



Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

RIM Wetlands - Phase IX Laws of Minnesota 2018 Final Report

General Information

Date: 08/18/2026

Project Title: RIM Wetlands - Phase IX

Funds Recommended: \$10,000,000

Legislative Citation: ML 2018, Ch. 208, Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd 4(c)

Appropriation Language: \$10,000,000 the second year is to the Board of Water and Soil Resources to acquire permanent conservation easements and to restore wetlands and native grassland habitat under Minnesota Statutes, section 103F.515. Of this amount, up to \$292,500 is for establishing a monitoring and enforcement fund as approved in the accomplishment plan and subject to Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 17. A list of permanent conservation easements must be provided as part of the final report.

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Sharon Doucette

Title: Easement Section Manager

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Location Information

County Location(s): Renville, Freeborn, Lyon, Martin, Brown, Jackson, McLeod, Meeker, Mower, Stearns, Wright, Redwood and Todd.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Forest / Prairie Transition

Prairie

Metro / Urban

Southeast Forest

Activity types:

Protect in Easement

Restore

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Wetlands

Prairie

Narrative

Summary of Accomplishments

Under the CREP partnership with USDA, 28 easements were recorded on a total of 2,390 acres to restore previously drained wetlands and adjacent uplands. Two easements are RIM wetland easements that were required to complete wetland restoration work on an adjacent easement secured with 2018 Wetlands funding. The landowners received the RIM-Only payment rate. The easements were accomplished with local implementation done by SWCD, NRCS and FSA staff within the 54 county CREP area and leveraged federal funds for landowner payments and conservation practices.

Process & Methods

The sites enrolled were generally drained and farmed wetlands and associated upland habitat. These sites originally offered limited ecological benefits. Through a combination of a scoring and ranking process and eligibility screening, each application was evaluated, with the applications that provided the greatest habitat and environmental benefits after restoration and protection being selected for funding. RIM Wetlands Phase 9 protected and restored wetlands and adjacent upland area to prairie using the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). The project area consisted of the 54 counties within the CREP area with 2,390 acres of permanently protected and restored wetlands and uplands on 28 easements. Note that one easement (32-11-19-01) listed on the parcel list was split into 2 easements as a result of an ownership split but is still reported as 1 easement in the parcel list; accounting for the difference of one easement in the text compared to the parcel list. These acres provide a healthy and plentiful supply of habitat for fish, game, and wildlife, especially for waterfowl and upland birds. CREP utilizes both a 15-year CRP contract and a permanent RIM easement.

RIM Wetlands Phase 9 was a local-state-federal partnership delivered locally by Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and BWSR. In addition, the CREP partnership is possible through collaboration among many local, state and federal partners including the USDA-Farm Service Agency (FSA), USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Pheasants Forever (PF), the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), and over 70 supporting organizations and agencies. BWSR staff coordinated with federal partners on the overall CREP process and program oversight. In addition, BWSR staff were responsible for the easement acquisition process. Local staff promote CRP contracts and RIM easements, assist with easement processing and provide key essential technical assistance and project management services.

Some highlights of the easements funded through this project include:

The largest easement funded in this project, 65-07-19-01 in Renville County, included 8 wetland basins on almost 94 acres and almost 150 acres of upland. Easement 47-14-18-01 in Meeker County, was a total of 92 acres, almost 20 of which were included in the easement with no easement payment (donated acres). Two easement in Stearns County, 73-01-18-01 and 73-02-18-01 are adjacent to each other and owned by the same family. The total easement was almost 195 acres, and is across the road from part of the Stearns County Waterfowl Production Area.

The payment rates were consistent throughout this appropriation but CRP annual rental rates fluctuated, so the state's contribution to the overall easement cost varied in reaction to the CRP rate.

How did the program address habitats of significant value for wildlife species of greatest conservation need, threatened or endangered species, and/or list targeted species?

An expansion of wetland and prairie habitat through this program alleviates pressure on those species that are most sensitive to habitat changes occurring on the landscape. The project targeted wetlands and prairies, two of the three most important habitats used by the Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). Of the nearly 1200 known wildlife species in Minnesota, 292 species, or approximately one-fourth, are at risk because they are rare; their populations are declining due to loss of habitat. SGCN in the RIM Wetlands area include the Five-lined Skink, Blanding's Turtle, Two-spotted Skipper, Northern Pintail, American Black Duck, Grasshopper Sparrow, Upland Sandpiper, Sedge Wren, Dickcissel, and Western Grebe. In addition to the SGCN, the threatened or endangered species include the Dakota Skipper and Poweshiek Skipperling.

Diverse vegetation, access to water resources, and protection from pesticides are important to Minnesota's native pollinator species. BWSR's native vegetation guidelines and pollinator initiative protect native pollinators.

Complexes and corridors targeted through RIM Wetlands provide areas that are safe from pesticides and natural passageways for pollinators. Targeted pollinator species include the Monarch Butterfly and bee species.

Prairie wetlands are important for migratory waterfowl. The Prairie Pothole region contains only about 10% of the waterfowl nesting habitat on the continent but it produces 70% of all North American waterfowl. The loss of Minnesota's prairie and wetland habitat in the prairie pothole region has led to the decline of many wildlife and plant species. RIM Wetlands has protected and restored this habitat over many years and continues to do this important work using CREP.

How did the program use science-based targeting that leveraged or expanded corridors and complexes, reduced fragmentation, or protected areas in the MN County Biological Survey.

Through a combination of targeted outreach, a scoring and ranking process, and eligibility screening, RIM Wetlands evaluated each application on its potential to restore wetland/upland functions and values (optimize wildlife habitat benefits) and to provide other benefits including water quality. Each site's benefit to the surrounding landscape, ability to build upon existing corridors and complexes, and site-specific features were evaluated. During the application process, a review of adjacent permanent habitat and easement size was conducted to indicate a site's usefulness as a corridor or extension to an existing habitat complex. Other examples of the science-based targeting used include evaluation of the proximity to T&E Species, contributing watershed area, proximity of drainage to DNR Protected Waters, and the USFWS Habitat and Population Evaluation Team (HAPET)-developed GIS Wildlife Habitat Potential Model for environmental evaluation. The HAPET model is a consolidation of models representing an array of migratory birds that use the Minnesota Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) for breeding or migration.

Explain Partners, Supporters, & Opposition

RIM Wetlands is a local-state-federal partnership delivered locally by Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and BWSR. The CREP partnership is possible through collaboration among many local, state and federal partners including the USDA-Farm Service Agency (FSA), USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Pheasants Forever (PF), the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), and over 70 supporting organizations and agencies.

Exceptional challenges, expectations, failures, opportunities, or unique aspects of program

The Council approved the following amendment changes at the October 7, 2021 Council meeting:

- reduced acres from 3,920 to 2,400
- reduced # of easements from 45 to 27
- reduced federal leverage from \$23.6 million to \$10 million
- decreased personnel, contracts and stewardship in line with the revised number of easements
- increased easement acquisition dollars by almost \$1 million

What is the plan to sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended?

BWSR is responsible for maintenance, inspection and monitoring of RIM easements. BWSR partners with local SWCDs to carry out oversight, monitoring and inspection of its easements. Easements are inspected each of the the first five years beginning the year after the easement is recorded. Thereafter, on-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years. SWCDs document findings of each site inspection conducted and report to BWSR . A non-compliance procedure is implemented when problems or potential violations are identified. Perpetual monitoring and stewardship costs were calculated at \$6,500 per easement at the time this accomplishment plan was approved and funded. This value was based on using local SWCD staff for monitoring and landowner communication and existing enforcement authorities. The amount listed for Easement Stewardship cover costs of the SWCD regular monitoring, BWSR oversight and future enforcement if necessary.

Budget

Totals

Item	Requested	AP Amount	Spent	Leverage	Received Leverage	Leverage Source	Original Total	Final Total
Personnel	\$734,800	\$550,000	\$549,900	-	-	-	\$734,800	\$549,900
Contracts	\$468,000	\$106,700	\$90,000	-	-	-	\$468,000	\$90,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	\$8,344,600	\$9,007,700	\$8,925,300	\$23,622,300	\$10,746,400	USDA-FSA-CRP	\$31,966,900	\$19,671,700
Easement Stewardship	\$292,500	\$175,500	\$175,500	-	-	-	\$292,500	\$175,500
Travel	\$17,500	\$17,500	\$6,200	-	-	-	\$17,500	\$6,200
Professional Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	\$110,100	\$110,100	\$41,900	-	-	-	\$110,100	\$41,900
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$1,800	-	-	-	\$25,000	\$1,800
Supplies/Materials	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$1,700	-	-	-	\$7,500	\$1,700
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$9,792,300	\$23,622,300	\$10,746,400	-	\$33,622,300	\$20,538,700

