

Conservation Plan Amendment, Enhancement, and Funding (PIRF) Requests

If a landowner desires to make a change to a Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) conservation easement area and/or request funding to enhance an existing practice, install a new practice, or re-install a failed practice, the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) or other local government unit (LGU) must submit a request to the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) for review and approval, prior to implementation. Depending on the situation requiring approval, BWSR requires submission of different information and forms.

A Practice Implementation

Request for Funding (PIRF) must be submitted for all requests involving BWSR funding. See detailed PIRF form guidance below (pages 2-6).

An amended conservation plan

must be submitted if the proposed activity would result in a change to the practice type(s), acres, and/or boundaries shown in the current conservation plan. The amended conservation plan should be signed by both the SWCD and landowner, then emailed to the general RIM inbox (bwsr.rim@state.mn.us) for BWSR review and approval.

Note that some requests will only require a PIRF, some requests will only require an amended conservation plan (i.e. food plot), and some requests will require submittal of both a PIRF **and** an amended conservation plan.

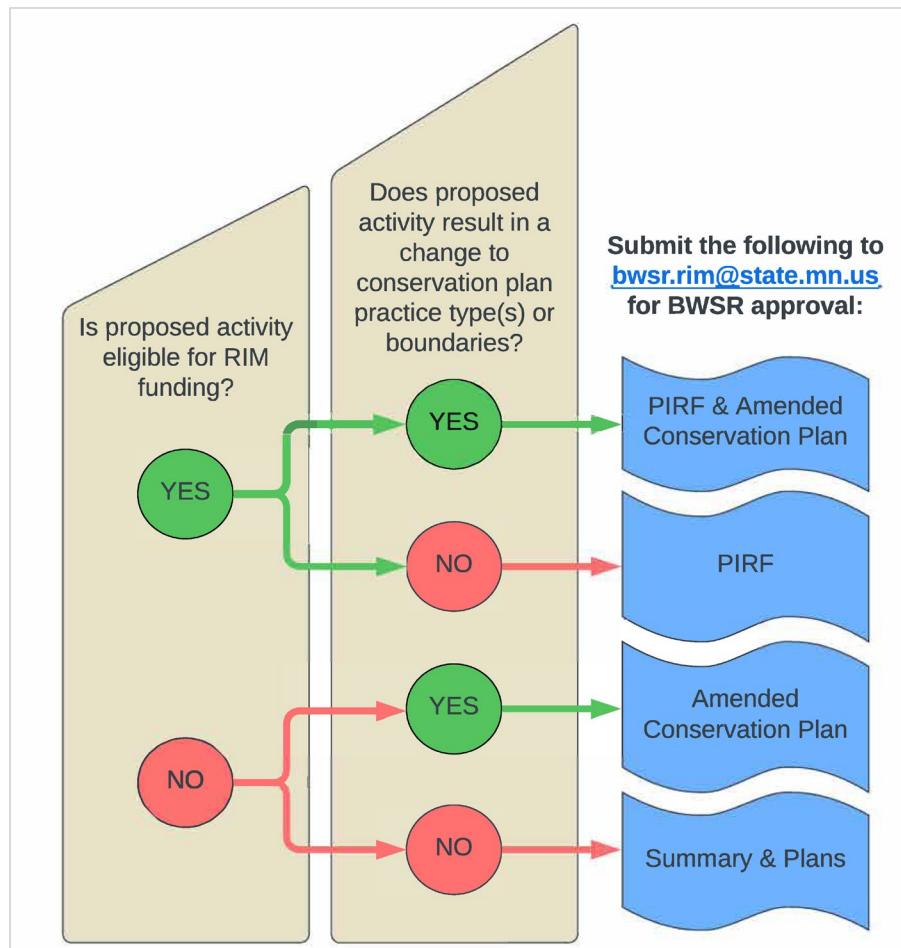


Figure 1. What to submit for BWSR approval.

If preparing an amended [Conservation Plan Workbook](#), check "Yes" in the "Conservation Plan Amendment" section at the top of the signature page and include a summary of the requested changes the text box provided. BWSR will review the requested change, countersign the plan (if approved), and return a copy to the SWCD.

If a proposed activity would impact or modify the easement area but no RIM funding is being requested and the practice type(s) would not change, BWSR written approval is still required prior to implementation. In these rare situations, email a summary of the proposed activity and preliminary project plans or other supporting documentation to bwsr.rim@state.mn.us.

Practice Implementation Request for Funding (PIRF): Form Guidance

About the PIRF Form

BWSR provides funding to implement conservation practices on conservation easement lands via the RIM easement program. This RIM conservation practice implementation funding is initially approved via the easement's conservation plan, which specifies the maximum funding amounts available for each planned practice. In some instances, the organization coordinating the practice implementation – typically the local SWCD or other LGU, but sometimes BWSR staff in coordination with an SWCD/LGU – may identify the need for new or additional RIM funding.

