

# **Final Report: RIM Reserve Program**

**TO:**

**Senate Capital Investment Committee  
Senate Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Budget Division  
House Capital Investment Finance Division  
House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division**



**February 1, 2009**

**Posted at: [www.bwsr.state.mn.us/easements](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/easements)**

## **RIM/WRP Partnership and Program Development**

The 2008 Minnesota State Legislature appropriated \$25 million in new Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve funds in the 2008 Capital Investment Bonding Bill (Chapter 179, 2008 Session Law) which Governor Tim Pawlenty signed into law on April 7, 2008 (see attached appropriation language).

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) provided legislative testimony along with the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), indicating the projected leveraging of federal Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) with State RIM Reserve program funding to restore wetlands via a local-state-federal partnership. Wetland restoration of previously drained areas provides multiple conservation benefits including wildlife and native plant habitat, water quality improvement, flooding prevention and carbon sequestration.

The 2008 Federal, Food, Conservation and Energy Act (2008 Federal Farm Bill) was passed by Congress in May 2008 reauthorizing the new WRP with \$75 million available nationwide through the remainder of fiscal year 2008 (ending September 30, 2008). These funds are held in Washington and allocated to states on a first-come-first-serve basis after a landowner signs an Option Agreement to Purchase (OTP). Minnesota NRCS determined that signed OTPs needed to be to NRCS National Headquarters by September 1, 2008 to receive WRP funds for Minnesota's RIM/WRP Partnership.

The BWSR authorized staff to work in partnership with NRCS to develop sign-up procedures and supporting materials for Phase I (federal fiscal year 2008) of the RIM/WRP partnership. In June, the BWSR authorized Phase I of the RIM/WRP partnership to begin on June 26, 2008 and run through September 30, 2008 (see attached Board Resolution #08-65). The board established competitive payment rates for this partnership using township estimated market value averages. Rates were to be calculated using the township mean for tillable property value established by county assessors for the 2009 tax year. Attached is the news release announcing the premier wetland restoration partnership in the nation to the public and potential landowners statewide.

The RIM/WRP partnership combines a 30-year federal WRP easement with a state perpetual RIM Reserve conservation easement. Landowners selected for funding and who agree to enroll in both easement programs receive a payment for the 30-year WRP easement and a payment for the state for their perpetual RIM Reserve easement. In addition, NRCS will be paying for 75% of the conservation practice costs. BWSR will pay the remainder of the conservation practice costs, not to exceed RIM program maximums and/or actual costs. BWSR estimates that the RIM/WRP partnership will leverage \$1.4 federal dollars for every \$1 of state funds.

## **Program Implementation**

The enrollment period for this new wetland restoration partnership was June 26 through July 18, 2008. Landowners were able to sign up for the RIM/WRP partnership at local NRCS or Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) offices across the state. All eligible applications were scored using the Minnesota Wetlands Easement Evaluation Worksheet approved by NRCS State Technical Committee with technical assistance from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, MN DNR, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, BWSR and others. It provides a higher score for

those applications that restore the most wetlands and uplands in priority migratory species habitat areas of the state and in areas of the state that have had a large amount of their wetlands drained or altered (see RIM/WRP Partnership I map).

During this three week sign-up period for the RIM/WRP partnership 265 applications were received statewide totaling 24,932 acres for approximately \$70 million of demand. Eligible applications were sorted by legislatively mandated geographic priority areas (see RIM/WRP total application map).

NRCS and BWSR program staff along with a sub-committee of the BWSR board ranked the project applications based on their legislatively established geographic priority and their scored as determined from the wetland easement evaluation worksheet. A total of 119 RIM/WRP applications from landowners were selected, including eight from the Cedar/Turtle Creek Watershed; 24 from the Red River Watershed, and 86 from the statewide category totaling 13,236.50 acres (see Table 1a). Ninety-eight selected landowners signed and returned their OTPs to Minnesota NRCS and were submitted to Washington NRCS and were funded for the RIM/WRP partnership (see Selected Projects map and Table 1b). Remarkably, Minnesota's RIM/WRP Wetland Restoration Partnership received \$19 million of the nation's total WRP funds for federal fiscal year 2008.

#### **Technical Assessment and Site Investigations**

Of the 98 applications approved, approximately 55 were identified as needing additional investigation to ensure program eligibility and/or to better define necessary boundaries of the conservation easement. These eligibility issues included such things as easement boundary adjustments, neighboring land issues, wetland to upland ratio requirements and various utility and/or public ditch issues. These 55 sites were surveyed and mapped by BWSR engineering staff this past fall to accurately determine eligibility and easement boundaries. Areas of concern were identified throughout the process of developing a preliminary restoration plan for each of the sites surveyed. As a result of these investigations, easement areas have been better defined to accommodate restoration needs for each of these projects. Investigations have also identified the need to enroll additional lands on neighboring properties to facilitate full restorations of those drained wetland systems. Investigations will continue this spring on all projects to enable design and construction of the wetland restorations enrolled as part of this sign-up.

