

Wildlife Food Plot (RR-FP) Guidelines for RIM Easements

June 2023

Guidance from the [RIM Handbook \(https://bwsr.state.mn.us/rim-handbook\)](https://bwsr.state.mn.us/rim-handbook)

Purpose

The purpose of this practice is to create and maintain food plots for wildlife, or other monoculture plots for pollinator benefit.

Policies and Practices

1. No cost-sharing is authorized for this practice.
2. