

THE RIM RUNDOWN

April 2025

STAFF UPDATE

Please welcome Julie Hendrickson, Easement Acquisition Specialist, to the Easement Section. Julie started in February and will be working out of the Duluth office. Julie comes to BWSR with a background in forestry working for the Minnesota Tree Improvement Cooperative and the Sustainable Forests Education Cooperative, and a Master's degree in Natural Resources Science and Management focused on the genetic variability of Minnesota's black and green ash.

Welcome Julie (julie.hendrickson@state.mn.us)!

CREP UPDATE

In case you hadn't heard...

An amended agreement between the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and the USDA's Farm Service Agency (USDA-FSA) will make easement opportunities via the Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (MN CREP) available in 12 more counties across the state and expand eligibility for planting native vegetation outside of wellhead protection areas.

The amended agreement signed in January 2025 adds Benton, Isanti, Kittson, Mahnommen, Marshall, Morrison, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, Roseau and Sherburne counties.

The amended agreement makes several other changes. It extends the program end date from December 31, 2026, to December 31, 2039, or until a 75,000-acre cap is reached. It also allows landowners to apply the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) CP2 practice, which establishes native vegetation to all conservation lands. Previously, CP2 could only be implemented in designated Wellhead Protection Areas. CP2 on Wellhead Protection Areas is still an eligible practice, and will be evaluated separately from CP2 applications outside of Wellhead Protection Areas. A minimum of 15 species of native grasses, forbs and legumes must be seeded on CP2 practice areas established via MN CREP.

Detailed guidance documents can be found on the [MN CREP for SWCDs](#) webpage.

An online training for MN CREP will be held on April 14th, from 1 to 3 via Microsoft Teams. This training will cover MN CREP Wetland restorations, the MN CREP Application Workbook, and the MN CREP module.

Contact Dusty VanThuyne (dusty.vanthuyne@state.mn.us), Easement Programs Coordinator, with questions.



2025 RIM AND CREP RATES EFFECTIVE APRIL 01

RIM and CREP contacts at SWCDs should have received an email on April 01 regarding 2025 RIM and CREP rates. These rates are effective April 01, 2025.

Rates are determined using the township averages of estimated market value of tillable land, which is based on tax-assessed land values for taxes payable in 2025.

All easement applications received April 1, 2025 and later will be paid using the 2025 rates.

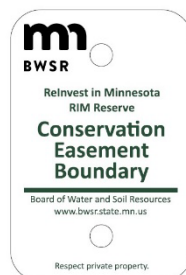
For in-process easements, BWSR will offer the updated payment rate to applications for which payment has not yet been encumbered. Encumbrance occurs just prior to BWSR mailing the agreement to the district for landowner signature. Districts with applications eligible for 2025 rates will receive individual emails from BWSR easement acquisition staff with instructions on how to update the conservation easement financial worksheet (CEFW) for each eligible easement.

Note that nothing is changing for programs that use the tax assessed value of the easement property to calculate the payment rate.

Contact Kristina Geiger (kristina.geiger@state.mn.us), Program Analyst, with questions.

THIS IS YOUR SIGN

SWCD staff that need RIM signs for posting boundaries should reach out to Dusty VanThuyne (dusty.vanthuyne@state.mn.us) with requests. If possible, please include the easement information, as sign types are based on funding sources.





PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: RIM WETLANDS – PEATLANDS EMPHASIS

As a result of recent dedicated funding, easement applications containing drained and altered peatlands are being sought and considered a high priority as part of RIM Wetlands and MN CREP batching periods. A peatland is defined as a type of wetland ecosystem characterized by natural, high accumulations of organic matter derived from decaying plant material under relatively constant soil saturation. Peatlands are dominated by actively forming peat and a significant layer, typically a foot or more, of accumulated peat.

For program purposes, wetlands that have all or a majority of their area identified as having histosol soils are being considered peatlands. The [Potentially Restorable Peatlands Mapping Tool](#) or [USDA Web Soil Survey](#) are good references to use to identify drained and potentially restorable peatlands.

Specific drained and altered peatland landscapes are being targeted for restoration and will generally need to meet the following criteria:

- A majority of the eligible wetland areas within the application must be drained or altered and deemed restorable.
- A majority of the eligible, restorable wetland area within the application must be mapped as having histosol soils. Applications can include other restorable wetland areas, not exceeding the restorable peatland acres.
- A majority of the restorable peatland should be capable of being hydrologically restored to a continuously saturated water regime and be relatively stable, not subject to long duration periods of drying or flooding. Histosol soil areas that are part of a deep marsh landscape likely will not meet this requirement.
- Other eligibility requirements for either program still apply. Note that RIM Wetlands and MNCREP (in limited amounts) allow certain eligible lands including restorable wetland areas to not meet program defined crop history requirements. That determination does impact landowner payment.

Applications containing restorable peatlands meeting the above criteria will generally be located in landscapes and parts of the State that may not score as high as other, non-peatland applications. Because applications containing the restoration of eligible peatlands are being prioritized and have dedicated funding, no minimum scoring threshold has been established. Applicable program score sheets should still be completed and submitted as part of required application materials. Applications containing restorable peatlands will be reviewed and funded independent of other non-peatland wetland restoration applications.

Over the spring and summer, BWSR staff will be reaching out to SWCDs and Watershed Districts to seek potential sites and build interest in the program. Updates to program guidance documents located on the [Easements Programs Page](#) of the BWSR website regarding peatlands and their eligibility are in progress. Find more information about peatlands [here](#).

Contact John Voz (john.voz@state.mn.us), Easement Programs Coordinator, or Kevin Roth (kevin.roth@state.mn.us), Easement Programs Coordinator, with questions.



BWSR EASEMENT STAFF CONTACTS FOR SWCDs

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 Application Submittal and Landowner Eligibility (Non-CREP Programs)	Karli Swenson	651-440-2456 karli.swenson@state.mn.us
	Brittany Polzin	651-539-2565 brittany.polzin@state.mn.us
General Payment Questions	Kristina Geiger	651-539-2531 kristina.geiger@state.mn.us
Electronic Payments	Sumbal Rana	651-539-2592 sumbal.rana@state.mn.us
General CREP Questions	Dusty VanThuyne	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	651-440-2456 karli.swenson@state.mn.us
Easement Alteration Questions	Karli Swenson	651-440-2456 karli.swenson@state.mn.us
Conservation Plan Amendments & Practice Implementation Request for Funding (PIRF)	Sara Reagan	651-539-2533 sara.reagan@state.mn.us
	<i>Continue to send PIRFs to bwsr.rim@state.mn.us</i>	
Practice Implementation Reimbursement Request (PIRR)	Alan Ritchie	651-539-2562 alan.ritchie@state.mn.us
	<i>Continue to send PIRRs to 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 Specific Easement Programs	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 VanThuyne	651-539-2573 dusty.vanthuyne@state.mn.us