Acquisition of these easements is currently underway. After determination of technical and site specific issues as described above, legal boundary surveys of each easement area are developed. Ownership is being verified and title work completed to ensure that easements acquired are free and clear of any encumbrances which could interfere with the restoration or jeopardize the state's investment.

## **SE Flood Disaster RIM Reserve**

The BWSR's 2008 bond fund appropriation language directed us to give priority to the area designated for flood relief and recovery from the flooding that occurred in August of 2007 in the area of southeast Minnesota designated under the Presidential Declaration of Major Disaster, DR-1717. To that end, the BWSR has directed \$2.0M from the 2008 appropriation for a RIM Reserve sign-up to acquire perpetual RIM Reserve easements, with willing landowners in Dodge, Fillmore, Houston, Olmsted, Steele, Wabasha and Winona counties.

The intent of the sign-up is to secure easements on lands either damaged by the flood events from August 2007, or will help to reduce the impacts of future flood events. With this in mind the following lands are eligible for this sign-up:

1. both crop and non-crop lands that were damaged,
2. riparian cropland areas within the 100 year floodplain,
3. riparian cropland outside the 100 year floodplain, and
4. wetland restorations.

A county average payment rate for each county has been developed. The payment rate is the same for both crop and non-crop lands for this sign-up. The county rate represents the county average 100% rate for agricultural land, and was derived from a simple average of the assessor's township average market value (ATAMV) amounts for all townships in each county. These are 2008 rates, based on 2007 values that county assessors provided to the MN Department of Revenue. There is also a county wide 70% rate for those landowners who wish to retain their grazing/haying rights on enrolled lands that need more intensive use than that allowed by the recently adopted vegetative management policy.

The sign-up deadline for landowners to make application for this program is February 20, 2009. After that date SWCDs will utilize their local RIM screening committee to rank their applications prior to submitting them to the BWSR by March 13, 2009.

## **Vegetative Management and Enhancement of Conservation Easement Lands**

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) recognized the need to establish a policy and procedure for vegetative management and enhancement of conservation easements. This updated policy includes new legislative responsibilities provided to the BWSR in the 2008 Bonding Bill (Chapter 179, 2008 Session Law) and incorporates historical and new innovative practices into one new policy document. The full policy is attached and/or viewed at <http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/easements/VegMgmtPolicy.pdf>.

The 2008 BWSR bond fund appropriation provided up to \$1.25 M to be used to enhance and restore native prairies on previously secured RIM Reserve conservation easements. This money can be used to convert cool season grass stands to natives, or to enhance and inter-seed additional species into existing native grass plantings. Use of these funds requires adherence to MN Statutes, section 84.02, subdivision 2. This requires an attempt must be made to find local ecotype seed according to the following geographic areas – in sequential order. If a project

cannot go forward due to a lack of local area seed or unreasonable costs the SWCD may approve using seed from the next local geographic area according to the following sequence:

1. The same county or within 25 miles of the county's border but not across an ecotype region boundary.
2. Anywhere within the local ecotype region.
3. Neighboring ecotype region or county.
4. All prairie eco-type regions in Minnesota.
5. Prairie eco-type regions in neighboring states within 25 miles of MN boundary.

Seed source should be verified by the SWCD. Yellow tag certified seed is recommended to aid in the verification of source. Cultivars are discouraged. Projects must have a goal of 25 native species across the entire easement area.

See attached Board Resolution #08-110.

### **Red River Valley Restoration Initiative (RRVRI)**

The BWSR authorized allocation of up to \$3 million to the RIM Reserve Program to establish the Red River Valley Restoration Initiative (RRVRI) to achieve priority river/stream restoration and flood damage reduction. Four projects were brought forward by watershed districts in partnership with Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The Red River Mediation Agreement Work Group (RRMWG) reviewed and made recommendations to the BWSR board that the following four projects be authorized to utilize RRVRI funding thru June 1, 2009.

1. Springbrook Coulee Protection Project, Two Rivers Watershed District located in Kittson County (300 acres)
2. South Branch of the Buffalo River Stream Restoration and Flood Damage Reduction Project, Buffalo Red Watershed District – Wilkin County (800) acres
3. Grand Marais Creek Outlet Restoration, Red Lake River Watershed District – Polk County (490 acres)
4. Lower Wild Rice River Corridor Restoration Initiative, Wild Rice Watershed District – Norman County (a portion of a 1,484 acre project)

On January 28, 2009 BWSR authorized the four projects as recommended. Acquisition will begin in the coming weeks.

See attached Board Resolution #08-111 and Board Resolution #09-08.

## **What's Next**

The Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Federal Farm Bill) has reauthorized and amended the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP).

Currently, Minnesota USDA NRCS has \$8 million of WRP funds on-hand with an additional \$7 million requested for WRP easement acquisition. Presently, interim rules are available for public comment for 60 days. Once NRCS has completed the rule-making process, we will be looking at using any remaining RIM Reserve funds to partner with WRP for our next sign-up of the RIM-WRP partnership. With our remaining 2008 RIM Reserve funding allocation, we will be able to leverage only about \$4.2 of an anticipated \$15 in federal WRP dollars available to Minnesota in 2009.

