

# MAWRC Monthly

- May 2017



## Legacy Funding Includes Money for Buffers, Habitat Acquisitions

This week Governor Dayton signed budget bills allocating funds from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment including Clean Water Funds for the 2018 and 2019 fiscal years (FY) and Outdoor Heritage Funds for 2018.

The Clean Water Fund is generally allocated to programs through several state agencies on a two-year basis. Appropriations made during the 2017 legislative session allow for spending of \$100,497,000 during FY 2018 and \$111,373,000 during FY 2019. The bill appropriates \$9.75 million “to restore and preserve permanent conservation on riparian buffers,” \$3 million for permanent conservation easements through CREP, \$5 million to SWCDs “for cost-sharing contracts to implement riparian buffers or alternative practices on public waters or public ditches,” and \$22 million to SWCDs to carry out their work.

The Outdoor Heritage fund is generally allocated each year to more specifically defined projects. Projects funded for FY 2018 total \$102,605,000, more than half of which is available for the acquisition of permanent easements or outright purchase.

The full Legacy funding bill can be found here-

[https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=HF707&version=0&session=ls90&session\\_year=2017&session\\_number=0&type=ccr&format=pdf](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=HF707&version=0&session=ls90&session_year=2017&session_number=0&type=ccr&format=pdf).

For more information on Outdoor Heritage spending go to <http://www.legacy.leg.mn/funds/outdoor-heritage-fund>. You can also find a report of land acquisitions through June 30 2015 at [http://www.legacy.leg.mn/sites/default/files/resources/LSOHC\\_Land\\_Acquisition\\_Report\\_ML\\_2015.pdf](http://www.legacy.leg.mn/sites/default/files/resources/LSOHC_Land_Acquisition_Report_ML_2015.pdf).

For more information on Clean Water Fund spending, go to <http://www.legacy.leg.mn/funds/clean-water-fund>.

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## DNR Wildlife Management Areas Continue to Grow

According to the Minnesota Board of Soil and Water Resources, DNR WMAs have grown to 1,192,432 acres, increasing by nearly 12,000 acres between August 2015 and August 2016. US Fish and Wildlife acres also grew by more than 7,000 acres during that same period, providing more opportunities for hunters. These figures do not include some lands currently in transition, having been purchased with more recent Legacy funding but still in the hands of one of the various organizations working to convert the land, often cropland, to habitat prior to transfer to the DNR or USFWS.

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## US CRP Acreage Nearing Farm Bill Caps

The Minnesota Farm Service Agency reports that with nationwide CRP acreage approaching the cap of 24 million acres, sign-ups for Continuous Sign-up CRP, generally referred to as CCRP, are no longer being accepted. As of this writing, only sign-ups associated with CREP are being accepted.

CREP is a combination of the Federal CRP, providing annual rental of eligible cropland for up to 15 years, with the state Reinvest in Minnesota, or RIM program, which requires a perpetual easement prohibiting agricultural uses or development on the land.

An unfortunate consequence of this action is that landowners struggling to meet looming deadlines to establish buffers under Minnesota's 2015 buffer legislation are losing access to the program preferred by many landowners over the permanent commitment required under CREP.

Landowners are also reminded that because CRP contracts are of a 10-15 year duration, there are contracts expiring each year. When CRP contracts expire, many landowners offer their land for re-enrollment, but not all, which will likely mean that additional cap space will open up later this year.

Landowners intending to use either CCRP or CREP to meet buffer requirements are encouraged to talk to their local FSA offices, which will help FSA gauge demand for these programs and may help with prioritization to ensure that buffers remain a high priority under CRP.

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## 4R Nutrient Management Events Coming to Minnesota

The Fertilizer Institute is now accepting registrations for the annual 4R Summit to be held June 12 and 13 in Minneapolis. The event will feature information on 4R nutrient management initiatives across the country, including presentations on Minnesota efforts by the Minnesota Corn Growers, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, the University of Minnesota, the MAWRC and others.

For more information go to <https://www.tfi.org/conference/4r-nutrient-stewardship-summit>.

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The MAWRC is a non-profit research and education corporation comprised of 24 agricultural organizations working together to address water issues. For more information, go to [www.mawrc.org](http://www.mawrc.org).

