

THE RIM RUNDOWN

January 2026

ANNUAL PRIVATE LANDS PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Join us at the annual Private Lands Partnership meeting on February 20th, 2026. This year's annual meeting will be held in conjunction with Pheasant Fest at the Minneapolis Convention Center. The meeting's theme is **water, wildlife, and habitat management**.

Presentations from BWSR, Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Xerces Society, and Washington County Parks will highlight how a single project site can successfully maximize both wildlife habitat and water quality. Speakers will share practical, real-world habitat management strategies, with a special emphasis on the role of grazing.

Registration is \$10 and a link to register will be sent in January.

Contact Kevin Roth (kevin.roth@state.mn.us), Easement Programs Coordinator, with questions.

SHARING AN UPDATE ON SHAREPOINT

Easement Section staff have created a SharePoint site for SWCDs to submit easement applications electronically, while continuing to protect personally identifiable information (PII). This Microsoft SharePoint site will be used for new RIM and ACUB applications. **MN CREP applications should still be submitted via the MN CREP Easement Application Module.**

Some SWCDs are already set up with access to the SharePoint LGU file share. The remainder of SWCDs that actively submit applications will be contacted and provided access in 2026.

If your SWCD plans to submit non-CREP applications in the next two months, please reach out to the RIM Inbox (rim.bwsr@state.mn.us) to request access to the SharePoint LGU file share. In the request, provide the name and email address of the staff responsible for submitting non-CREP applications.

Unless submitted via the SharePoint LGU file share, non-CREP easement applications must continue to be mailed in paper form to protect PII.

Contact Sumbal Rana (Sumbal.Rana@state.mn.us), Assistant Program Analyst, with questions.

NEW CONSERVATION EASEMENT ALTERATION POLICY

A revised Conservation Easement Alteration Policy has been adopted by the Board, effective January 1st, 2026. A link to the policy as well as detailed instructions on how to submit an alteration request can be found [here](#).

Contact Karli Swenson (karli.swenson@state.mn.us), Conservation Easement Specialist Lead, with questions.



2026 RIM RATES

In April, BWSR will release the 2026 township average value easement payment rates, which are used to determine payments for restoration-focused RIM and MN CREP easements. The 2026 rates are based on 2025 estimated market values as reported by county assessors to the Minnesota Department of Revenue.

PLEASE NOTE: Easement payment rates are now determined at time of application. In-process easements are not eligible for a rate update once a signed application has been submitted, unless submitted to a partnership program where the partner has opted to update rates. For more information see the [BWSR Easement Payment Rate Determination Procedure](#) (May 15th, 2025).

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

TITLE REIMBURSEMENT UPDATE

BWSR reimburses SWCDs for title costs incurred to meet BWSR's easement acquisition requirements.

New this year: After the SWCD has paid all costs associated with an easement, BWSR will accept and pay a reimbursement request. In the past, BWSR has requested that the SWCD wait until they receive notice that the landowner payment has been made, which is no longer a requirement.

In addition, the title expenses for which BWSR can reimburse the SWCD have been clarified and updated in the RIM Handbook, as summarized below.

Reimbursable Title Expenses (to be covered by RIM):

- Cost of title exam to search records back to land patent
- "Gap check" to search the title from date of commitment to policy
- Title insurance premium based on easement payment amount
- Recording fees for document drafted by BWSR (easement, NoFR, mortgage subordinations, etc.)
- Cost of providing copies of (non-certified) Schedule B exception documents
- Mailing fees, if any

Non-Reimbursable Title Expenses (to be covered by landowner):

- Abstract creation or updating (in the rare situation it is required by the title company)
 - o If a landowner can't find their abstract, contact BWSR to discuss potential alternatives
- Cost of drafting required ownership related legal documents such as a certificate of trust, affidavit of trustee, etc.
- All costs associated with clearing title issues, if any
- Any charges to update an expired commitment where the expiration date was caused by landowner delays in clearing exceptions

To request reimbursement, complete the [Reimbursement Request Form](#), attach supporting documentation, and submit to the RIM Inbox (bwsr.rim@state.mn.us). Submit only one request per easement and do not request for more than one easement on each form.

Contact Sumbal Rana (Sumbal.Rana@state.mn.us), Assistant Program Analyst, with questions.



RIM REFRESH PILOT PROCESS

The RIM easement acquisition process is being redesigned to follow current real estate transaction standards and improve efficiency for SWCD and BWSR staff.

The new process has been coined “**RIM Refresh**” and is being piloted for all RIM Drinking Water applications as well as RIM Wetlands + Peatlands applications funded in 2026. See [RIM Refresh Easement Acquisition Flowchart](#) for a step-by-step overview. BWSR will refine the process and roll out for all RIM programs, likely in 2027.

RIM Refresh highlights:

- Title review will be completed earlier to identify red flags and roadblocks up front; BWSR staff will coordinate directly with title company
- Easement boundary will be surveyed and signposts installed by surveyor
- Easement closing and payment process will be streamlined and standardized; title company will disperse payment at recording and liens may be satisfied at closing

BWSR will be holding an online overview of the RIM Refresh process on **January 20, 2026, at 11 AM** and will send out a calendar invite and Teams link to SWCD/LGU partners next week. The Teams call will be recorded and a link made available to all invitees.

Contact Lucy Dahl (lucy.dahl@state.mn.us), Easement Management and Acquisition Supervisor, with questions.

2025 BWSR ACADEMY AWARDS

At the 2025 BWSR Academy RIM-Markable session workshop, Easement section staff started a new tradition of awarding SWCDs for their work on the RIM program. This tradition will continue annually, and award titles may vary! SWCD of the Year will be a travelling trophy that changes hands every year.

In 2025, awards were given for:

- Largest easement of all time: Mahnomen SWCD (2008 – 1,240 acres)
- Largest easement of 2025: Todd SWCD (479 acres)
- Fastest easement processed in 2025: Cass SWCD (150 days)
- SWCD with the most easements of all time: Redwood SWCD (643 easements)
- Most easements processed in the last five years: Morrison SWCD (70 easements)
- **SWCD of the Year for most easements processed from start to finish in 2025: Cass SWCD (4 easements)**

**Thanks to all SWCD staff for continuing to work with the
RIM Program and advocate for private lands conservation.
Cheers to another year of working together!**



BWSR EASEMENT STAFF CONTACTS FOR SWCDs

If you have a general question and aren't sure who to ask, send it to the RIM inbox (bwsr.rim@state.mn.us).

Topic	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 and Boundary Issues	Peter Jordet	651-539-2580 peter.jordet@state.mn.us
Easement Compliance and 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
	Continue to submit PIRFs to bwsr.rim@state.mn.us	
Practice Implementation Reimbursement Request (PIRR)	Alan Ritchie	651-539-2562 alan.ritchie@state.mn.us
	Continue to submit PIRRs to bwsr.rim@state.mn.us	
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)	
	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