## **In Summary**

The RIM-WRP Wetland Restoration Partnership is considered the premier wetland restoration program on private lands in the nation. By partnering, we enrolled 9,775 acres of restored wetlands and adjacent grasslands at a cost of approximately \$14.2 million of RIM Reserve and \$19.1 million of WRP funds. Minnesota received almost 20% of the nation's WRP funds in 2008 – the first phase of the RIM/WRP partnership. This success would not have been possible without BWSR's proven and ready delivery system with local SWCDs who are co-located with NRCS and our many conservation partners – Ducks Unlimited Pheasants Forever, Minnesota Waterfowl Association and watershed districts just to name a few.

In addition, the BWSR established and authorized \$3 million of RIM Reserve for a new Red River Valley Restoration Initiative (RRVRI) pilot project in the Red River Watershed. BWSR approved four project areas which will target riparian conservation easements and practices on priority river/stream restorations and flood damage reduction.

The BWSR identified the need and established a policy and procedure for Vegetative Management and Enhancement of Conservation Easements. This policy includes new legislative responsibility as prescribed in the 2008 Bonding Bill (Chapter 179, 2008 Session Law) to allow for restoration, including overseeding and harvesting, of native prairie vegetation for use in energy production as long as it does not devalue the public's investment or the purpose for which the conservation easement was acquired.

The BWSR approved and authorized \$2.1 million for a second SE Flood Disaster RIM Reserve sign-up to acquire conservation easements on flood damaged lands.

Locally led conservation is the most effective and efficient way to connect with landowners who are the ultimate key to our conservation program success. BWSR expects this entire 2008 appropriation to be fully obligated in 2009.

These initiatives provide the basis for our continued success now and into the coming months.



## For Immediate Release

June 25, 2008

Contact: Jon Fure, 651-296-0884

Premier Wetland Restoration Easement Program Signup Available through July 18

### *Local-State-Federal Partnership Offers Competitive Rates for Restoring Previously Drained Wetlands*

St. Paul – Soil and Water Conservation Districts are offering a new wetland restoration program that will pay eligible landowners competitive rates to restore previously drained wetlands. Rates for this local-state-federal partnership are the highest ever for conservation easements, keeping pace with rising crop prices and land values.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) announced the signup period for this local-state-federal wetland restoration program that will enhance wildlife habitat, improve water quality and reduce potential flood damage in targeted areas.

“Record commodity prices and land values might seem to make wetland restorations a tough sell for landowners, but many landowners have already expressed interest in restoring previously drained wetlands, and the competitive payment rates that are available through this partnership make this an attractive option for Minnesota farmers,” said John Jaschke, BWSR Executive Director.

The partnership combines the state’s Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve conservation easement program with the USDA Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). Combining these two easement programs allows state funds to leverage federal funds for conservation that are available through the recently enacted 2008 Federal Farm Bill.

#### **Details of the RIM-WRP Partnership:**

- To leverage federal funds that are available until the end of the federal fiscal year, the RIM-WRP signup period is from June 26 to July 18, 2008.
- Interested landowners should contact their local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) or Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff at their local USDA Service Center.
- Eligibility is statewide, but priority is given to the prairie pothole region of Minnesota. In addition, some state funds are targeted to specific areas where wetland restorations will provide much-needed flood damage reduction and other benefits.
- Competitive payment rates have been established for this partnership using township estimated market value averages. Please contact your local SWCD or NRCS field office to determine your payment rate per acre by township.

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources is the state’s administrative agency for soil and water conservation districts, watershed districts, metropolitan watershed management organizations, and county water managers. The agency’s mission is to improve and protect Minnesota’s water and soil resources by working in partnership with local organizations and private landowners.

- end -

## Sec. 9. **BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES**

### Subdivision 1. Total Appropriation \$30,475,000

To the Board of Water and Soil Resources for the purposes specified in this section.

To the extent possible, prairie restorations, funded in whole or in part with funds from this appropriation, must be made using best management practices for native prairie restoration as defined under Minnesota Statutes, section 84.02, subdivision 2.

Funds previously appropriated and waivers previously authorized to the Board of Water and Soil Resources for DR-1717 flood relief and recovery in Minnesota Laws 2007, First Special Session chapter 2, are available and applicable until June 30, 2010.

### Subd. 2. RIM Conservation Reserve 25,000,000

To acquire conservation easements from landowners to preserve, restore, create, and enhance wetlands, restore and enhance rivers and streams, riparian lands, and associated uplands in order to protect soil and water quality, support fish and wildlife habitat, reduce flood damages, and other public benefits. The provisions of Minnesota Statutes, section 103F.515, apply to this appropriation, except that the board may establish alternative payment rates for easements and practices to establish restored native prairies, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 84.02, subdivision 7, and to protect uplands. Of this appropriation, up to ten percent may be used to implement the program. The board shall give priority to the area designated for relief and recovery from the flooding that occurred on or after August 18, 2007, in the area of Southeast Minnesota designated under Presidential Declaration of Major Disaster, DR-1717. At least \$2,000,000 of this amount is available for use by the Cedar River and Turtle Creek Watershed Districts in Freeborn, Mower, and Steele Counties to restore wetlands and reduce flooding in the Austin area. Up to \$8,000,000 of this amount is available for use in Becker, Clay, Kittson, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, Roseau, and Wilkin counties to restore wetlands and reduce flooding in the Red River Valley area. The board is authorized to enter into new agreements and amend past agreements with landowners as required by Minnesota Statutes, section 103F.515, subdivision 5, to allow for restoration, including overseeding and harvesting, of native prairie vegetation for use for energy production in a manner that does not devalue the natural habitat, water quality benefits, or carbon sequestration functions of the area enrolled in the easement. This shall occur after seed production and minimize impacts on wildlife. Of this appropriation, up to five percent may be used for restoration, including overseeding. The board must submit to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over environment finance and capital investment an interim report on this program by October 1, 2008, and a final report by February 1, 2009.



**Establish Rates and Sign-up Procedures for Reinvest in Minnesota Reserve/Wetlands Reserve Program (RIM/WRP) Partnership Project – Phase I**

**WHEREAS** the MN State Legislature appropriated \$25 million dollars to RIM Reserve in the 2008 bonding bill (Chapter 179, 2008 Session Law) which Governor Pawlenty signed into law on April 7, 2008, and said funding is now available for expenditures as the MN Department of Finance has established the necessary accounts;

**WHEREAS** the 2008 legislative hearings on the bonding bill included testimony, evidence and projections regarding the use of newly appropriated RIM-Reserve funds quickly to leverage available federal farm bill funds and provide economic stimulus benefits to Minnesota's economy;

**WHEREAS** the new RIM Reserve funding is intended to leverage federal WRP (Wetlands Reserve Program) dollars;

**WHEREAS** the recently passed 2008 Federal, Food, Conservation and Energy Act (2008 Federal Farm Bill) reauthorized the WRP with \$75 million available nationwide through the remainder of fiscal year 2008 (ending September 30, 2008);

**WHEREAS** the Board of Water and Soil Resources (Board) RIM Reserve Management Planning Committee met on April 23, May 28 and June 17, 2008 to review and recommend the following provisions to successfully launch Phase I of the RIM/WRP partnership;

**WHEREAS** approximately \$10-15 million dollars of federal WRP funding is expected to be available for MN under the new farm bill for the federal fiscal year 2008 which ends September 30, 2008 and there exists an urgency to get the RIM/WRP partnership launched in order to leverage 2008 federal farm bill funds;

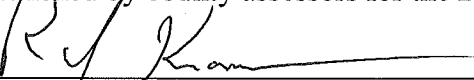
**WHEREAS** the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources authorized staff to work with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to develop sign-up procedures and supporting materials for Phase I (federal fiscal year 2008) of the RIM/WRP partnership;

**WHEREAS** the Board and NRCS staff, in consultation with the University of Minnesota Applied Economics Department, have determined that Estimated Market Value (EMV) is the most consistent and available land value data for determining payment rates;

**WHEREAS** the Minnesota NRCS is expected to adopt a 30-year WRP payment rate, specific to the RIM/WRP Partnership, of 75% of EMV for cropland acres and 50% of EMV for non-cropland acres;

**WHEREAS** a subcommittee shall be appointed by the Chair of the Board of Water and Resources to review the existing scoring worksheet and make project selections in coordination with NRCS;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT**, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources authorizes Phase I of the RIM/WRP partnership to begin on June 26, 2008 and run through September 30, 2008. The total partnership payment rate for cropland acres shall not exceed 140% of EMV and for non-cropland acres shall not exceed 93% EMV. Rates are to be calculated using the township mean for tillable property value established by county assessors for the 2009 tax year.

  
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Randy Kramer, Chair  
Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

\_\_\_\_\_  
6/25/08  
Date

# 2008 RIM Reserve Outcomes: Wetland and Grassland Restoration

The premier private lands wetland restoration easement program in the nation is a partnership of Minnesota's Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve and USDA (NRCS) Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP).

