

## RIM-Peatlands Options

### State and Federal Funds Available for Peatland Restoration

BWSR is seeking opportunities to restore and protect peatlands across public and private lands throughout Minnesota, utilizing both state and federal funds. BWSR received \$9 million in state funding in 2023 to acquire easements “to restore and enhance peatlands and adjacent lands... for the purposes of climate resiliency, adaptation, carbon sequestration, and related benefits.” An additional \$8 million is available through Minnesota’s [Climate-Smart Food Systems](#) (CSFS) grant program, with funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, to protect and restore peatlands.

In addition to the above options, peatland restoration on private land can also be pursued through a **10-year agreement** with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) rather than through a permanent RIM easement. BWSR will work with SWCDs to fund restorations under this program. Restoration agreements with **local governments** and **non-governmental organizations** such as land trusts will also be considered for funding.

### RIM Programs Now Include the Opportunity to Restore Peatlands

Properties with restorable drained and altered wetlands located on peatland soils – known as histosols – are potentially eligible for a conservation easement. BWSR has developed a [Potentially Restorable Peatlands](#) web-based mapping tool to help with preliminary screening.

### Program Eligibility

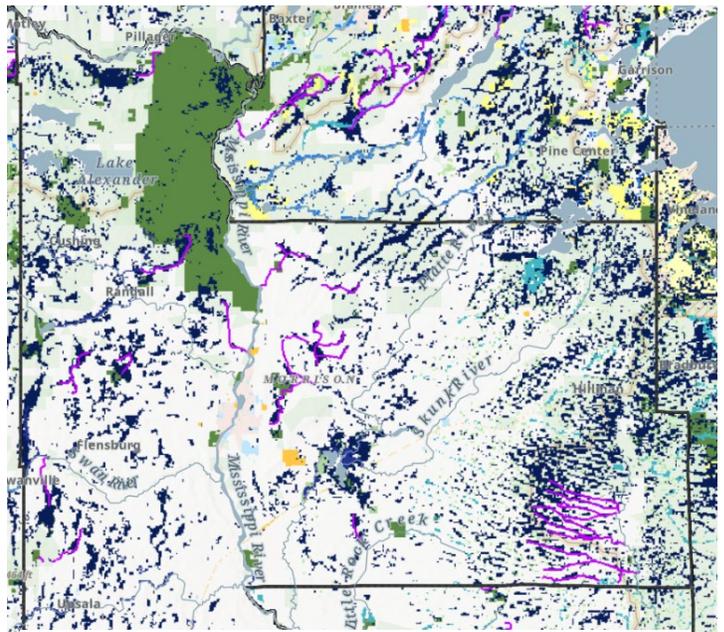
The primary goal of this work is to restore peatland hydrology to a continuously saturated and stable condition. Eligible sites must contain **drained or otherwise altered wetlands** that are determined to be restorable.

- Over **50%** of the proposed restorable wetland area must be located on **histosol soils**.
- Restoration must aim to re-saturate as much of the impacted peat as possible.
- **Not eligible** for this funding: Projects primarily restoring shallow or deep marsh, or open water wetlands with limited fringe areas.

Adjacent **cropped and non-cropped lands** may be included within RIM easement boundaries:

### What is a peatland?

A peatland is a type of carbon-rich wetland dominated by organic soils, built up over time by decaying plant materials in a waterlogged environment. These soils, known as histosols, or peat or muck soils, hold some of Minnesota’s largest carbon reserves, but can emit large quantities of carbon when ditched and drained. Minnesota has the largest peatlands acreage of any state outside Alaska: almost 7 million acres, of which over a million acres are fully or partially drained.



Screenshot of histosols (dark blue) in Morrison County from BWSR’s mapping tool. Public ditches are shown in purple, Camp Ripley and other state lands in green.

- Adjacent cropped uplands that qualify as having eligible cropping history are eligible, with a maximum of four (4) acres for each eligible acre of wetland to be restored (4:1 ratio).
- The enrollment of additional non-cropped lands follows specific RIM program guidance.

