

Date of Report: July 1, 1993
LCMR Final Status Report

I. Conservation Reserve Easements (RIM) - Agriculture 10

Program Manager:
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Programs & Policy Analyst
Board of Water and Soil Resources
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A. ML 1991 Ch. 254, Art. 1, Sec. 14 Subd. 6(d) Appropriation: \$ 600,000.00
Balance; \$ 1,203.69

This appropriation is from the Minnesota environment and natural resources trust fund to the board of water and soil resources to acquire perpetual easements on wetlands and to acquire perpetual easements under Minnesota Statutes, section 103F.515, subdivision 3, with priority for wetland areas, to enhance wildlife habitat, control erosion, and improve water quality.

B. Compatible Data: During the biennium ending June 30, 1993, the data collected by projects funded under this section that have common value for natural resource planning and management must conform to information architecture as defined in guidelines and standards adopted by the Information Policy Office. In addition, the data must be provided to and integrated with the Minnesota Land Management Information Center's geographic data bases with the integration costs borne by the activity receiving funding under this section.

C. Match Requirement: Not applicable.

II. Narrative

A. Over 75% of Minnesota's land is under private ownership. Many acres of land now in agricultural production should never have been converted from wild land due to the natural limitations of the land. The conversion costs to agricultural production represents a considerable landowner investment. Landowner compensation via easement payment has proven to be the most effective method to convert these acres back to wildlife habitat. RIM Reserve provides the mechanism or this conversion to take place. This allocation will enroll and enhance approximately 800 acres.

B. This program is important since it provides the private landowner a viable option to retire land instead of continuing agricultural production on these

marginal and critical areas. Without this program these areas will continue to erode and cause sediment problems, degrade water quality, and limit fish and wildlife habitat.

C. Minnesota has over 2 million acres of marginal cropland, thousands of acres of drained restorable wetlands, thousands of miles of cropped shoreland, sensitive groundwater areas that need protection, and other critical land areas that should no longer be in agricultural production.

III. Objectives

A. Acquisition of Reinvest in Minnesota Conservation Easements

A.1. Narrative: This project will acquire perpetual conservation easements on marginal and critical lands with priority to wetland restorations to enhance fish and wildlife habitat, control erosion and sedimentation, and improve water quality.

A.2. Procedure: The existing implementation process will be used. The BWSR will provide statewide guidance to the 91 local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs). Direction concerning priority setting is also provided at the local level by the local screening committee made up of agency and conservation organization representatives.

A.3 Budget:

- a. Amount budgeted: \$479,000.00
- b. Balance: \$ 1,192.03

A.4 <u>Timeline</u> :	<u>July 91</u>	<u>Jan 92</u>	<u>June 92</u>	<u>Jan 93</u>	<u>June 93</u>
Conduct sign-up	***				
Approve applications	*****				
Finalize easements	*****				
Vegetative cover estab.			***		***
Field spot checks					****
Status reports	*		*	*	*

A.5. Status: Final status report:

The Board has committed (i.e., requisitioned, encumbered, or paid) a total of \$477,809.97 to 23 of the 86 wetland restoration easement projects funded from the August 1991 program application period. This total represents the (a) conservation easement payments (\$349,217.97), and (b) conservation practice costs (\$128,590). The balance of the August 1991 signups were funded from available bonding. Due to a cancellation of one of the originally accepted 86 applications from this appropriation, an easement from the October 1992 application period was selected for funding from this appropriation.

VI. Qualifications:**1. Program Manager:**

David H. Behm

Programs & Policy Analyst

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

It is the mission of the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources to provide leadership in managing policies and programs that encourage all citizens to be stewards of Minnesota's irreplaceable land and water resources. The BWSR has administered the RIM Reserve Program since its inception in 1986. David Behm earned a BS degree in Water Resources from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in 1982 and an MS degree in Resource Management (soils emphasis) from UW-Stevens Point in 1986. He has been employed by the Board since December 1988.