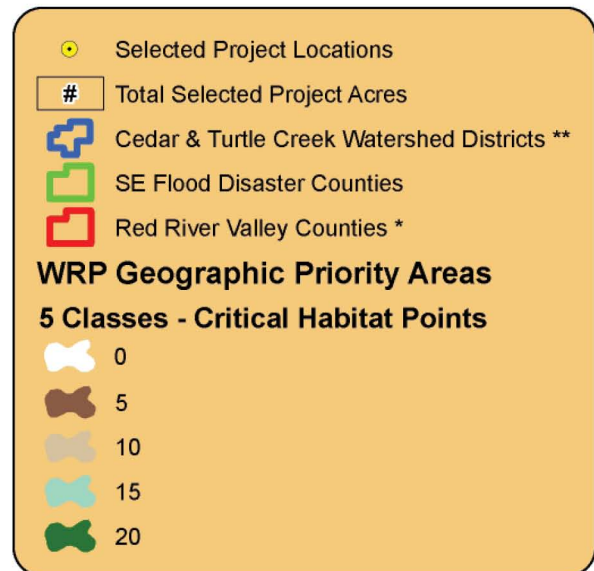
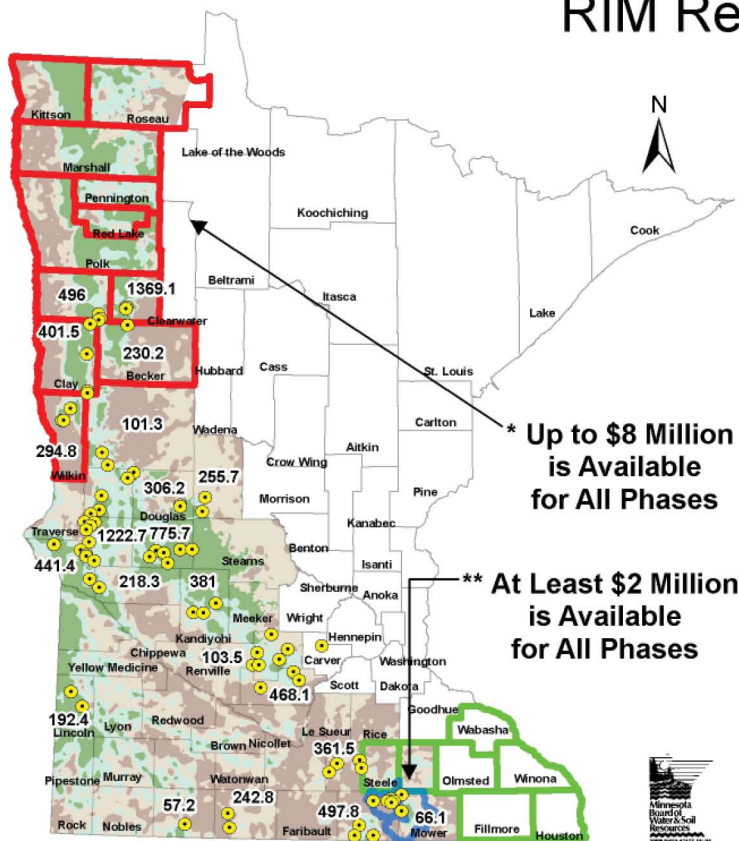
Combining RIM Reserve and WRP allows state funds to leverage Federal Farm Bill conservation dollars. Utilizing both programs results in competitive payment rates to landowners and sharing of restoration costs.

## 2008 RIM/WRP Outcomes:

- \$14.2 million of RIM with \$19.1 million of WRP will restore wetlands and adjacent grasslands on 9,775 acres in 2008.
- Minnesota received almost 20% of the nation's WRP funds in 2008 - the first phase of the RIM-WRP partnership.

## RIM Reserve / WRP Partnership Phase I Funded Projects

There were  
98 Selected Projects  
Totaling 9,775 Acres



October 2008



## Conservation benefits

- Retires environmentally sensitive land
- Protects and improves water quality
- Reduces soil erosion
- Enhances fish and wildlife habitat
- Sequesters carbon
- Biofuel production potential

## Economic benefits

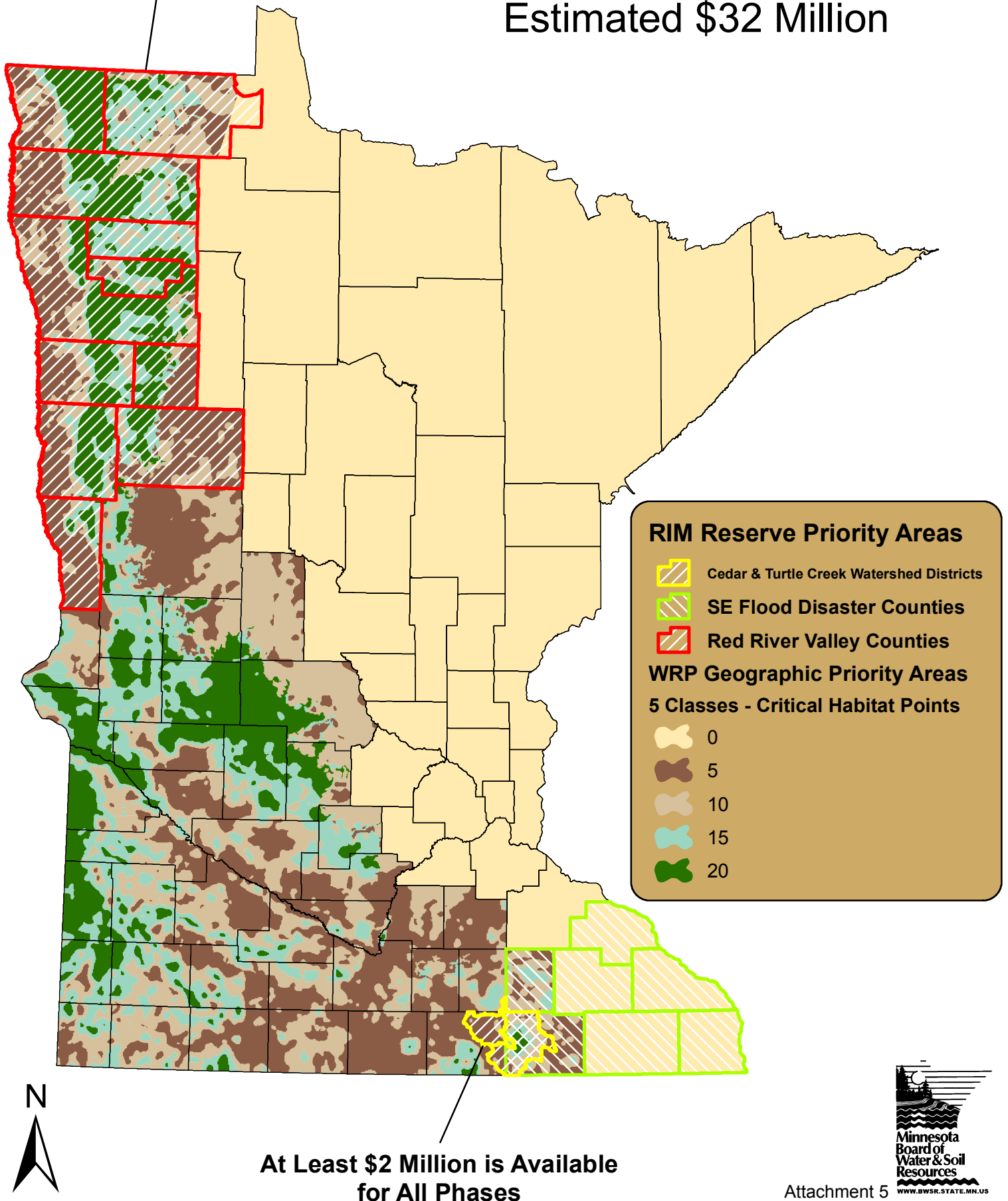
\$35 million in state dollars for wetland restoration projects in 2008 created and/or supported **556 full-time jobs in Minnesota** when coupled with federal funding at a 1.4:1 ratio.

