



# Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request



**Requested Meeting Date:** August 11, 2020

**Title of Item:** Collaborating with USDA - LCCMR - PNCML Grant

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION ONLY	<b>Action Requested:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft)	<input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item <input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing* <small>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</small>
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<b>Submitted by:</b> Rich Courtemanche	<b>Department:</b> Land
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<b>Presenter (Name and Title):</b> Rich Courtemanche - Land Commissioner	<b>Estimated Time Needed:</b> 10 min
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**Summary of Issue:**

The USDA and Pheasants Forever have secured a LCCMR grant to Protect North-Central Minnesota Lakes (PNCML) through forestry, easements and improving best management practices. The grant focuses on DNR studies that indicate that lakes that have less than 75 percent of the forest land protected will not be able sustain long term cold water fisheries. Improving forest best management practices (BMPs) is a component in this grant.

ACLD is actively financially investing into its forest roads to BMPs of water flow, erosion control, and accessibility. However, the projects outnumber the financial resources for forest roads. This problem is exasperated by the lack of continued funding from the 2020 legislature.

The ACLD will be using its existing budgeted road monies (\$10,000) to match PNCML funding (\$10,000) to improve forest road BMPs allowing additional projects to be completed in 2020 and 2021.

**Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:**

**Recommended Action/Motion:**  
 Providing an overview of this grant opportunity and for County Board comments

**Financial Impact:**

Is there a cost associated with this request?     Yes     No

What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$

Is this budgeted?     Yes     No    *Please Explain:*

Using \$10,000 of road construction monies to be used as a match for LCCMR grant.



## Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) M.L. 2018 ENRTF Work Plan (Main Document)

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**Today's Date:** 3/12/18

**Date of Next Status Update Report:** January 31, 2019

**Date of Work Plan Approval:**

**Project Completion Date:** June 30, 2021

**Does this submission include an amendment request?** No

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**PROJECT TITLE:** Protecting North-Central Minnesota Lakes

**Project Manager:** Sheila Boldt

**Organization:** Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District

**Mailing Address:** 322 Laurel Street Suite 22

**City/State/Zip Code:** Brainerd, MN 56401

**Telephone Number:** (218)828-6197

**Email Address:** Sheila.boldt@crowwingswcd.org

**Web Address:** <http://crowwingswcd.org/>

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**Location:** Crow Wing & Aitkin Counties

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**Total Project Budget:** \$750,000

**Amount Spent:** \$0

**Balance:** \$750,000

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**Legal Citation:** M.L. 2018, Chp. xx, Sec. xx, Subd. xx

**Appropriation Language:**

### **I. PROJECT STATEMENT:**

The main goal of this project is to increase watersheds protection to 75 percent around 25 at risk lakes. To do this, the Aitkin and Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) will complete:

10 permanent conservation easements

12 forest management plans

6 best management practices (BMP)

Aitkin and Crow Wing Counties contain 880 high-quality lakes, 170 miles of the Mississippi River, public land, over 24 percent private forest land, and countless recreational opportunities. These private lands are threatened by: forest fragmentation, first and second tier development, damaged aquatic habitat, and increasing housing

and roads. The MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Fisheries has identified a strong correlation between lake water quality that sustains fish populations and maintaining 75 % forest cover in a specific watershed.

We have identified 25 lakes out of 880 lakes that have state wide importance for aquatic and terrestrial habitat, are sensitive to phosphorous, have less than 75 percent of the watershed is protected, and support cold water fisheries. We will focus on the following Minor Watersheds (Hydrologic Unit Code 14 subwatersheds): Round-Big Pine, Dam-Long, Round, Waukenabo-Round, Spirit-Farm Island, Minnewawa, Cedar, Rat-Flowage, Hill Lake, Camp-Smith, Borden, Ruth, Serpent, North Long-Round, Mitchell, Cullen Chain, and Bay to implement private forest management plans to enroll into Sustainable Forest Incentive Act (SFIA) and permanent conservation easements on private lands. We will also complete BMPs on public or permanently protected lands, such as those with RIM conservation easements. Prior to implementation, the Crow Wing SWCD will hire a consultant to complete a conservation atlas for each lake. This will consist of identified aquatic and woodland habitat parcels, Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) and SFIA price estimates, and targeted landowner parcel lists. The SWCDs will coordinate this project with a consultant, the Board of Soil and Water Resource (BWSR) RIM Staff, private forest plan writers, and private and public land owners. This project will be successful because of the prioritization process, staff experience and knowledge, and relationships with private landowners.