To request BWSR approval of new or additional RIM funding, prior to beginning the work, the SWCD/LGU/BWSR must submit a Practice Implementation Request for Funding (PIRF) to the BWSR RIM Program for review and approval. Submit the PIRF to the BWSR RIM Inbox at bwsr.rim@state.mn.us.

A PIRF should be submitted only if the landowner is seeking funding for the proposed activity. Potential reasons to submit a PIRF include:

- Requesting enhancement of upland or wetland habitat or other land cover types to increase the practice area's climate change resiliency.
- Requesting wetland structural preservation, repair, or replacement work.
- Requesting a change in a conservation practice on the land **and** RIM currently funds the new practice.
- Requesting additional funding because the estimated cost of the initial conservation practice implementation exceeds maximum conservation plan funds available for the practice.
- To request additional funding because the initial installation of a practice failed and requires re-installation. BWSR must approve a PIRF for all re-installations, even if there are remaining conservation plan funds for the practice.

An amended conservation plan must *also* be prepared and attached to the PIRF if the proposed activity would result in a change to the practice type(s), acres, and/or boundaries shown in the current conservation plan.

When preparing the amended Conservation Plan Workbook, check the box to indicate the plan is being amended and provide a brief summary of the requested change in the text box on the near the top of the signature page. The amended plan should be signed by the SWCD/LGU and landowner when submitted with the PIRF, and will be returned with BWSR's signature, with the PIRF, if approved.

Following PIRF review, BWSR will email the SWCD/Requester to approve or deny each request. If approved, BWSR will include a cover sheet to indicate the approved funding amount and deadline for spending. The conservation implementation work should not be initiated until after BWSR has returned the approved/completed (now 2-page) version to the SWCD/Requester.

Initial Information

Request Submitted by: Select the type of organization that is submitting the PIRF from the dropdown menu. An authorized representative of the organization submitting the request must sign at *Requester Signature* and *Date* near the bottom of page 1.

Easement Number: A separate PIRF must be submitted for each easement. If there are multiple easements associated with the request (e.g., a group wetland restoration project), list the associated easement numbers in the *Describe Request* field and divide the required funding among the easements based on the number/percent of acres treated on each.

Payee

Payee Name and Address: Identify the person who will pay for implementing the activities identified in the PIRF and who will be reimbursed following their completion. Enter their name and address in these fields.

If the Payee is the landowner who signed the original conservation easement, the *Payee Name, Co-Payee Name, if applicable*, and *Payee Address* must match the name and address of the Conservation Plan Payee identified on the original Agreement for Conservation Easement.

Co-Payee Name: If the landowner or Payee would like the reimbursement payment to be made to both them and an additional party, enter the additional party's name in this field.

If there is a Co-Payee, the payment would come in the form of a single check mailed to the Payee's address. Both parties' names would be on the check and both parties would be required to endorse the check when deposited. Payments with Co-Payees are typically not eligible for electronic deposit.

Is Payee interested in electronic payment? Electronic payments are a fast, convenient, and safe alternative to paper checks. Encouraging Payees to opt for direct deposit will allow them to receive payments faster, even when they are not always at their primary residences. An electronic payment may only be issued to a single bank account/payee.

[More information on electronic payments](#)

Check *Yes* if the Payee is interested in an electronic payment. BWSR will then establish whether the Payee is eligible for electronic payment and reach out to the SWCD/LGU to inform them either way and, as needed, provide more information on how to enroll.

Check *No* if the Payee would prefer a paper check. This is the only option when there is a Co-Payee or if a landowner/Payee has a more complicated ownership situation such as a group of siblings. If *No* is checked, BWSR will not reach out to the SWCD/LGU to provide more information on how to enroll.

Additional Payee Documentation Sometimes Required: Depending on the desired Payee, one or more of the following additional financial and/or ownership documents may be required:

- **IRS W-9 Form:** If the Payee has not been paid by the State within the last two years, or has changed addresses since initial payment, they must complete an [IRS W-9 Form](#) to be submitted with the PIRF. If a W-9 is required but is not submitted with the PIRF, BWSR Easement Section staff will reach out to the SWCD/LGU to request one. PIRF review and approval cannot occur until after the W-9 is received.
Note: Due to the Personal Identifiable Information on the W-9, the form can only be submitted via the mail or an encrypted email.
- **Ownership Change Form:** If the Payee is the current landowner of the conservation easement area, but is not the original conservation easement grantor, an [Ownership Change Form](#) and a copy of the current

deed should have been submitted to BWSR. If not already submitted, include these documents with the PIRF. Enter their information in *Payee Name, Co-Payee Name, if applicable*, and *Payee Address*.

Current ownership information must be submitted prior to BWSR's review and approval of the PIRF.

- **Request to Pay a Non-Landowner:** In rare cases, and with BWSR approval, someone other than the current landowner may be the Payee. BWSR approval of a non-landowner Payee may be requested with an email or letter from the current landowner identifying their designated Payee's Name and Address. Submit this request with the PIRF. Enter the designated non-landowner Payee's information in *Payee Name, Co-Payee Name, if applicable*, and *Payee Address* fields.