(Source: "Assessing the Economic Impact of WRP on the Minnesota Economy," USDA NRCS, January 2008).

Attachment 4

Up to \$8 Million is Available  
for All Phases

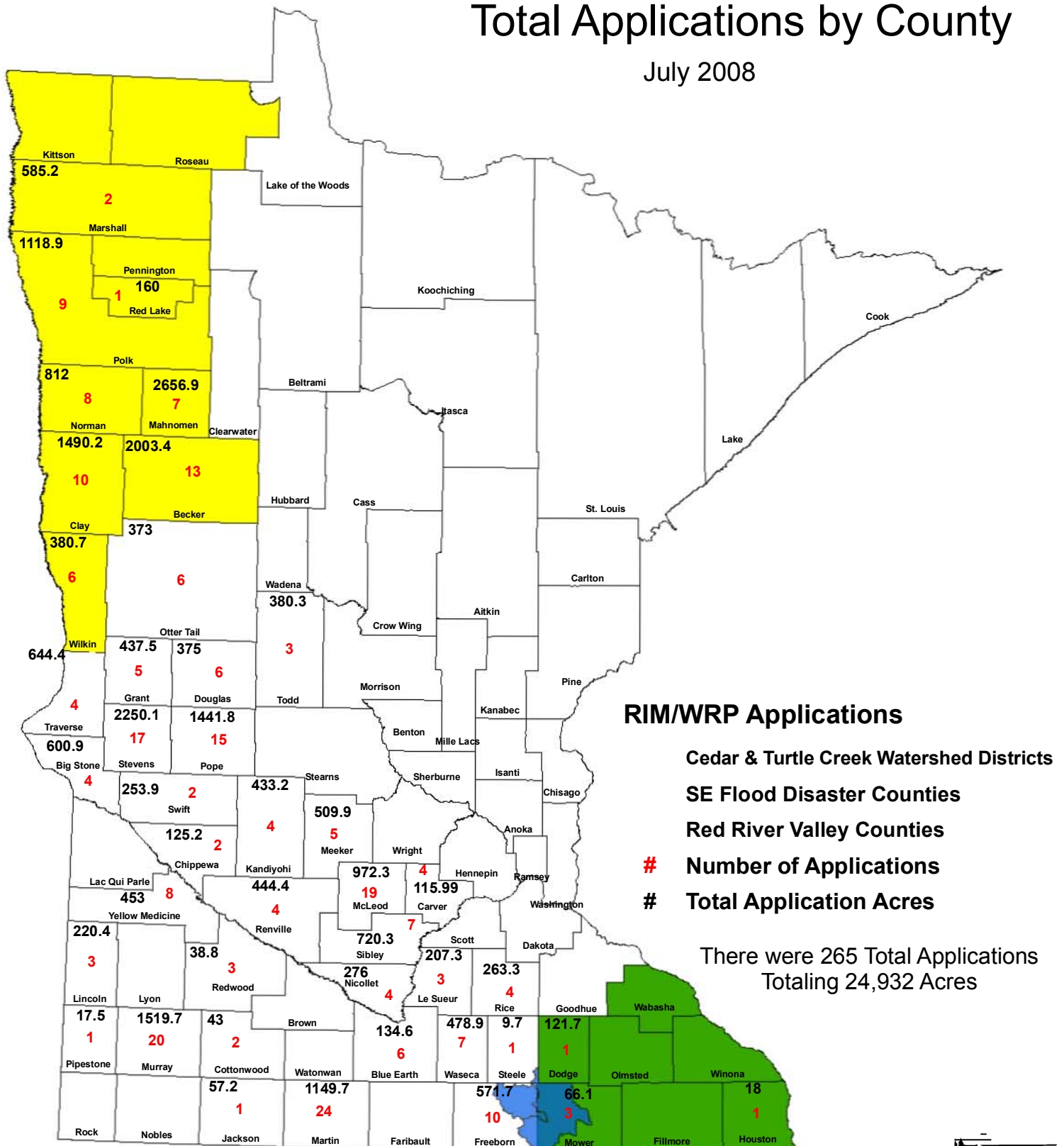
# RIM Reserve / WRP Partnership Phase I Estimated \$32 Million