2. Major Cooperators:

SWCD Officials and Staff

Each SWCD designates an employee to administer the program at the local level. This includes landowner contacts, securing applications, on site assessment, local screening committee activities, agreement development, title searches, and vegetative cover certification, and spot checks to determine easement compliance. These employees have a varied educational background. Most have a degree in agricultural or natural resource management.

VII. Reporting Requirements:

Semiannual status reports will be submitted not later than Jan. 1, 1992, July 1, 1992, Jan. 1, 1993, and a final status report by June 30, 1993.

APPENDIX A:

DESCRIPTION OF EASEMENT AREAS

SWCD	EASEMENT NUMBER	LANDOWNER NAME	EASEMENT ACRES	WETLAND ACRES	WETLAND BASINS	EASEMENT \$	VEGETATIVE PRACTICE \$	RESTORATION COSTS
1) Meeker	47-20-91-01	Richard Southworth	13.4	3.0	1.0	\$7,629.69	\$1,740.00	\$900.00
2) Stevens	75-06-91-01	Kermit Stahn	15.1	9.8	1.0	\$7,435.91	NONE	\$2,940.00
3) Wright	86-02-91-01	Alden Sandquist	6.5	1.3	1.0	\$6,857.70	\$390.00	\$390.00
4) Douglas	21-08-91-01	John Gibbons	13.2	5.0	1.0	\$5,092.70	\$820.00	\$1,500.00
5) Norman	54-01-91-01	George Hess	176.3	31.9	1.0	\$86,368.99	\$24,850.00	\$9,570.00
6) Mille Lacs	48-10-91-01	James Lawandowski	15.0	7.5	1.0	\$6,162.21	NONE	\$2,250.00
7) Redwood	64-06-91-01	Lawrence Lightfoot	70.0	33.1	1.0	\$54,025.00	\$6,500.00	\$9,930.00
8) Yellow Medicine	87-09-91-01	Hilton Ims Estate	33.5	26.1	1.0	\$22,785.27	NONE	\$7,830.00
9) Yellow Medicine	87-11-91-01	Gladys Ose	17.8	12.7	(part of above)	\$11,821.25	NONE	\$3,810.00
10) Big Stone	06-02-91-01	Terry Wiese	74.4	36.0	1.0	\$30,568.40	\$2,640.00	\$10,800.00
11) Renville	65-17-91-01	James Dillon	20.0	4.1	1.0	\$21,419.40	\$1,590.00	\$1,230.00
12) Carver	10-06-91-01	Frank Schmelz	7.8	3.1	1.0	\$5,311.78	\$200.00	\$930.00
13) Mille Lacs	48-09-91-01	Elvin Schenefeld	43.0	33.0	1.0	\$9,024.84	NONE	\$9,900.00
14) Mille Lacs	48-14-91-01	Phillip Anderson	43.0	20.0	(part of above)	\$9,705.97	NONE	\$6,000.00
15) Pope	61-17-91-01	Kenneth Reese	36.3	9.9	1.0	\$12,065.62	\$840.00	\$2,970.00
16) Pope	61-05-91-01	Duane Vosberg	39.2	10.9	1.0	\$20,633.89	\$3,840.00	\$3,270.00
17) Lyon	42-02-91-01	Troy Wendland	2.3	1.5	**	\$839.52	NONE	\$450.00
18) Lyon	42-03-91-01	Willis Wendland	1.0	0.5	(part of above)	\$365.01	NONE	\$150.00
19) Washington	82-01-92-01	David Lutz	12.3	5.2	1.0	\$5,287.10	\$0.00	\$0.00
20) Douglas	21-04-91-01	Randolph Peterson	28.8	10.0	2.0	\$10,906.85	\$1,880.00	\$3,000.00
21) Yellow Medicine	87-05-91-01	Thomas Londgren	7.0	7.0	1.0	\$3,950.78	\$150.00	\$2,100.00
22) Benton	05-12-91-01	Glenn Petron	20.1	6.5	1.0	\$7,942.14	\$530.00	\$1,950.00
23) Carver	10-03-91-01	Ortwin Mielke	5.0	2.5	2.0	\$3,017.95	NONE	\$750.00
TOTALS			701.0	280.6	21	\$349,217.97	\$45,970.00	\$82,620.00
TOTAL EASEMENT COST	\$349,217.97							
TOTAL PRACTICE COST	\$128,590.00							