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Amount Spent	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Program Management	0.25	5.0	\$84,300	-	-	\$84,300
Easement Processing	0.58	3.0	\$125,200	-	-	\$125,200
Engineering/Eco Services	1.59	3.0	\$340,400	-	-	\$340,400

Direct Support Services

How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program?

BWSR calculates direct support services costs that are directly related to and necessary for each request based on the type of work being done.

Explain any budget challenges or successes:

The federal match is likely more than reported. The total leverage listed includes all CRP payments but practice payments may not be fully paid yet via FSA nor do SWCDs always receive accurate practice payment information. If the acquisition line excluded title and practice payment, the federal to state match for CRP vs easement payment to the landowner was approximately 1.3:1.

Total Revenue: \$0

Revenue Spent: \$0

Revenue Balance: \$0

Of the money disclosed above, what are the appropriate uses of the money:

E. This is not applicable as there was no revenue generated.

What other dedicated funds may collaborate with or contribute to this program?

Clean Water Fund

Environment and Natural Resource Trust Fund

Other : Bonding and federal funds

How were the funds used to advance the program?

CWF, ENRTF and bonding dollars were all used to support CREP wetland restoration projects within the 54 county CREP area. In addition, federal funds were provided to landowners in the form of annual CRP payments, incentive payments, and cost share for practice installation per the CREP agreement.

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland (AP)	Wetland (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	Forest (AP)	Forest (Final)	Habitat (AP)	Habitat (Final)	Total Acres (AP)	Total Acres (Amend)	Total Acres (Final)
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	1,333	797	2,587	1,593	0	0	0	0	3,920	2,400	2,390
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1,333	797	2,587	1,593	0	0	0	0	3,920	2,400	2,390

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland (AP)	Wetland (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	Forest (AP)	Forest (Final)	Habitat (AP)	Habitat (Final)	Total Funding (AP)	Total Funding (Final)
Restore	\$879,400	-	\$1,707,200	-	-	-	-	-	\$2,586,600	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	\$2,520,600	\$3,264,100	\$4,892,800	\$6,528,200	-	-	-	-	\$7,413,400	\$9,792,300
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$3,400,000	\$3,264,100	\$6,600,000	\$6,528,200	-	-	-	-	\$10,000,000	\$9,792,300

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro / Urban (AP)	Metro / Urban (Final)	Forest / Prairie (AP)	Forest / Prairie (Final)	SE Forest (AP)	SE Forest (Final)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	N. Forest (AP)	N. Forest (Final)	Total (AP)	Total (Amend)	Total (Final)
Restore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Protect in Easement	196	65	392	208	196	0	3,136	2,117	0	0	3,920	2,400	2,390
Enhance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	196	65	392	208	196	0	3,136	2,117	0	0	3,920	2,400	2,390

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/ Urban (AP)	Metro/ Urban (Final)	Forest / Prairie (AP)	Forest / Prairie (Final)	SE Forest (AP)	SE Fore st (Fina l)	Prairie (AP)	Prairie (Final)	N. Fore st (AP)	N. Fore st (Fina l)	Total (AP)	Total (Final)
Restore	\$129,300	-	\$258,700	-	\$129,300	-	\$2,069,300	-	-	-	\$2,586,600	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	\$370,700	\$266,300	\$741,300	\$852,200	\$370,700	-	\$5,930,700	\$8,673,800	-	-	\$7,413,400	\$9,792,300
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$500,000	\$266,300	\$1,000,000	\$852,200	\$500,000	-	\$8,000,000	\$8,673,800	-	-	\$10,000,000	\$9,792,300

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

Explain the success/shortage of acre goals

We successfully met the amended acreage goal.