# RIM Reserve / WRP Partnership Phase I

## Total Applications by County

July 2008

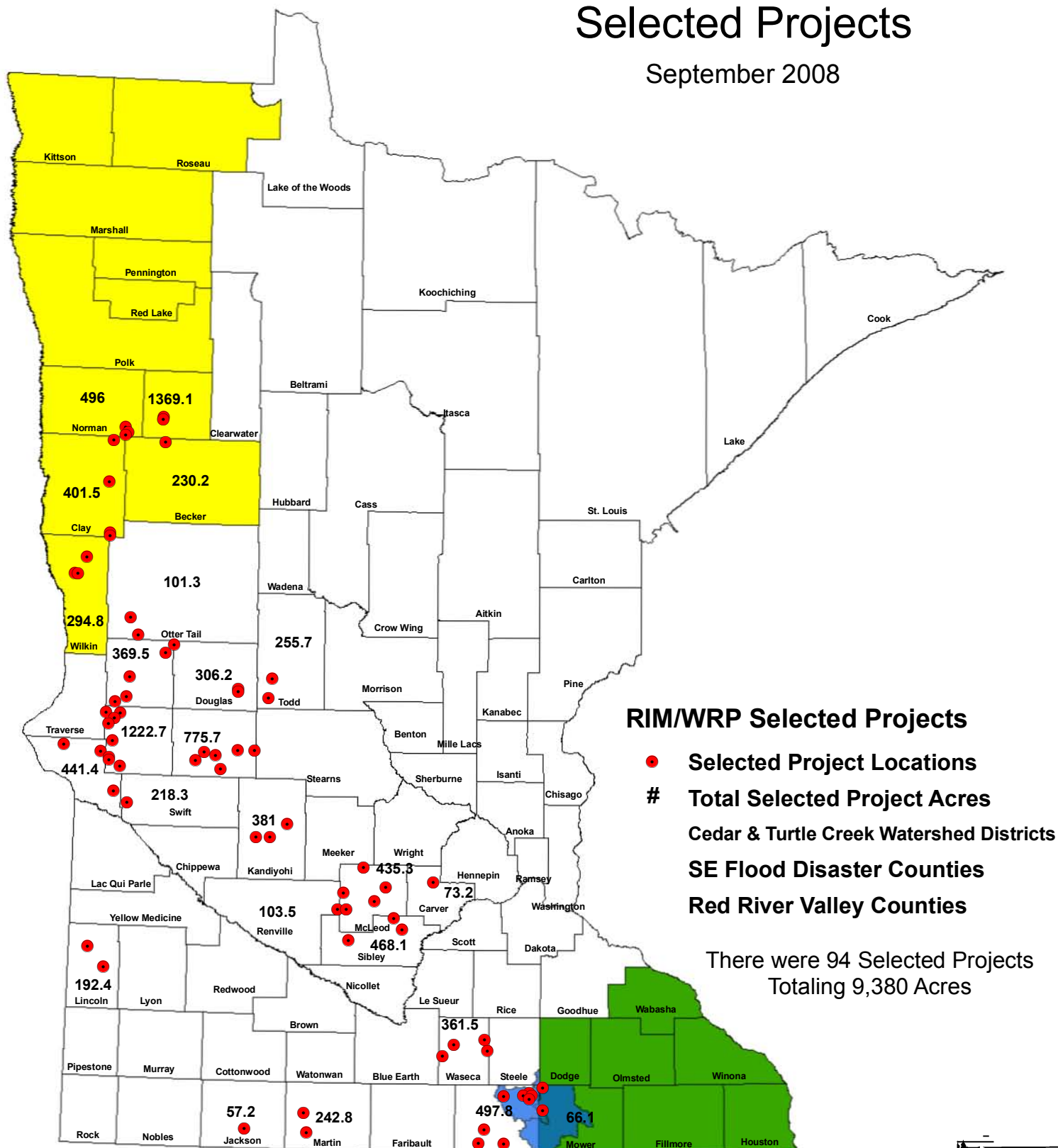


## At Least \$2 Million is Available for All Phases

# RIM Reserve / WRP Partnership Phase I

## Selected Projects

September 2008



## At Least \$2 Million is Available for All Phases

**Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve/Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) Partnership**  
**Table 1a**  
**Phase I Applications Selected For Funding by Minnesota NRCS/BWSR Selection Team**