NOTES:

- "Vegetative Practice \$" indicates the costs of the upland vegetative practices which will be established on the easement areas.
- "Restoration Costs" indicates the costs associated with the restoration of the wetland basin(s) on the respective easement areas.
- ** indicates that this wetland restoration project encompasses three easements, two of which were funded by this appropriation and the third easement funded by bonding. This multi-easement project represents one wetland basin.

APPENDIX B:
DESCRIPTION OF UPLAND VEGETATIVE PRACTICES ON EASEMENT AREAS

Location County [Easement#]	Easement Area, Acres ¹	Upland Acres ²	Vegetative Practice ³	Vegetative Practice Acres ⁴	Vegetative Practice Costs ⁵
Meeker [47-20-91-01]	13.4	10.4	Native grasses	7.4 ^a	\$ 940
			Introduced grasses	^b	\$ 200
			Trees/shrubs	2.0	\$ 600
			Food plot	1.0	NONE
Stevens [75-06-91-01]	15.1	5.3	Existing grasses	5.3	N/A
Wright [86-02-91-01]	6.5	5.2	Introduced grasses	3.9	\$ 390
			Existing grasses	1.3	N/A
Douglas [21-08-91-01]	13.2	8.2	Introduced grasses	8.2	\$ 820
Norman [54-01-91-01]	176.3	144.4	Native grasses	80.5 ^c	\$12,250
			Trees/shrubs	42.0	\$12,600
			Food plot	3.0	NONE
			Natural woods	18.9	N/A
Mille Lacs [48-10-91-01]	15.0	7.5	Existing grasses	5.0	N/A
			Natural woods	2.5	N/A
Redwood [64-06-91-01]	70.0	36.9	Native grasses	36.9 ^d	\$ 6,500
Yellow Medicine [87-09-91-01] [87-11-91-01]	51.3	12.5	Existing grasses	12.5	N/A
Big Stone [06-02-91-01]	74.4	38.4	Native grasses	26.4	\$ 2,640
			Food plot	3.0	NONE
			Existing grasses	9.0	N/A
Renville [65-17-91-01]	20.0	15.9	Native grasses	15.9	\$ 1,590
Carver [10-06-91-01]	7.8	4.7	Native grasses	2.0	\$ 200
			Existing grasses	2.7	N/A
Mille Lacs [48-09-91-01] [48-14-91-01]	86.0	33.0	Existing grasses	29.0	N/A
			Natural woods	4.0	N/A
Pope [61-17-91-01]	36.3	26.4	Native grasses	8.4	\$ 840
			Food plot	1.3	NONE
			Existing grasses	16.7	N/A
Pope [61-05-91-01]	39.2	28.3	Introduced grasses	22.4 ^e	\$ 2,640
			Trees/shrubs	4.0	\$ 1,200
			Natural wetland	1.9	N/A
Lyon [42-02-91-01] [42-03-91-01]	3.3	1.3	Existing grasses	1.3	N/A
Washington [82-01-92-01]	12.3	7.1	Introduced grasses	^f	\$ 280
			Trees/shrubs	2.8	\$ 840
			Existing grasses	4.3	N/A
Douglas [21-04-91-01]	28.8	18.8	Introduced grasses	8.8 ^g	\$ 1,880
			Existing grasses	10.0	N/A
Yellow Medicine [87-05-91-01]	7.0	0.0	Trees/shrubs	^h	\$ 150
Benton [05-12-91-01]	20.1	13.6	Introduced grasses	5.3	\$ 530
			Existing grasses	1.8	N/A
			Natural woods	6.5	N/A
Carver [10-03-91-01]	5.0	2.5	Existing grasses	2.5	N/A

NOTES:

