



STATE OF MINNESOTA CONSERVATION EASEMENT ENHANCEMENT ELIGIBILITY SURVEY INSTRUCTION GUIDE

BWSR

Scope

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine the current vegetative state of Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) easements and identify eligibility for future enhancement funding. To accomplish this, there are 14 questions (not including easement identifying information) aimed at providing broad information about the easement. Consider the entire easement when answering each question.

Audience

This survey is designed for low to intermediately skilled surveyors. Some plant identification is preferred. Ability to use provided guides is required.

Layout

Most of the questions are *binary*, meaning there are two options to choose from (e.g. Yes/No). Other questions are *multiple choice* (i.e. choose one option from a list) or *multiple selection* (choose all options that apply from a list).

The survey is broken into three sections, with each section having different colorization: Pre-requisite (grey), Priority (blue), and Enhancement (orange) questions.

Prerequisite Questions

Questions 1-5 must have “Yes” selected to complete the rest of the survey. These questions should be completed with landowner input.

Priority Questions

Questions 6-8 consider prioritization of sites for available funding. Darkened blue boxes indicate the response that demonstrates a priority. Note each checked blue box is worth 10 points (minimum score of 0 and maximum score of 30). Easements with higher scores gain priority for enhancement actions (see Score section for further detail). These questions should be completed with landowner input.

Enhancement Questions

Questions 9-14 cover broad ecological concepts. Darkened orange boxes denote enhancement opportunities and should be counted towards the enhancement score. Note each checked orange box is worth 1 point (minimum score of 0 and maximum score of 8). For example, if the plant community is mostly comprised of invasive species, there is an opportunity to enhance the landscape by controlling those invasive plant populations and/or installing native plants.

Score

The eligibility score in the bottom right can be found by adding the prioritization score to the enhancement score. A *minimum eligibility score of 11 is required to pass* and continue to the Enhancement Capacity Survey. Please note that questions 1-5 must be checked as “Yes” to continue. However, in special circumstances, the SWCD can contact BWSR for alternative actions.

Easements with higher eligibility scores will be ranked higher for management action than easements with lower eligibility scores.

Contact

Once completed, this and all associated materials can be submitted to the RIM Inbox (bwsr.rim@state.mn.us). In the email subject line, please list the easement ID number followed by “Enhancement application”.

For questions regarding funding or enhancement eligibility, please email Sara Reagan (sara.reagan@state.mn.us).

Next Steps

Once the Enhancement Eligibility survey is finished and has a minimum passing score of 11, staff should complete the following steps:

1. Ensure all information is filled in and accurate.
2. Arrange for the completion of the Enhancement Capacity survey during the growing season by a staff member with moderate to advanced plant identification experience.



**STATE OF MINNESOTA RIM CONSERVATION EASEMENT
ENHANCEMENT ELIGIBILITY SURVEY**

Landowner Name	Easement ID #	County
	SWCD Staff	Date of Survey

Questions 1-5 must have a "yes" answer to be eligible for enhancement funding.

1.	Is the landowner currently in compliance with all easement terms and conditions?	Y	N
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Does the landowner understand the reimbursement process?	Y	N
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Is the ownership information up to date with a current signed and approved Conservation Plan?	Y	N
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Will boundary posts/markers be established and maintained for the duration of the easement?	Y	N
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Is the landowner willing to commit to future and ongoing management?	Y	N
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Consider the entire easement when answering the following questions. Complete with landowner.

6.	If deemed appropriate, is the landowner willing to purchase a custom seed mix(es)?	Y	N
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Did the current landowner receive any portion of the original easement payment?	Y	N
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8.	Is the landowner interested in providing a cost match (cash or in-kind)?	Y	N
	<i>If yes, list cash match (%) and/or in-kind match. _____</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mark the prioritization score (0-30 points). Each checked blue square is worth 10 points			
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

9.	Please check all land types surrounding the easement.		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial/Residential
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Woodland/Forest	<input type="checkbox"/> Wetland/Open Water	<input type="checkbox"/> Grassland/Rangeland/Prairie
			<input type="checkbox"/> Food Plot
10.	Was the easement acquired before 2014?	Y	N
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	Is the plant community dominated (>50% cover) by 3 species or less?	Y	N
	<i>If yes, please list the dominant species below.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	Does the site include Minnesota listed noxious weeds or is the site threatened by noxious weed invasion from adjacent sites? (<i>Refer to the noxious weed guide for identification.</i>)	Y	N
	<i>If yes, please list the noxious species below.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	Please check one response that most accurately represents approximately how many native species are on site (aligning with the original restoration habitat goals).		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0-10	<input type="checkbox"/> 11-20	<input type="checkbox"/> 21-30
			<input type="checkbox"/> 31+
14.	Is there anything else on the site worth noting? (e.g. <i>SGCN, remnant prairie, fen, etc.</i>)	Y	N
	<i>If yes, please describe below.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mark the enhancement score (0-8 points). Each checked orange square is worth 1 point.			
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Total Eligibility Score: