

Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Outside Funding Request Administrative Policy

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Approval: Signature on file

Policy Statement

This policy directs the use of the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve easement program for entities wishing to pursue RIM conservation easement acquisition or for projects proposing restoration/enhancement initiatives on RIM easements with funds from sources other than available BWSR programs. **Prior approval from BWSR is required before outside funding is requested for RIM easement acquisition or restoration/enhancement on RIM easements.**

Reason for the policy

The RIM Reserve program was established in 1986 and provides a unique opportunity for entities, including soil and water conservation districts and watershed districts, to accomplish important conservation projects on private lands. To sustain the high quality of the RIM Reserve program, ensure consistency with enabling legislation and program requirements, accommodate future stewardship obligations, and efficiently process easements; BWSR has developed this guidance for organizations interested in utilizing the RIM Reserve program as a mechanism to secure long-term protection of the state's natural resources and/or improving vegetation on existing RIM easements.

Applicability

This policy applies to any entity (applicant) that proposes to use RIM easements as a method of land protection or any entity that applies for funding to complete work on existing RIM easements. If using RIM easements as a protection mechanism or funding for enhancement work on RIM easements is proposed without prior BWSR easement section knowledge, BWSR will not support the proposal with funding or legislative committees.

Related Information

Criteria

- Proposals must address a resource concern and meet RIM Reserve program priorities including habitat and water quality.
- Prior approval from BWSR is required before any funding is requested for RIM easement acquisition or restoration/enhancement on RIM easements. This may include other BWSR grants. Check with easement section staff if you are not sure.
- All current [RIM Reserve program statute \(Minnesota Statutes \(MS\) §103F.501 – 535\)](#), policies and procedures shall be followed. The [RIM Handbook \(https://bwsr.state.mn.us/rim-handbook\)](https://bwsr.state.mn.us/rim-handbook) and associated [easement forms \(https://bwsr.state.mn.us/easement-forms\)](https://bwsr.state.mn.us/easement-forms) should be used as guidance.
- BWSR approved payment rates are to be followed. Payment rates are typically modified annually. Contact the Easement Section Manager for rate structure and current rate.
- Conservation practices must meet current [Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines \(https://bwsr.state.mn.us/native-vegetation-guidelines\)](https://bwsr.state.mn.us/native-vegetation-guidelines).
- BWSR Engineering oversight is required for all wetland restorations. All engineering associated costs must be identified and incorporated in project costs. If your project involves a wetland restoration, BWSR's [RIM Wetlands Application Workbook \(https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2024-02/RIM-Wetlands_AppWorkbook.xlsm\)](https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2024-02/RIM-Wetlands_AppWorkbook.xlsm) will be used as guidance in establishing eligibility.
- BWSR Engineering review is required for river/stream corridor restoration projects.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between BWSR and the organization will be required as determined by BWSR.
- BWSR costs associated with easement acquisition must be included in the request. BWSR will develop a budget based on known costs for BWSR program management and implementation. Easement acquisition costs include easement development, title insurance, recording, legal description, and conservation plan development and are approximately \$16,000/easement. There is also a stewardship charge of \$10,000/easement. This funding is placed into an interest-bearing account and used for long-term easement stewardship as allowed in [MS §103B.103](#).
- The project materials submitted to BWSR with the request, and following the procedure below, should include previous landowner communication, written landowner interest, engineering plans, status of required permitting and relevant maps.
- If a funding source requires local match and operates on a reimbursement basis, the applicant must plan for interim funding to fully cover costs. BWSR cannot make payments without sufficient funds thus the applicant must submit funds to BWSR for easement and practice payments based on easement applications. BWSR requires an income contract with the unit of government prior to funds being transferred to the state. It is the responsibility of the applicant to seek reimbursement from non-BWSR grants.

Procedure

- Contact the Easement Section Manager or one of the program managers below as early in your planning process as possible to determine if your proposal meets the requirements of the RIM Reserve program.

- A letter, signed by the applicant's leadership, summarizing the project proposal must be sent to the Easement Section Manager. The summary should contain a brief outline of the resource concern that would be addressed by the project along with a detailed budget, and other information (see **Criteria** above) that would help in determining if the proposal meets RIM goals and purposes. These items must be submitted in electronic format no later than 4 weeks before a project proposal deadline. Late submittal or submittal when workload is high for easement section staff may result in a denial due to lack of resources to review, coordinate and provide budget input. **The summary will be reviewed by easement section staff to determine if the resource concern meets the necessary wildlife or water quality requirements of the funding source before the proposal is approved.**
- Easement section staff will evaluate each proposal on a case-by-case basis.
- Easement section staff will request additional documentation to substantiate public benefits for wildlife and water quality or other criteria, as necessary.
- Easement section staff may work with applicant to refine projects to meet RIM priorities; choose to withhold support of requests outside of the scope of RIM; or refer projects to a more appropriate program.
- Easement section staff reserves the right to reject or modify projects that do not meet current RIM priorities or that obligate the state to unreasonable future management or liability issues. The Easement Section Manager will send written communication to the applicant's listed contact on decision.
- The applicant is responsible for application submittal and supplying all information required by the funding source.

Post Funding Award

It is the responsibility of the applicant to assume the project manager role for funding received. This includes project initiation, coordination, reporting, and amendment requests. BWSR will provide data to the applicant for these purposes. A copy of all submitted reports and amendment requests must be provided to BWSR prior to submittal. This will be detailed in the MOU as required and appropriate.

- It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain any required permits.
- Individual easement acquisitions must follow the standard RIM process and all rules, policy, and guidelines. The RIM Reserve program reserves the right to reject any individual easement acquisition if it does not meet RIM standards.
- Vegetation restoration, management, or enhancement on a specific RIM easement may require BWSR approval or a conservation plan amendment. Plans must be developed or amended per standard RIM procedures. BWSR approval is required prior to implementation.

For further information, please contact john.voz@state.mn.us, sara.reagan@state.mn.us, kevin.roth@state.mn.us, dusty.vanthuyne@state.mn.us, or bill.penning@state.mn.us.

History

Version	Description	Date
1.0	Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Outside Request Easement Policy	January 2018
2.0	Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Outside Funding Request Policy	October 2024

Contact

sharon.doucette@state.mn.us