- 1
- The acreage indicated represents the total acreage of the easement(s) identified in the first column. Where more than one easement is listed, this represents a multi-owner restoration project requiring more than one conservation easement.
- 2
- "N/A" means not applicable.
- 3
- 9.4 total acres to be seeded including 2.0 acres of wetland species within the wetland restoration area.
- 4
- 2.0 acres to be seeded within the trees/shrubs area.
- 5
- 122.5 total acres to be seeded including 42.0 acres within the trees/shrubs area.
- 6
- 65.0 total acres to be seeded including 33.1 acres of wetland species within the wetland restoration area.
- 7
- 26.4 total acres to be seeded including 4.0 acres within the trees/shrubs area.
- 8
- 2.8 acres to be seeded within the trees/shrubs area.
- 9
- 18.8 total acres to be seeded including 10.0 acres of wetland species within the wetland restoration area.
- 10
- 0.5 acres of wetland species to be seeded within the wetland restoration area.

1991 LCMR PROJECT ABSTRACT (FOR THE PERIOD ENDING JUNE 30,1993)

Funding for this project approved by the Minnesota Legislature (ML 1991, Chapter 254, Art. 1, Sec. 14, Subd. 6(d)) as recommended by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources from the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.

TITLE: Conservation Reserve Easements (RIM)- Agriculture 10
PROGRAM MANAGER: David H. Behm
ORGANIZATION: Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
LEGAL CITATION: M.L. 1991, Chapter 254, Art. 1, Sec. 14, Subd. 6(d)
APPROPRIATION AMOUNT: \$600,000

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

With this appropriation, the Board accelerated RIM Reserve wetland restoration and easement acquisition activities and also continued the employment of its unclassified Easement Programs Coordinator (formerly known as the RIM Reserve Program Coordinator position). This appropriation helped the Board to accelerate wetland restoration activities within the Minnesota River watershed because it had designated that half of the acres enrolled in RIM Reserve must be from within the watershed, its designated priority area for fiscal year 1993.

OVERALL PROJECT RESULTS

Twenty-three perpetual conservation easements were enrolled in RIM Reserve with this appropriation to provide permanent protection to 280.6 acres of restored wetlands and 420.4 acres of adjacent enhanced uplands. The enrolled acreage represents 22 restored wetland basins and nearly all of the easement areas are located within the prairie pothole region of Minnesota. Consequently, this cumulative acreage reflects a net gain in critically important waterfowl production habitat. This habitat achievement is further enhanced by the fact that 371.4 acres enrolled are within the Minnesota River watershed.

PROJECT RESULTS USE AND DISSEMINATION

Due to the success of these accelerated wetland restoration activities, the Board is pursuing opportunities to leverage further easement acquisition and practice establishment funds from the North American Wetland Conservation Act within the Minnesota River watershed.

As a result of another 1991 LCMR work program ("Easement Acquisition on Restored Wetlands"), the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) approved a statewide policy in August 1992 allowing CRP contract holders whose contract lands contained a federally restored wetland to modify or cancel their CRP contracts without repayment or penalties if the lands were enrolled under perpetual conservation easements into the RIM Reserve Program. ASCS' approval of this policy will now enable landowners to easily modify their existing CRP contracts to enroll, in whole or part, their contract lands in RIM Reserve as part of their wetland restoration easement area, without the landowner being penalized or having to repay ASCS for past contract payments. This policy will now provide opportunities that otherwise would have been stymied until the CRP contracts had expired. This landmark policy was consequently broadened in scope in October 1992 to allow any CRP contract holders to cancel their contracts without repayment or penalty, as long as the contract lands are then enrolled into RIM Reserve Program under a perpetual conservation easement. The broadened policy will now greatly benefit the RIM Reserve Program as a whole, not just limit its applicability to wetland restoration projects and acquisitions. This ASCS policy is unique to Minnesota and provides landowners with an important and timely land management option, especially since most of Minnesota's CRP contract acreage will be expiring within four years and there appears to be ever increasing indications that CRP will not be extended and perhaps not continued.