

Stearns County SWCD Wildlife Habitat Program Guide

PROTECTING AND ENHANCING NATURE

The Stearns County SWCD staff are dedicated to working with landowners on developing wildlife habitat plans to help achieve the goals the landowner envisions for their land.



CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (CREP)

MN CREP is a voluntary federal-and-state funded conservation easement program. CREP is administered through the Farm Service Agency (FSA), and the easement is administered through the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). CREP is a combination of a 15-year CRP contract with a permanent easement. Lands are enrolled into a perpetual easement and established to native vegetation. Minnesota BSWR and the Federal Government compensates landowners who enroll in CREP with a payment that is 90% of the township average land value. Landowners still retain ownership of the property and retain all access rights. Public hunting is NOT a requirement. This program accepts cropland acres and 20% non-cropland acres.



CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)

CRP is a land conservation program administrated by FSA. In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant native species that will improve wildlife habitat and water quality. Contracts are either 10 or 15 years long.



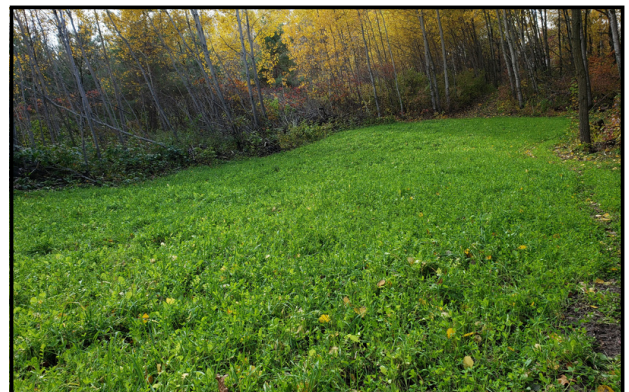
CONTINUOUS CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CCRP)

CCRP is part of the federal Conservation Reserve Program focused on water quality, wetland restoration, and waterfowl habitat. In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant native species that will improve wildlife habitat and water quality. Contracts are either 10 or 15 years long.

STEARNS COUNTY PHEASANTS FOREVER (SCPF)

STEARNS COUNTY PHEASANTS FOREVER (SCPF) FOOD PLOT SEED

The Stearns County SWCD in cooperation with the Stearns County Chapter of Pheasants Forever provides up to 3 bags of food plot seed to Pheasants Forever members. Round-up Ready corn and soybeans and grain sorghum are available. Additional food plot mixes such as clover and brassicas can be purchased. Proof of Pheasants Forever membership is required.



UNITED STATES FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE (USFWS) EASEMENTS

Land enrolled into an easement is a legal agreement signed with the United States, through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, that pays the landowner to permanently protect the wetlands area on the enrolled land.

UNITED STATES FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE (USFWS) PARTNERS FOR WILDLIFE PROGRAM

This program provides technical and financial assistance to landowners interested in restoring and enhancing wildlife habitat on their land. Each project is custom designed to fit each landowners needs. Landowners own and manage their land.



REINVEST IN MINNESOTA

REINVEST IN MINNESOTA (RIM)

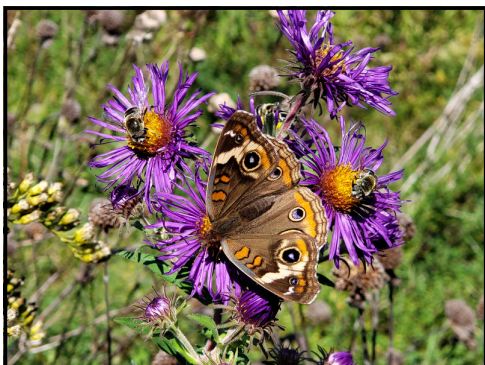
RIM strives to protect and improve water quality by encouraging landowners to place agricultural land that is environmentally sensitive into a permanent easement. In exchange, landowners are reimbursed and provides cost-share assistance to restore the area to grass, trees, or wetlands. This program is managed at the state level by Minnesota Board of Water and Resources (BWSR) and implemented by the local Stearns SWCD office.

REINVEST IN MINNESOTA (RIM) GRASSLANDS

MN RIM Grasslands is a voluntary state-funded conservation easement program. Lands are enrolled into a perpetual easement and preserve remnant prairie vegetation. The State of MN compensates landowners who enroll in RIM with a payment that is 90% of the township average land value. Landowners still retain ownership of the property and retain all access rights. Public hunting land is NOT a requirement. This program only accepts remnant native prairie and adjacent sites.



POLLINATOR HABITAT



BEE & BUTTERFLY POLLINATOR HABITAT FUND - POLLINATOR HABITAT

Stearns County SWCD along with Stearns County Chapter of Pheasants Forever and the Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund have partnered to provide landowners not eligible for USDA programs an avenue for establishing pollinator habitat. Landowners willing to establish pollinator habitat can receive free pollinator seed and cost-share assistance for site prep and establishment of the pollinator habitat.

WOODLAND & FORESTRY

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR) FORESTRY INCENTIVE PROGRAM

This program provides 50-75% cost-share to eligible landowners to establish a stand of trees for conservation purposes, timber production, or management of an existing forest.



WOODLAND STEWARDSHIP PLANS (WSP)

WSP provides a plan to landowners to help plan for the future condition of their woodlands while providing sustainable management.



SUSTAINABLE FOREST INCENTIVE ACT (SFIA)

SFIA provides annual rental payments to encourage landowners to keep their wooded areas undeveloped. Enrolled land follows a forest management plan for either a period of eight, 20, or 50 years.

WETLANDS

WETLAND RESERVE EASEMENT (WRE)

WRE provides habitat for fish and wildlife to improve water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals, reduce flooding, and recharge groundwater. Lands enrolled can include land previously farmed or converted wetlands. Through this program, NRCS enters into a purchase agreement with eligible landowners to develop and implement a wetland reserve restoration easement plan.



MINNESOTA LAND TRUST (MLT) - EASEMENTS SAUK RIVER & WETLANDS

Minnesota Land Trust Easements are a voluntary conservation easement program. Lands are enrolled into a perpetual easement and established to native vegetation. Landowners who enroll in the MLT easement are compensated with a payment that is 20%-40% of the assessed land value. Funding is provided by Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC). Landowners still retain ownership of the property and retain all access rights. Public hunting is NOT a requirement. This program will accept both cropland and non-cropland acres.