**II. OVERALL PROJECT STATUS UPDATES:**

**First Update January 31, 2019**

**Second Update July 31, 2019**

**Third Update January 31, 2020**

**Fourth Update July 31, 2020**

**Fifth Update January 31, 2021**

**Final Update July 31, 2021**

**III. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES:**

**ACTIVITY 1: Complete 17 HUC 14 Atlases. Advertise and recruit landowners to enroll into conservation programs.**

**Description:** The geographic information system specialist will run water quality models and data analysis on the HUC 14 watersheds to determine best locations for conservation easements, forest stewardship plans, and BMPs. The GIS specialist will also estimate prices for SFIA and RIM and create a parcel targeted list of landowners. The SWCDs will complete targeted outreach for forest management plans, conservation easements, and BMPs. This will include letters, phone calls, radio, social media, and press releases. The Aitkin and Crow Wing SWCDs will work with lake associations, environmental groups, and involved citizens to send direct mail, public meetings, and other forms of communication to reach landowners.

**Summary Budget Information for Activity 1:**

**ENRTF Budget: \$ 65,500**  
**Amount Spent: \$ 0**  
**Balance: \$ 65,500**

Outcome	Completion Date
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1. The GIS specialist will complete 17 HUC 14 Atlases. HUC 14 atlases will include parcel list of landowners, estimated value of property for conservation easements, landowner contact information, and maps	2019-2021
2. Send direct mailing to high priority parcel list to an estimated 50 landowners.	2019-2021
3. Attend an estimated 10 meetings to discuss the program.	2019-2021

**First Update January 31, 2019**

**Second Update July 31, 2019**

**Third Update January 31, 2020**

**Fourth Update July 31, 2020**

**Fifth Update January 31, 2021**

**Final Update July 31, 2021**

**Activity 2: Complete 12 Targeted Private Forest Management Plans.**

The SWCDs will coordinate with private foresters to write forest stewardship plans and enroll landowners to into the SFIA program. The SWCDs will follow MN DNR requirements for forest management plans. All plans will be registered with the MN DNR. The private landowner will be able to select from a list of DNR approved plan writers. The plans will emphasis the greatest habitat and water quality values and give suggestions to landowners to improve and protect forest habitat.

**Summary Budget Information for Activity 2:**

**ENRTF Budget: \$ 20,500**  
**Amount Spent: \$ 0**  
**Balance: \$ 20,500**

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Write Private Forest Stewardship Plans (3) by Crow Wing and Aitkin SWCD Staff (MN DNR Certified)	2019-2020
2. Write Private Forest Stewardship Plans (3) by Crow Wing and Aitkin SWCD Staff (MN DNR Certified)	2020-2021
3. Write Private Forest Stewardship Plans (3) by private foresters (MN DNR Certified)	2019-2020
4. Write Private Forest Stewardship Plans (3) by private foresters (MN DNR Certified)	2020-2021

**First Update January 31, 2019**

**Second Update July 31, 2019**

**Third Update January 31, 2020**

**Fourth Update July 31, 2020**

**Fifth Update January 31, 2021**

**Final Update July 31, 2021**

**Activity 3: Implement an estimated 6 BMPs.**

**Description:** The SWCD will partner with private landowners, and SWCDs to complete best management practices (BMP's) on permanently protected conservation easements and public lands. Activity 1 will help prioritize where we target and complete BMP's.

The BMP's that will be utilized are listed as Forestry Conservation Practices by the NRCS designed to establish or improve long term forestry practices to improve or protect water quality or control soil erosion. The SWCD will focus on 30 eligible forestry conservation components from the NRCS conservation practices:

- The SWCD will focus on 30 eligible forestry conservation components from the NRCS conservation practices:
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Access Road (560*)                                | Brush Management (314)                                |
| Clearing and Snagging (326)                       | Conservation Cover (327)                              |
| Critical Area Plantings (342)                     | Early Successional Habitat (647)                      |
| Filter Strip (393)                                | Firebreak (394)                                       |
| Forest Stand Improvement (666)                    | Forest Trails and Landings (655)                      |
| Grade Stabilization (410) [15yrs]                 | Hedgerow Planting (422)                               |
| Herbaceous Weed Control (315)                     | Herbaceous Wind Barriers (603)                        |
| Prescribed Burning (338)                          | Restoration and Management of Declining Habitat (643) |
| Riparian Forest Buffer (391)[15yrs]               | Riparian Herbaceous Cover (390)                       |
| Stream Bank and Shoreline Protection (580)[20yrs] | Stormwater Runoff Control (570)[15yrs]                |
| Stream Crossing (678)                             | Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (392)       |
| Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)[15yrs]             | Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490)                     |
| Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)          | Vegetative Barrier (601)                              |
| Water and Sediment Control Basin (638)            | Woody Residue Treatment (384)                         |
| Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (380)[15yrs]  | Windbreak/Shelter renovation (650)[15yrs]             |
- (\*) – NRCS Conservation Practice Number  
 [Lifespan is 10 years unless noted]

**Summary Budget Information for Activity 3:**

**ENRTF Budget: \$28,500**  
**Amount Spent: \$ 0**  
**Balance: \$ 28,500**

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Install 1 riparian buffer projects. (i.e. shoreline buffers, native planting, and erosion)	2019-2020
2. Install 1 riparian buffer projects. (i.e. shoreline buffers, native planting, and erosion)	2020-2021
3. Complete 2 forest management projects. (i.e. planting, thinning, and pollinator habitat)	2019-2020
4. Complete 2 forest management projects. (i.e. planting, thinning, and pollinator habitat)	2019-2021

**First Update January 31, 2019**

**Second Update July 31, 2019**

**Third Update January 31, 2020**

**Fourth Update July 31, 2020**

**Fifth Update January 31, 2021**

**Final Update July 31, 2021**

**Activity 4: Complete an estimated 10 RIM Conservation Easements.**

**Description:** Landowners will agree to put their land in a perpetual easement that restricts the development of that property. In return the landowner will be paid 60 percent of the county assessed land value of the property (excluding buildings). This 60% valuation based on the county assessed value is an accepted BWSR formula for use with easements in the forested region of MN. This valuation method is currently being used in 4 other active easement programs. We will utilize an easement scoring sheet to rank all conservation easements. A technical review team will review and rank all conservation easements prior to submittal to BWSR. The SWCD staff will work with BWSR staff to complete legal documents and record easements on the deed. The BWSR will hold the easements through the RIM Program. The SWCDs will monitor completed easements each year according to BWSR RIM Policy.

**Summary Budget Information for Activity 4:**

**ENRTF Budget: \$ 635,500**  
**Amount Spent: \$ 0**  
**Balance: \$ 635,500**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
1. Permanently protect an estimated 135 acres (5 Easements)	2019-2020
1. Permanently protect an estimated 135 acres (5 Easements)	2020-2021

**IV. DISSEMINATION:**

**Description:** The SWCD will create public awareness and involvement in this project. Using social and media resources including press releases, Facebook, website postings, radio and public TV interviews which will notify the public about this project. In addition, the SWCD will utilize the partner networks and newsletters to disseminate information on the project. Lastly, the project results will be posted on the Crow Wing SWCD website: [www.crowwingswcd.org](http://www.crowwingswcd.org) and CW SWCD Facebook Page.

**First Update January 31, 2019**

**Second Update July 31, 2019**

**Third Update January 31, 2020**

**Fourth Update July 31, 2020**

**Fifth Update January 31, 2021**

**Final Update July 31, 2021**

**V. PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY:**

**A. Preliminary ENRTF Budget Overview:** See attached spreadsheet

**Explanation of Use of Classified Staff:** The Crow Wing SWCD receives a minimal amount of funds (less than \$20,000) from tax dollars to run our office. We apply for grants to not only implement BMP's but to also fund our salaries. The funds requested for personnel will be to organize, implement, manage and inspect all aspects of the project.

Consistent with approved work plans for previous ENRTF appropriations, this funding will be used to pay project-associated costs for classified and unclassified staff. These costs directly correlate with the staff needed to fill these services. Without these funds, these positions would not exist.

Direct and Necessary expenses are for Department Support Services (HR Support, Financial Support, Communications Support, and IT Support). These services are directly related to and necessary for the appropriation. Department Leadership services are not assessed, and BWSR does not require Planning Support or Safety Support. Direct Support Services were calculated based upon considerations used with the established DNR model, and using actual BWSR projections. HR Support (~\$1,200), Financial Support (~\$1,300), Communications Support (~\$200), and IT Support (\$1,900) are necessary to accomplish this funded project. The \$4,600 of Direct Support Services amount to less than 1% of this appropriation.

BWSR will periodically complete reconciliation between budgeted cost vs. actual costs during the appropriation. If we forecast there will be unspent funds for Direct Support Services, we may seek an amendment to shift some of these costs into the Permanent Easement Acquisition line. Any unspent funds would be returned.

**Explanation of Capital Expenditures Greater Than \$5,000:** N/A

**Number of Full-time Equivalents (FTE) Estimated to Be Funded through Contracts with this ENRTF Appropriation:** .3 FTE for 3 years for private consultants.

**B. Other Funds:**

Source of Funds	\$ Amount Proposed	Use of Other Funds
<b>Non-state</b>		
Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: US Forest Service Grant	\$50,000	
In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period:	\$10,000	
<b>State</b>		
TSA Area VIII Funds	50,000	
Past and Current ENRTF Appropriation: Forest Management for Mississippi River Drinking Water Protection (M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 08f).	300,000	
<b>TOTAL OTHER FUNDS:</b>	<b>\$410,000</b>	

**VI. PROJECT PARTNERS:**

**Project Partners:**

- Crow Wing SWCD                      - MN DNR Forestry
- Aitkin SWCD                            - Board of Water and Soil Resources
- Area VIII North Central Joint Powers Board GIS Specialist

This technical team will assist with parcel prioritization process. The team plans to capitalize on existing partner landowner solicitation networks that will promote this new program, plus offer it as an additional private land owner benefit/opportunity within this targeted project area.

**A. Partners receiving ENRTF funding**

Name	Title	Affiliation	Role
Crow Wing SWCD			Project Management
Aitkin SWCD	District Manger	Steve Hughes	

The Board of Water & Soil Resources	Conservation Easement Assistant Section Manger	BWSR	Easement Holder
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**B. Partners NOT receiving ENRTF funding**

Name	Title	Affiliation	Role
Area VIII North Central Joint Powers Board GIS Specialist	GIS Specialist	NJCPB Contract Employee	Map and database support

**VII. LONG-TERM- IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING:**

The MN DNR Fisheries research indicates that lakes that have less than 75 percent of the land protected will not be able sustain long term cold water fisheries. Currently, 40 percent of all streams and lakes in Minnesota no longer meet state standards for conventional pollutants (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency). This project will have a direct impact on keeping 25 lakes off the state impairment list. This project will also help sustain the long term cold water fisheries. This project will also influence the one million Minnesotans' who receive drinking water from the Mississippi River. The Mississippi River Brainerd Watershed was ranked 5th out of 81 major watersheds for its importance of private forests to provide clean drinking water to downstream users (US Forest Service). These private forest and riparian lands are the cornerstone of the local economy generating over \$225 million in sales tax revenues (Explore Tourism Minnesota 2015). A Bemidji State University study, determined that there is a direct correlation between property values and water clarity. A one meter increase in water clarity will increase property by \$ 50 a frontage foot. A greater loss will occur with a decrease in water clarity. The local property tax is base for schools and local governments. This project will have a direct effect on property values and maintaining the local tax base for future generations.

**VIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:**

- The project is for 3 years, began on July 1, 2018, and ends on June 30, 2021.
- Project status reports will be submitted; January 31, 2019, July 31, 2019, January 31, 2020, July 31, 2020 and January 31, 2021.
- A final report and associated products will be submitted between June 30 and August 15, 2021.

**IX. SEE ADDITIONAL WORK PLAN COMPONENTS:**

- A. Budget Spreadsheet
- B. Visual Component or Map
- C. Parcel List Spreadsheet
- D. Acquisition, Easements, and Restoration Requirements
- E. Research Addendum

**VIII. FEE TITLE ACQUISITION/CONSERVATION EASEMENT/RESTORATION REQUIREMENTS:**

**Restoration**

1. **Provide a statement confirming that all restoration activities completed with these funds will occur on land permanently protected by a conservation easement or public ownership.**

The Crow Wing SWCD will work with partners to complete restoration actives on Reinvest in Minnesota BWSR held permanent easements and public lands.

**2. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for the parcels to be restored by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation.**

In the last 5 years, the Crow Wing SWCD has become a local leader and expert in technical assistance to landowners on restoration and BMPs. Since 2010, the SWCD has completed 200 enhancement projects from native plantings, rain gardens, stormwater, tree planting, and forest improvements. The SWCD follows the necessary procedures recognized by The ENRTF such as a detailed restoration and management plans for each project. Office procedures include: pre-site visits, project plans, good relationship with private contractors, and technical experience with project management skills, landowner databases and ability to work with landowners to complete the project. For this specific grant, the SWCD will wait for the water quality modeling to start landowner outreach for BMPs and restoration activities. The SWCD will coordinate with partners and ACUB team to identify specific parcels and BMPs. The Crow Wing SWCD will then partner with corresponding county to implement the restoration and BMP activities. The specific parcels that will be funded through this appropriation have not yet been identified, but parcels will be selected that are located within the project area.