**RIM applications for peatland restorations will be accepted on a continuous basis.** Applications may be directed to other RIM programs such as Working Lands or Riparian and Floodplain when more appropriate. BWSR Easement and Engineering staff are available to confirm eligibility before an application is submitted.

### Easement Payment Rates

The RIM payment rate for restoration programs is based on the township average tillable land value. In counties participating in CREP, eligible lands can be enrolled via a CREP easement during announced sign-up periods and would receive the applicable payment rates.

### Restoration Design

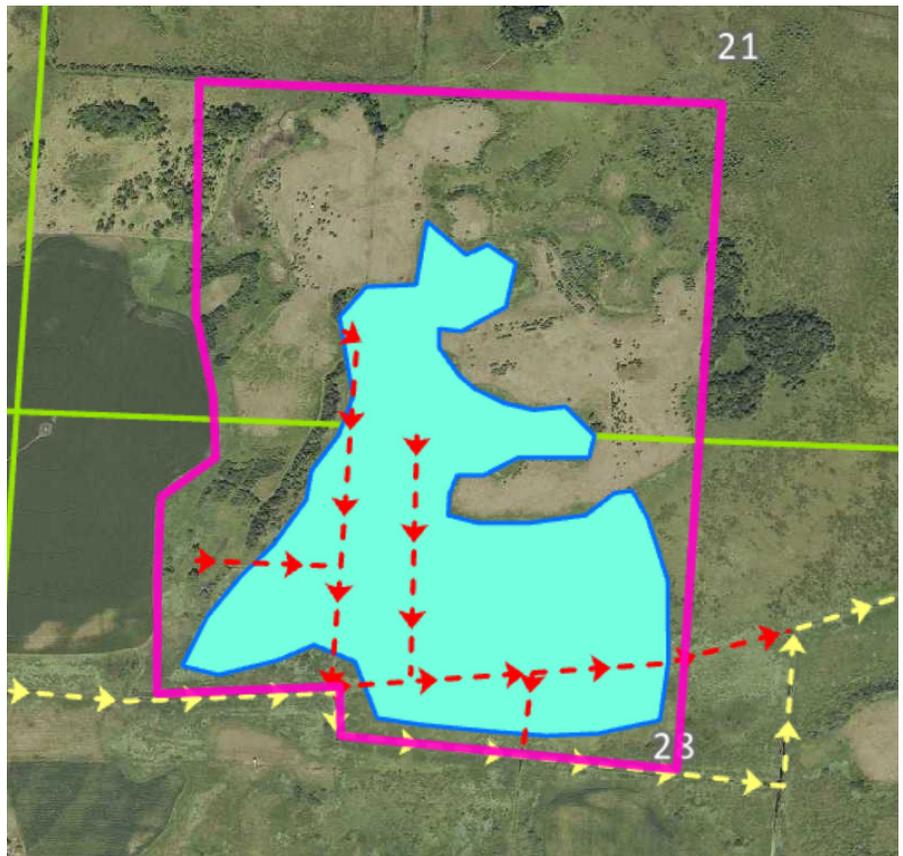
Peatland restorations often involve filling drainage ditches or abandoning tile lines. Many factors need to be considered, including existing hydrology, existing drainage systems, vegetation, and adjacent landownership.

**BWSR Easement and Engineering staff are available to assist with site assessments.**

### Utilization Options

Periodic and controlled haying and grazing is available on RIM easements through a three-year agreement. See <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/grassland-management-haying-and-grazing> for details. Water levels in restored peatlands may, of course, limit the feasibility of these practices. The primary goal of haying and grazing on peatland easements will be for vegetation management.

*A typical peatland restoration in Otter Tail County. Drained peatland (blue) to be restored by filling private ditches (red). Public drainage system (yellow) remains functional. Easement boundary shown in pink.*



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