



## 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 13 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 1-4 must have “Yes” selected to complete the rest of the survey. These questions should be completed with landowner input.

#### *Priority Questions*

Questions 5-7 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 8-13 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 1-4 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

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

#### Next Steps

Once the Enhancement Eligibility Survey is finished and has a minimum passing score of 11, staff should arrange for the completion of the Enhancement Capacity Survey by a staff member with moderate to advanced plant identification experience. See the Easement Enhancement Program Guidance document for application submittal.



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

Landowner Name	Easement ID #	County
	SWCD Staff	Date of Survey

*Consider the entire easement when answering each question. Complete with landowner.*

1.	Is the landowner interested in enhancement?	Y	N
2.	Is the landowner currently in compliance with all easement terms and conditions?	Y	N
3.	Does the landowner understand the reimbursement process?	Y	N
4.	Is the landowner willing to commit to future and ongoing management?	Y	N

*If any of the above are No, end survey here. Otherwise, continue. Complete with landowner.*

5.	If deemed appropriate, is the landowner willing to purchase a <b>custom</b> seed mix(es)?	Y	N
6.	Did the current landowner receive any portion of the original easement payment?	Y	N
7.	Is the landowner interested in providing a cost match (cash or in-kind)? <i>If yes, list cash match (%) and/or in-kind match. _____</i>	Y	N

**Mark the prioritization score (0-30 points). Each checked blue box is worth 10 points.**

8.	Check all land types surrounding the easement. <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial/Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Food Plot <input type="checkbox"/> Woodland/Forest <input type="checkbox"/> Wetland/Open Water <input type="checkbox"/> Grassland/Rangeland/Prairie		
9.	Was the easement acquired before 2014?	Y	N
10.	Is the plant community dominated (>50% cover) by 3 species or less? <i>If yes, list below.</i>	Y	N
11.	Does the site include Minnesota listed noxious weeds or is the site threatened by noxious weed invasion from adjacent sites? <i>If yes, list below.</i>	Y	N
12.	Check the one response that most accurately represents approximately how many <b>native</b> species are on site (aligning with the original restoration habitat goals). <input type="checkbox"/> 0-10 <input type="checkbox"/> 11-20 <input type="checkbox"/> 21-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 31+		
13.	Is there anything on site of ecological significance? (e.g. <i>SGCN, remnant prairie, fen, etc.</i> ) <i>If yes, describe below.</i>	Y	N

**Mark the enhancement score (0-8 points). Each checked orange box is worth 1 point.**

**Total Eligibility Score:**

**Minimum eligibility score of 11 is required to pass.**