Outcomes

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

Improved aquatic habitat indicators ~ *Scoring and ranking was used to prioritize sites to achieve maximum environmental benefits. This included prioritizing sites that best served as wildlife corridors/complexes and provided the highest-quality migratory waterfowl and upland bird habitat. We expect healthier populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species with these complexes restored. Areas with expiring CRP contracts were also prioritized, removing the threat of conversion. The increased storage of restored wetlands reduces flood potential and improves aquatic habitat. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure outcomes are maintained.*

Wetland and upland complexes will consist of native prairies, restored prairies, quality grasslands, and restored shallow lakes and wetlands ~ *Scoring and ranking was used to prioritize sites to achieve maximum environmental benefits. This included prioritizing sites that best served as wildlife corridors/complexes and provided the highest-quality migratory waterfowl and upland bird habitat. We expect healthier populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species with these complexes restored. Areas with expiring CRP contracts were also prioritized, removing the threat of conversion. The increased storage of restored wetlands reduces flood potential and improves aquatic habitat. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure outcomes are maintained.*

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

Core areas protected with highly biologically diverse wetlands and plant communities, including native prairie, Big Woods, and oak savanna ~ *Scoring and ranking was used to prioritize sites to achieve maximum environmental benefits. This included prioritizing sites that best served as wildlife corridors/complexes and provided the highest-quality migratory waterfowl and upland bird habitat. We expect healthier populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species with these complexes restored. Areas with expiring CRP contracts were also prioritized, removing the threat of conversion. The increased storage of restored wetlands reduces flood potential and improves aquatic habitat. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure outcomes are maintained.*

Programs in prairie region:

Protected, restored, and enhanced shallow lakes and wetlands ~ *Scoring and ranking was used to prioritize sites to achieve maximum environmental benefits. This included prioritizing sites that best served as wildlife corridors/complexes and provided the highest-quality migratory waterfowl and upland bird habitat. We expect healthier populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species with these complexes restored. Areas with expiring CRP contracts were also prioritized, removing the threat of conversion. The increased storage of restored wetlands reduces flood potential and improves aquatic habitat. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure outcomes are maintained.*

Programs in southeast forest region:

Stream to bluff habitat restoration and enhancement will keep water on the land to slow runoff and degradation of aquatic habitat ~ *No easements were obtained in the SE Forest with this funding.*