Project

Practice Type: In the dropdown menu, select the one practice type for which you are requesting funding. One form should be completed for each practice type needing new or additional funding. Multiple practice areas may be changed to a single new practice type. In these cases, select the single practice type for which the funding is being requested. If this request results in a change to the practice type from what is in the current conservation plan, submit a signed amended conservation plan with the request.

Practice Area(s): Identify the practice area(s) where the implementation is planned to occur and enter the information in this field. Use the Conservation Plan to identify the correct practice area number(s). The entry may be "all," indicating that all practice areas of this practice type are identified in this request.

Acres Treated: Enter the number of acres that will be treated. *Acres to be Treated* will generally match the practice area acres from the Conservation Plan. "All" is ok to enter. If acres to be treated are a subset of the acres within the practice area(s), provide an explanation in the *Describe Request* box.

Is this a re-installation? Check Yes if the initial installation of the conservation practice failed and requires re-installation. Include the reason for the installation failure in the *Describe Request* box below. BWSR must approve a PIRF for all re-installations, even if there are conservation plan funds remaining for the practice.

Describe Request: Provide more detailed information about the request and the planned project in this box. Include the following details, as applicable:

- **Reason funding is needed:** Is this an enhancement request? Was the contractor estimate higher than maximum conservation plan funds available for the practice? Is the seed mix highly diverse and therefore expensive?
- **Proposed month and/or year of installation:** This is used to follow up with the submitting organization about funding availability given the proposed timeline.
- **Potential establishment activities required after installation, such as mowing:** Note that some programs do not pay for establishment activities following the initial practice installation.
- **If it is a re-installation, indicate the reason for failure:** BWSR uses this PIRF to document the failure and assess whether to duplicate funding for the practice type on the same practice area.
- **Group restoration projects:** If the easement is a part of a complex where work is occurring on multiple easements, describe that here and list the other easement number associated with the project.

Will request result in change to the practice type(s), acres, and/or boundaries in the current conservation plan?

If this PIRF is associated with a change to the practice type(s), acres, and/or boundaries shown in the current conservation plan, submit an amended conservation plan and map – signed by the landowner and the SWCD/LGU – with this PIRF. BWSR will review the amended plan in conjunction with the PIRF and will return a fully signed copy, if the PIRF is approved.

Planned Activities and/or Materials for this Practice and Estimated Cost: While three rows are provided, one row showing one activity or material and the total cost of the project is sufficient. Keep the following in mind when completing these fields:

- **If requesting enhancement on an older easement:** Include the desired activity and/or items as well as the estimated cost of each activity/item.
If the estimated cost is unknown, use the current maximum payment rate/acre for the requested practice to calculate BWSR's maximum potential practice funds available. Refer to the [Conservation Plan Workbook](#) to determine the current maximum payment rate/acre for the chosen enhancement practice, then multiply that value by the requested enhancement acreage. *Example: 20 acres of RR-2a * \$450/ac = \$9,000.*
- **If requesting reinstallation of a failed practice:** Include the cost of the current installation/re-installation, but not the original practice installation cost that has already been reimbursed.
- **If requesting additional funding for the initial installation on a new easement:** Include ALL project costs associated with the installation of this practice, even if some will be covered by the approved conservation plan or through expected non-RIM funding sources.

Funding

Expected Non-RIM Funding for this Practice: If there are any other funding sources available for this activity such as cost share through FSA/CRP, PIP, or a landowner contribution, choose the appropriate option from the drop-down menu and include the estimated amount available from each additional source. Use the best estimate available.

RIM Funding Request for this Practice: The *RIM Funding Request for this Practice* amount is auto calculated by subtracting *Total Expected Non-RIM Funding* from *Total Estimated Cost*.

Certification: The authorized representative of the organization submitting this PIRF must sign and date the PIRF here. The landowner's signature is not required on the PIRF. Once the PIRF has been completed down through the *Requester Signature and Date*, this form may be submitted to the BWSR Easement Section via the BWSR RIM Inbox at rim.bwsr@state.mn.us. BWSR technical staff then review for approval and sign at the bottom of the PIRF.

BWSR Approval Cover Sheet

Upon PIRF approval, BWSR will return the signed form to the Requester with a cover sheet added to indicate the approved amount and funding expiration date. If the PIRF is not approved, a notification will also be sent to the Requester with more information.

Requesting Reimbursement of Approved PIRF Funding

After a PIRF has been approved and the practice has been implemented and paid for by the Payee, the SWCD must submit a Practice Implementation Reimbursement Request (reimbursement request or PIRR; formerly Cost Share Voucher). When submitting a reimbursement request:

- Use the *AMOUNT APPROVED BY THIS PIRF* on the cover sheet of the approved PIRF to assist with entering information into the reimbursement request(s).
- Submit all reimbursement requests promptly upon completion of conservation implementation work.
- Submit all reimbursement requests prior to the expiration date entered on the cover sheet of the approved PIRF. When determining the expiration date, BWSR considers the type of funding request, the easement's establishment period (see the [RIM Handbook](#) for more information on establishment periods), and RIM funding availability.