**3. Describe how restoration efforts will utilize and follow the Board of Soil and Water Resources “Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines” in order to ensure ecological integrity and pollinator enhancement.**

In addition, the SWCD will require that all trees and plants come from MN DNR approved native plant nurseries. We also require that contractors or landowners follow BWSR Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines and utilize all native seed mixes. All projects will follow the US Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service Practice Field Guide.

Easements acquired through this program will have a RIM Conservation Plan. The RIM Conservation Plan identifies practice areas and includes an Operation & Maintenance Plan. The easements secured under this project will be managed as part of the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) RIM Reserve Program that has over 6,500 easements currently in place. Easements are monitored annually for each of the first 5 years and then every 3rd year after. BWSR, in cooperation with Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), implement a stewardship process to track, monitor and assure compliance with easement terms. Under the terms of the Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) Easement Program, landowners are required to maintain compliance with the easement. A conservation plan is developed with the landowner and maintained as part of each easement. Basic easement compliance costs are borne by the landowner, periodic enhancements may be cost shared from a variety of sources.

**4. Describe how the long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel being restored with these funds will be met and financed into the future.**

To guarantee long-term assurance of public benefit, the SWCD will complete inspections on projects and require a maintenance plan. The SWCD will utilize the BWSR State Cost-Share Contract and process for all restoration activities.

This includes:

- 1) All restoration and improvement projects will have an operation and maintenance plan with landowner for the effective life of the project as per the State of MN; Cost Share Program Manual (Part VI).
- 2) The Cost-Share Contract will be between the SWCD Board and landowner/land occupier.
- 3) SWCD will provide periodic maintenance inspections on the 1, 3, and 9 years after completion (BWSR Guidance document – Operations and Maintenance and Inspection of Practices).
- 4) Landowner will be required to have a 50 percent match towards the project.

As a part of the maintenance agreement the SWCD will perform on-site inspection(s) during the first year to ensure projects are functioning properly. The SWCD staff will also instruct participants on correct maintenance procedures which will include mulching, weeding, sediment removal, checking outflows, invasive species, and replanting plants. After the second year, the project participant will be required to

maintain the site annually. Additionally, the SWCD will follow up with participants during years three and nine to ensure projects remain functional and provide technical assistance if needed. All maintenance requirements will be included in the contract and explicitly described to participants. Lastly, the Crow Wing SWCD works directly with the Conservation Corps of Minnesota (CCMI) to help with maintenance on larger projects. To finance maintenance into the future the SWCD will:

- i. Receive grants from the CCMI to have the crews help with maintenance on SWCD projects.
- ii. Build 2-3 years maintenance cost into the contract for project with a contractor.
- iii. Require landowner to maintain the project into the future.

**5. Describe how consideration will be given to contracting with Conservation Corps of Minnesota for any restoration activities.**

The Crow Wing SWCD works closely with the CCMI for project installation and maintenance of restoration projects. We work with landowners to obtain a signed agreement with the CCMI crew to help with restoration activities that will be included in the cost-share agreement for re-imbursement to landowner. The Crow Wing SWCD also works with Apprentice Program and Clean Water Grant funds to hire crews and apprentice to help with maintenance and project inspections. Since 2011, the SWCD has had 6 seasonal CCMI Apprentices, hired over 25 days of Crews, and received over 50 days of Crews in grants.

**6. Provide a statement indicating that evaluations will be completed on parcels where activities were implemented both 1) initially after activity completion and 2) three years later as a follow-up. Evaluations should analyze improvements to the parcel and whether goals have been met, identify any problems with the implementation, and identify any findings that can be used to improve implementation of future restoration efforts at the site or elsewhere.**

The SWCD will complete project evaluations on all restoration activities and follow BWSR inspection schedule which requires inspection year 1, 3, and 9. An evaluation report will be filed with the project folder. If project improvements are needed the SWCD will work with the landowner to complete improvements.

**Conservation Easement Acquisition**

**1. Describe the selection process for identifying and including proposed parcels on the parcel list, including explanation of the criteria and decision-making process used to rank and prioritize parcels.**

The specific lakes that have been identified for protection, will be analyzed further to identify which specific parcels should be targeted for easement protection and how they each rank against one another. The parcel priority ranking will be three-fold: high, medium and low. The landowners solicited first will own the highest priority parcels.

