

BWSR seeks proposals for wetland restoration

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is seeking to generate new wetland banking credits to offset impacts to wetlands.

The agency's Local Government Road Wetland Replacement Program (LGRWRP) provides wetland mitigation credits to local road authorities for qualifying road improvement projects.

Wetlands that are filled or drained must be replaced under state and federal law. The wetland banking program allows wetlands to be restored on the landscape and transformed into wetland credits. These credits then get deposited into a wetland bank, which are then used by local road authorities to obtain state and federal wetland permits.

The LGRWRP receives funds from the state Legislature to develop wetland mitigation credits by restoring previously drained or filled wetlands and adjacent uplands.

In response to the most recent appropriation in 2018 of \$6.7 million in capital investment funds, BWSR on March 9 opened a request for proposals and voluntary easement sign-up in targeted areas. BWSR aims to find



quality restoration projects that provide good value to the state. Project sites are typically drained parcels that producers find difficult to farm because the land is too wet or maintaining the drainage infrastructure is too expensive.

The sign-up runs through May 21 at 2:30 p.m.

Landowners are encouraged to work with their local soil and water conservation district to determine if they have the type of wetland restoration project the

LGRWRP seeks.

The following three options to generate wetland mitigation credits are available to landowners and public or private entities.

Easement sign-up: BWSR purchases a perpetual conservation easement with a per-acre payment rate. BWSR works with the local soil and water conservation district to design and implement a wetland restoration plan. This option is typically the easiest for landowners to pursue

This Dakota County wetland project depicts the landscape before (top) and after (bottom) restoration. The LGRWRP program seeks to complete similar projects to generate wetland banking credits. Photo Credits: BWSR

because there is little to no financial risk, and landowners maintain ownership.

Third-party projects: A landowner or other entity develops a wetland mitigation bank and submits a cost-per-credit proposal to BWSR. When credits are deposited into the State Wetland Bank, BWSR pays the entity that developed restoration projects using an agreed upon cost per credit. This option provides landowners with a guaranteed buyer for at least a portion of their credits, lowering their financial risk while allowing them to generate more revenue since the private market offers higher rates.

Partnership: BWSR works collaboratively with private and public entities such as SWCDs, cities and private landowners to complete a wetland mitigation bank project. Based on the terms of a partnership agreement, the resulting credits are then distributed among partners. Partnership projects draw from each partner's experience, capabilities and technical resources.

Find details on BWSR's website [here](https://www.bwsr.state.mn.us).