Easement Acquisition:** Payment for the completion of Phases 1 and 2 has been increased to \$2,500.
- **Wetland Restoration Technical Assistance:** The payment cap is increased to \$4,000. Levels of payment will depend on services provided.
- **Reimbursable Expenses:** Reimbursable expenses have been modified. Many new items require BWSR's prior approval to be reimbursed. Reimbursement requests for these expenses are still required.

Don't worry, we won't say goodbye to the 2020-25 MJPA just yet. Work orders signed under the 2020-2025 MJPA will remain in place under that MJPA until the work is completed or the expiration of the existing master contract on June 30, 2025. *Invoices for services provided under the 2020-25 MJPA are still required.*

More information [HERE](#). Contact Kristina Geiger, Program Analyst, with questions (Kristina.geiger@state.mn.us).

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Some legislative updates were made in the 2024 Legislative Session. Many of the changes are actions that move definitions from Minnesota Rule to Minnesota Statutes for improved clarity around the laws that govern RIM administration.

Minnesota Laws 2024, Chapter 90, Article 3, section 71

In addition to moving language from repealed Minnesota Rules in Rules Chapter 8400 to this statutory section, this section also adds additional environmentally sensitive areas to the list of land eligible for RIM enrollment.

Minnesota Law 2024, Chapter 90, Article 3, section 72

This change moves language from repealed Rules 8400.3630 and 8400.3700 to this new section regarding conservation practices.

Minnesota Laws 2024, Chapter 90, Article 3, section 73

This change moves language from repealed Rules 8400.3210, 8400.3260, and 8400.3830 to this new section regarding soil and water conservation district responsibilities and delegation opportunities for the RIM conservation program.

Minnesota Laws 2024, Chapter 90, Article 3, section 74

Moves language from repealed Rule 8400.3610 to this section on altering conservation easements.

Contact Sharon Doucette, Easement Section Manager, with questions (Sharon.doucette@state.mn.us).



PAYMENTS AND REIMBURSEMENT REQUESTS

Reimbursement requests and Cost Share Vouchers (CSVs) should be submitted to the general RIM inbox at bwsr.rim@state.mn.us using the most current forms available on the BWSR website: <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/easement-forms>. These forms are updated regularly, so using old versions may delay reimbursement requests. **Keep an eye out for an updated Reimbursement Request Form later this summer!**

Electronic payments are now available to eligible landowners. More information [HERE](#).

When submitting reimbursements for title, work orders or cost share vouchers, don't forget to include the easement number in the Subject Line!

COST-SHARE VOUCHERS

- Reminder that starting in 2024, cost-share rates have been updated:
 - RR-2a Native grasses to be established \$450/acre
 - RR-8 Wetland restoration \$1200/acre
- Invoices or receipts must be attached to each CSV for RR-2a (native seeding) and RR-3a (tree/shrub planting) practices.
- Double-check the payees and co-payees listed in the RIM agreement and ensure that they match the payee name(s) entered on the CSV. BWSR will request documentation from the SWCD/landowner if the payees or co-payees are different from the agreement.
- If the landowner wants a change in the payee or co-payee from the RIM agreement, let BWSR know in advance of submitting the CSV.
- If there is an address change or ownership change, let BWSR know in advance.
- If any changes in name or address come up in review of the CSV, reimbursement will be delayed.
- Please submit CSVs in separate PDFs with invoices related to that CSV only. All CSVs are processed separately so it is a good idea to submit them separately.

MN CREP COST-SHARE VOUCHERS

In addition to the above CSV section, below are MN CREP-specific reminders on CSVs:

- FSA Practice Incentive Payment (PIP) needs to be included under the *Other Funding Sources* section of the CSV, if applicable.
 - Your local FSA office should have received an email from the State FSA office mid-July regarding cost-share payments for MN CREP, including PIP.
- FSA producer payment cost-share calculations must be attached to each CSV, if applicable.
- BWSR will provide practice payments for wetland restoration work, site preparation, seed, and seeding but will **not** provide practice payments for establishment (e.g., clippings) or ongoing maintenance.