Parcels

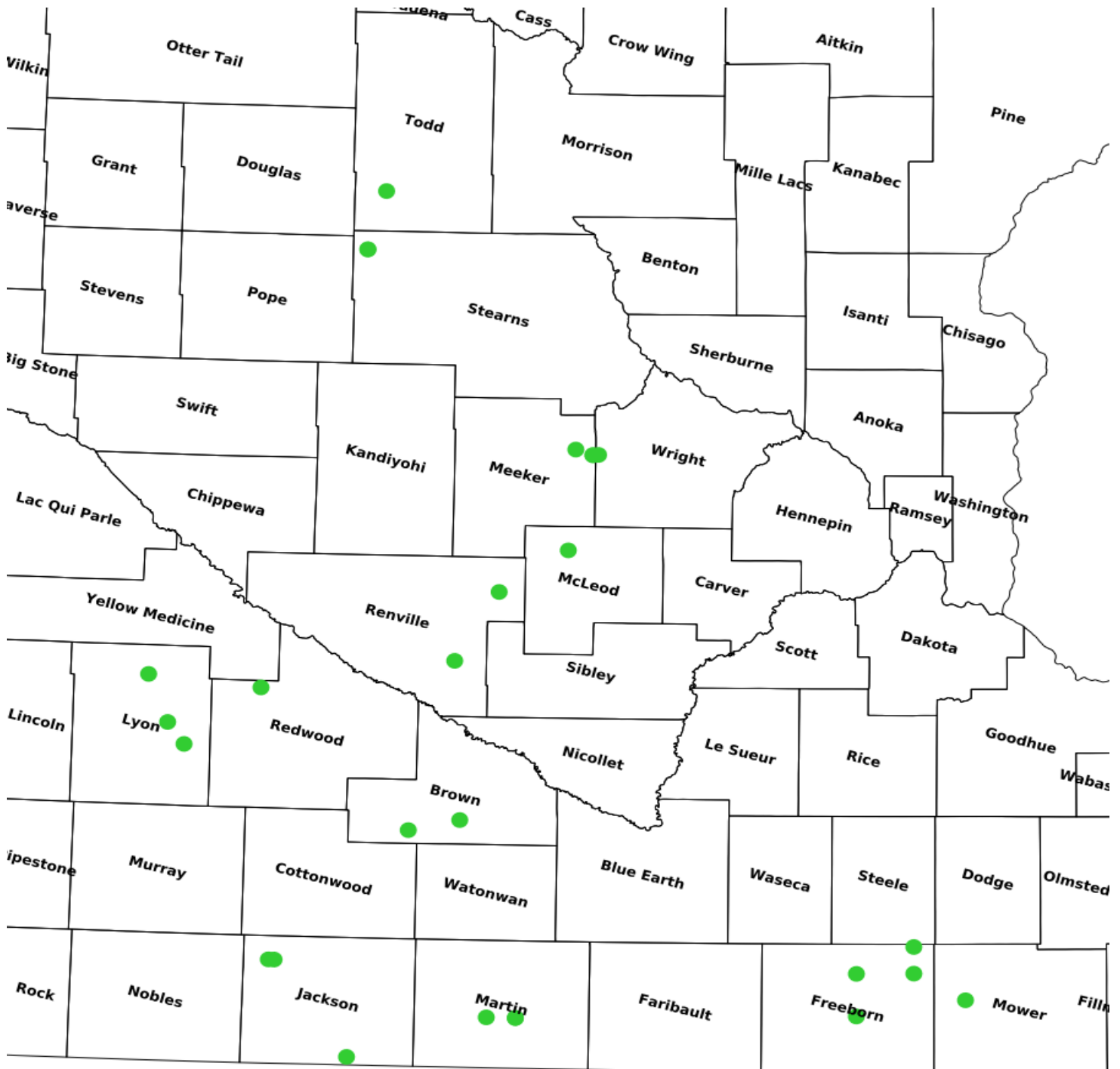
Sign-up Criteria?

[Yes - Sign up criteria is attached](#)

Easement Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
08-04-18-01- -	Brown	10832208	98	\$322,143	No
08-09-19-01- -	Brown	10834223	145	\$587,965	No
24-01-19-01- -	Freeborn	10421235	211	\$602,587	No
24-01-22-01- -	Freeborn	10419233	81	\$78,199	No
24-02-19-01- -	Freeborn	10419204	108	\$237,205	No
24-06-19-01- -	Freeborn	10221211	42	\$138,239	No
32-05-19-01- -	Jackson	10438225	58	\$241,468	No
32-06-19-01- -	Jackson	10438226	45	\$185,490	No
32-11-19-01- -	Jackson	10135230	220	\$1,156,235	No
42-01-21-01- -	Lyon	11040205	140	\$382,915	No
42-03-18-01- -	Lyon	11341232	151	\$773,060	No
42-05-18-01- -	Lyon	11141214	123	\$409,312	No
46-02-22-01- -	Martin	10231213	25	\$96,172	No
46-04-20-01- -	Martin	10231218	36	\$120,296	No
46-07-20-01- -	Martin	10231213	17	\$93,648	No
43-07-18-01- -	McLeod	11729229	58	\$112,076	No
47-01-19-03- -	Meeker	12029225	4	\$15,747	No
47-13-18-01- -	Meeker	12029221	23	\$27,551	No
47-14-18-01- -	Meeker	12029225	92	\$147,809	No
50-04-18-01- -	Mower	10318225	100	\$335,500	No
64-03-20-01- -	Redwood	11238209	45	\$130,489	No
65-07-19-01- -	Renville	11332207	241	\$861,981	No
65-08-20-01- -	Renville	11531205	37	\$128,211	No
73-01-18-01- -	Stearns	12635216	79	\$198,999	No
73-02-18-01- -	Stearns	12635216	116	\$281,514	No
77-02-20-01- -	Todd	12835224	89	\$180,111	No
86-01-19-03- -	Wright	12028230	7	\$20,959	No

Parcel Map



0 9 18 27 mi

- Protect in Easement
- ▲ Protect in Fee with PILT
- Protect in Fee W/O PILT
- ★ Restore
- ✱ Enhance
- ✚ Other