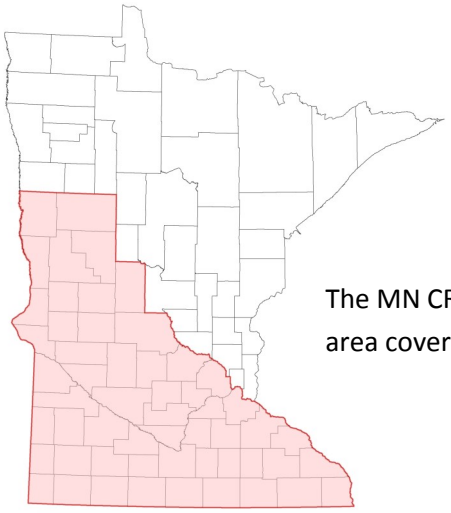
# Why Enroll Now?

## The Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (MN CREP)

### What is MN CREP?

MN CREP is a voluntary, federal-state funded natural resource conservation program that uses a science-based approach to target environmentally sensitive land.

Landowners will enter into a 14-15 year Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract administered by the USDA-Farm Service Agency (FSA), and a Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve perpetual conservation easement administered by the Minnesota Board of Soil and Water Resources (BWSR).



The MN CREP project area covers 54 counties.

### Reasons to consider MN CREP

There are many reasons to consider MN CREP now, based on the long-term goals of the landowner. Some of these include:

Fair compensation – Payments for the land retirement portion of MN CREP are based on current CRP rental rates and RIM rates that approximate 90% of the value of the land.

Rights retained – Landowners maintain ownership, including the right to control access to the land covered by the MN CREP CRP contract/RIM easement.

Returns on marginal cropland – MN CREP prioritizes and targets marginal cropland that is often associated with buffer areas and drained or altered wetlands. These lands often produce less than average crop yields, and are less profitable even when crop prices are high.

Impact on water quality and habitat – MN CREP focuses on both water quality and wildlife habitat. Enrolled land will deliver multiple benefits to ground and surface water, as well as provide habitat for pollinators and wildlife.

MN CREP versus CCRP – Land enrolled in MN CREP will receive additional CREP Incentives beyond what the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP) provides. Based on current analysis, MN CREP total payment rates are at least 30 percent higher than CCRP payment amounts.

Option for re-enrolled CRP – Lands that are currently enrolled in CRP and eligible for re-enrollment during a MN CREP sign-up period may be eligible. This can result in seamless coverage of CRP annual payments and may allow for the existing vegetation to stay in place.

Volatile land prices – According to the University of Minnesota and other sources, farm land prices have declined over the past two years and appear to still be on a declining trend.

Uncertain future of the next Farm Bill – The Federal Farm Bill is up for renewal in 2018. It is uncertain at this time what changes could occur to conservation programs, including CRP.

Quality native restoration – Restoration of the enrolled land will follow state and federal standards, and focus on native plant species. One hundred percent of these restoration costs will be covered by the CRP and RIM programs, leaving no out-of-pocket expenses to the landowner.

## Enrollment

Enrollment for the MN CREP will begin in Spring 2017 and continue until funds are exhausted or the 60,000 acre goal is reached.

BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

www.bwsr.state.mn.us/crep