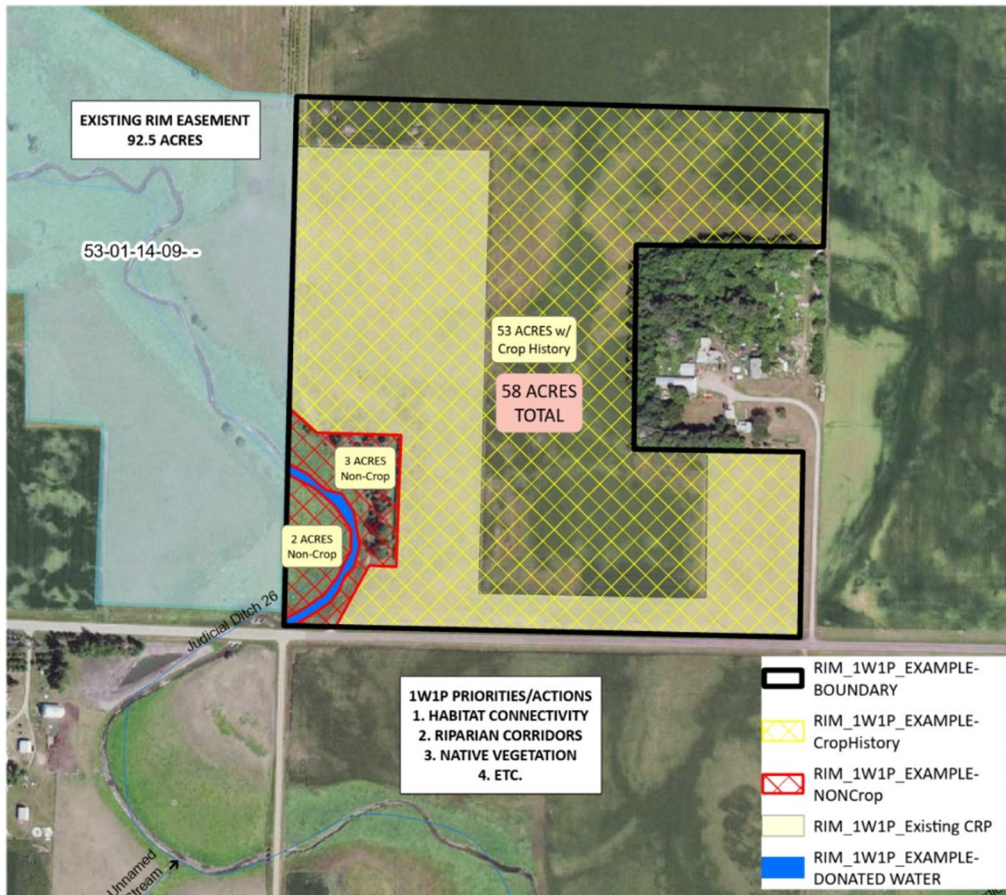
If a CSV is submitted including establishment activities (e.g., clippings) or excluding PIP on MN CREP easements, the CSV will need to be revised, new landowner signatures obtained, and re-submitted to bwsr.rim@state.mn.us.

RIM PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

RIM One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) – “Integrating Clean Water and Habitat”

The RIM-1W1P program offers a unique approach to BWSR’s more traditional RIM easements lineup. RIM-1W1P is available statewide, wherever there is an approved comprehensive watershed management plan (CWMP). The primary goal for RIM-1W1P is to permanently protect and/or restore prairie, wetland, riparian, and forested habitats. Water quality benefits are a secondary goal for the program. Land enrolled in RIM-1W1P must contribute to watershed plan priorities, goals, or leverage water quality related funding sources to maximize the habitat and water quality related impacts made on the landscape.

RIM-1W1P allows for additional flexibility when compared to other RIM programs, specifically for non-cropland.



RIM-1W1P easement example map

Restoration vs. Protection style RIM easements in RIM-1W1P:

- **Restoration Style Easement:**
 - Land with crop history is greater than, or equal to, land without crop history.
 - Traditional RIM Rates.
 - There is currently no 20% maximum non-cropland limit in RIM-1W1P.
 - Land with crop history that has already been restored or will be restored as part of the program.
 - Habitat enhancements should be considered in order maximize wildlife habitat whenever possible.
- **Protection Style Easement:**
 - Land without crop history is greater than land with crop history.
 - 60% of the tax assessed land value.
 - Habitat enhancements should be considered in order maximize wildlife habitat whenever possible.

Contact Kevin Roth, Easement Programs Coordinator, with questions (kevin.roth@state.mn.us).



BWSR EASEMENT STAFF CONTACTS

If you have a general question and aren't sure who to ask, please send it to the general RIM inbox (bwsr.rim@state.mn.us).

Topic	Current BWSR Contact(s)	
General Easement Processing	Lucy Dahl	651-358-8676 lucy.dahl@state.mn.us
Easement Program Eligibility & Application Submittal (Non-CREP Programs)	Karli Swenson	651-539-2571 karli.swenson@state.mn.us
	Peter Jordet	651-539-2580 peter.jordet@state.mn.us
Payments	Kristina Geiger	651-539-2531 kristina.geiger@state.mn.us
General CREP Questions	Dusty Van Thuyne	651-539-2573 dusty.vanthuyne@state.mn.us
CREP Module Questions	Pat Sherman	651-539-2570 pat.sherman@state.mn.us
Site Inspections/Boundary Issues	Peter Jordet	651-539-2580 peter.jordet@state.mn.us
Easement Compliance/Violations	Karli Swenson	651-539-2571 karli.swenson@state.mn.us
Easement Alteration Questions	Karli Swenson	651-539-2571 karli.swenson@state.mn.us
Conservation Plan Amendments & Practice Implementation Request Forms (PIRF)	Sara Reagan	651-539-2533 sara.reagan@state.mn.us
	<i>Continue to send PIRFs to bwsr.rim@state.mn.us</i>	
Conservation Practice Reimbursement/Cost-Share Vouchers (CSV)	Alan Ritchie	651-539-2562 alan.ritchie@state.mn.us
	<i>Continue to send CSVs bwsr.rim@state.mn.us</i>	
Work Orders	Alan Ritchie	651-539-2562 alan.ritchie@state.mn.us
Wetland Bank Easements	Brittany Polzin	651-539-2564 brittany.polzin@state.mn.us
Questions on a Specific Easement Program	Contact appropriate BWSR Program Manager (see Program pages)	
	Bill Penning	651-262-6403 bill.penning@state.mn.us
	Sara Reagan	651-539-2533 sara.reagan@state.mn.us
	Kevin Roth	651-539-2521 kevin.roth@state.mn.us
	John Voz	218-850-4283 john.voz@state.mn.us
	Dusty Van Thuyne	651-539-2573 dusty.vanthuyne@state.mn.us