Prioritization criteria are developed to give the highest return on conservation investment, water quality benefits and local water plan priorities. A local technical advisory committee made up of BWSR, DNR, SWCD and Water Plan staff will score and rank parcel priorities and support landowner solicitation from willing land owners in what is intended to be a sustained long-term protection program.

**2. List all adopted state, regional, or local natural resource plans in which the lands included in the parcel list are identified. Include a link to the plan if one is available.**

- Crow Wing County Water Plan, <https://crowwing.us/241/Water-Wetlands> (2014)
- Aitkin County Water Plan, <http://www.aitkincountyswcd.org/ACSWCD-Reports.html> (2009, updating in 2018)
- MHB, <http://mississippiheadwaters.org/comprehensiveManagementPlan.asp> (2002, currently updating)

Based on this strong science, backed by watershed-scale prioritization for multiple benefits and source water protection, The Board of Water and Soil Resources, local SWCD Directors in Crow Wing and Aitkin counties and local Water Plan Coordinators have developed this program for riparian protection. The

methodology in this prioritization is similar to, The Forest Management for Mississippi River Drinking Water Protection (LCCMR) and The Minor Watershed Landscape Stewardship Manual (Yet to be publicly released) developed in partnership with BWSR, The Forest Resource council and DNR Forestry Division.

- 3. For any conservation easement acquired, restoration and management must be prepared. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for parcels acquired by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation, including how long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel will be financed into the future.**

The SWCD staff will follow The BWSR RIM Easement guidelines for; writing easement conservation plans and completing easement inspections. Conservation Easement documentation is kept on a secure computer drive network or via filed paperwork within The SWCD's office.

Easements acquired through this program will have a RIM Conservation Plan. The RIM Conservation Plan identifies practice areas and also includes an Operation & Maintenance Plan. The easements secured under this project will be managed as part of the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) RIM Reserve Program that has over 6,500 easements currently in place. Easements are monitored annually for each of the first 5 years and then every 3rd year after that. BWSR, in cooperation with Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), implement a stewardship process to track, monitor quality and assure compliance with easement terms. Under the terms of the Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) Easement Program, landowners are required to maintain compliance with the easement. A conservation plan is developed with the landowner and maintained as part of each easement. Basic easement compliance costs are borne by the landowner, periodic enhancements may be cost shared from a variety of sources.

- 4. For each parcel to be conveyed to a State of Minnesota entity (e.g., DNR) after purchase, provide a statement confirming that county board approval will be obtained.**

Conservation Easements will remain privately owned by the landowner and therefore remain as a contributor to county tax income.

- 5. If applicable (see M.S. 116P.17), provide a statement confirming that written approval from the DNR Commissioner will be obtained 10 business days prior to any final acquisition transaction. A copy of the written approval should be provided to LCCMR.**

N/A

- 6. Provide a statement addressing how conservation easements will address specific water quality protection activities, such as keeping water on the landscape, reducing nutrient and contaminant loading, protecting groundwater, and not permitting artificial hydrological modifications.**

By preventing future building development in perpetuity, the easement acreage will not be succumbed to impervious surface. By keeping the acreage in perennial vegetation; erosion is prevented, therefore reduced nutrients being added to nearby water sources, and in-turn, preventing surface and groundwater contamination. The restrictions listed on the recorded Perpetual Conservation easement pertain to all future landowners of the parcels and include restrictions such as, requiring a forest management plan for the removal of timber products.

- 7. Describe the long-term monitoring and enforcement program for conservation easements acquired on parcels by your organization, including explanations of the process used for calculating conservation**

**easement monitoring and enforcements costs, the process used for annual inspection and reporting on monitoring and enforcement activities, and the process used to ensure perpetual funding and implementation of monitoring and enforcement activities.**

Once a RIM easement is acquired, BWSR is responsible for monitoring and enforcement into perpetuity. The BWSR partners with local SWCDs to carry-out oversight, monitoring and inspection of its conservation easements. Easements are inspected for the first five consecutive years beginning in 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 report to BWSR on each site inspection conducted and partners' staff document findings. A non-compliance procedure is implemented when potential violations or problems are identified.

Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs have been calculated at \$6,500 per easement. These calculations were derived using the elements described in MS 103B.103. BWSR uses local SWCD staff for monitoring and landowner relations which results in considerable cost savings.