

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
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WETLAND BANKING FACT SHEET

What is wetland banking?

Wetland banking is a convenient way to replace wetlands drained or filled for agriculture or urban development. Wetland banking allows a person wishing to drain or fill a wetland to purchase wetland credits from someone who has already restored or created a wetland and “deposited” those wetland credits in the Minnesota Wetland Bank. The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) administers this bank.

Why do we need it?

Under most wetlands regulations in Minnesota, people who drain or fill wetlands need to write a plan outlining how they will either create new wetlands or restore previously drained wetlands to replace the ones lost. This replacement must generally be in the same watershed or county as the original wetlands. Since direct, on-site replacement is often impractical—and the person proposing the project may have no idea of where to create or restore a wetland—purchasing credits from the Minnesota Wetland Bank is a convenient option. Essentially, the wetland banking system helps connect landowners who have already restored or created wetlands with those who need to replace wetlands they plan to drain or fill.

How do I get started?

A good first step for anyone contemplating making a deposit or withdrawal is to contact the local government unit that administers the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) in the area where the deposit or withdrawal acreage is located. Wetland banking can also be used for wetlands regulated by other programs. If you’re not sure of the appropriate local government office, your local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) can help get you started. SWCD phone numbers are in the county government section of the phone book. You can also go to the interactive map at www.shorelandmanagement.org/contact/index.html.

How do I make a deposit?

To make a deposit, a landowner must file an application and supporting technical information with the local government unit administering the WCA in that area. Forms can be obtained from the local government or at www.bwsr.state.mn.us/wetlands/index.html. After filing with the local government unit, a technical panel inspects the site and advises the local government unit whether or not the application should be approved. If it is approved, the landowner may restore the wetland. A good reference for restoring wetlands is *Native Vegetation in Restored and Created Wetlands* available at www.bwsr.state.mn.us/wetlands/publications/index.html. When construction is completed, the landowner must inform the local government unit; the technical evaluation panel will then inspect the site a second time. If the technical evaluation panel approves the construction/restoration, the landowner must wait for six months (for a restored wetland) or one year (for a created wetland).

After this waiting period, the landowner must again contact the local government unit, which will send the technical evaluation panel to inspect the site for the third time. This waiting period and third inspection are intended to ensure that the wetland has stabilized.



Helping Minnesota's local governments manage and conserve our water and soil resources.

The technical evaluation panel will recommend to the local government the amount of wetland acreage and type to be deposited in the bank. After the local government certifies that all necessary legal documents have been filed and the correct procedures followed, it provides this information to BWSR.

How do I make a withdrawal?

Purchase of wetland credits is a private sales transaction between the buyer and seller. A prospective buyer can see the names and phone numbers of people with wetland credits available for sale in the appropriate area at www.bwsr.state.mn.us/wetlands/wetlandbanking/index.html. A number of steps are involved in purchasing wetland credits, including:

- The buyer and seller must sign a purchase agreement (available from your local government unit or at www.bwsr.state.mn.us/wetlands/wetlandbanking/index.html).
- The buyer must obtain approval from the agency with regulatory authority over the wetland that the buyer wants to drain or fill. Generally, this agency will be the local government unit administering WCA; the Department of Natural Resources; or the Army Corps of Engineers. Again, your local Soil and Water Conservation District should be able to help you with this.
- The parties must close upon the sale, with the buyer paying for the credits and the seller signing an Application for Withdrawal of Wetland Credits (available from your local government or at the web address above) and giving it to the buyer.
- The buyer obtains all necessary signatures on an Application for Withdrawal of Wetland Credits and sends it, along with a completed replacement plan, to the appropriate regulatory authority, which then forwards it to the Board of Water and Soil Resources.

How much do wetland credits typically cost?

Prices vary dramatically, from \$1,000 per acre to \$20,000 or more in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Who can I contact for more information?

Your local Soil and Water Conservation District or the nearest BWSR office.

BWSR OFFICES

Central office: (651) 296-3767

St. Paul: (651) 282-9969

Duluth: (218) 723-4752

Bemidji: (218) 755-4235

Brainerd: (218) 828-2383

Marshall: (507) 537-6060

New Ulm: (507) 359-6074

Rochester: (507) 280-2873

Fergus Falls: (218) 736-5445

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