	<b>No. of Projects</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>RIM \$'s</b>	<b>WRP \$'s</b>	<b>Total \$'s</b>
Cedar/Turtle Creek Watershed:	9 (9)	398	\$670,673	\$880,767	\$1,641,440
Red River Watershed:	24 (38)	4,889	\$3,342,521	\$3,869,153	\$4,211,725
Statewide:	86(190)	7,950	\$11,804,356	\$13,451,853	\$25,456,209
All Project Areas Total:	119(237)	13,237	\$15,907,600	\$18,401,773	\$34,309,374

**( ) Number of eligible applications**



**Table 1b**  
**Phase I: RIM/WRP Projects Funded** (Landowners with Approved OTP's-Washington NRCS)

	<b>No. of Projects</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>RIM \$'s</b>	<b>WRP \$'s</b>	<b>Total \$'s</b>
Cedar/Turtle Creek Watershed:	8	366	\$698,698	\$809,072	\$1,507,761
Red River Watershed:	16	2,792	\$1,741,146	\$2,016,142	\$3,757,288
Statewide:	74	6,618	\$10,284,924	\$11,890,256	\$22,175,180
All Project Areas Total:	98	9,776	\$12,724,768	\$14,715,471	\$27,440,229

**Conservation Practice \$'s (\$600/acre estimate)**

75% Federal / 25% State: \$4,221,135 / \$1,407,045

<b>Total Estimated Dollars</b>	<b>\$14,191,138</b>	<b>\$19,114,581</b>	<b>\$33,305,719</b>
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**RIM Reserve Vegetation Management and Enhancement of Conservation Easement Lands Policy**

**WHEREAS** the MN State Legislature appropriated \$25 million dollars to the RIM Reserve in the 2008 Bonding bill (Chapter 179, 2008 Session law) which governor Pawlenty signed into law on April 7, 2008;


**WHEREAS**, the 2008 MN State Legislature identified that up to \$1.25M be used to expand the BWSR's policies on vegetation management to include energy production activities.

**WHEREAS**, the BWSR recognizes the need to update the August 26, 1998 policy on vegetation management options on conservation easement land to maintain the habitat and environmental quality of the State's investment.

**WHEREAS**, the BWSR has historically provided financial assistance to landowners on a case by case basis as RIM funding has been available to re-establish conservation practices on easement lands.

**WHEREAS**, the BWSR RIM Management Planning Committee has developed a new policy to incorporate historical and new innovative practices into one new policy document.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the Board of Water and Soil Resources approves and adopts the updated and attached Vegetative Management and Enhancement of Conservation Easement Lands policy and authorizes staff to proceed with implementation.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Randy Kramer, Chair  
Board of Water and Soil Resources

Date: 12/17/08

Attachment

Board Resolution # 09-08  
Red River Valley Restoration Initiative (RRVRI)  
Project Area Selection & Approval

WHEREAS December 17, 2008 the Minnesota BWSR authorized the allocation of up to \$3 million of the RIM Reserve Program Bonding bill (Chapter 179, 2008 Session law), beginning December 18, 2008 and ending June 1, 2009;

WHEREAS the Board Resolution #08-111, dated December 17, 2008, outlined the aspects of this pilot RRVRI program to achieve river/stream restorations and flood damage reductions consistent with the Red River Mediation Agreement (RRMA);


WHEREAS all Red River Valley SWCD's and watershed districts were informed of this pilot program aspects and opportunities;

WHEREAS four projects were submitted prior to January 9, 2009 for consideration by the Red River Mediation Work Group (RRMWG);

WHEREAS the RRMWG met January 13, 2009 and prioritized the submitted applications and recommends: the Springbrook Coulee Protect Project, Two Rivers Watershed District; South Branch of the Buffalo River Stream Restoration and Flood Damage Reduction Project, Buffalo Red River Watershed District; and Grand Marais Creek Outlet Restoration, Red Lake Watershed District be fully funded and the Lower Wild Rice River Corridor Restoration Initiative, Wild Rice Watershed District be enabled to utilize the balance of the \$3 million after the first three;

WHEREAS the RIM Reserve Management Planning Committee (RRMPC) met via a conference call on January 16, 2009 to review and comment the RRMWG's recommendation and concurred with those recommendation;

NOW, THEREFORE be it resolved that, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources authorizes the allocation of up to \$3 million in 2008 RIM Reserve funds be used to acquire riparian easements and establish conservation practices on those riparian lands acquired via easements for the following projects in full the Springbrook Coulee Protect Project, Two Rivers Watershed District; South Branch of the Buffalo River Stream Restoration and Flood Damage Reduction Project, Buffalo Red River Watershed District; and Grand Marais Creek Outlet Restoration, Red Lake Watershed District and the Lower Wild Rice River Corridor Restoration Initiative, Wild Rice Watershed District utilize the remaining balance of the \$3 million for this pilot program as recommended by the RRMPC to run thru June 1, 2009.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Randy Kramer, Chair  
Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

1/28/09  
Date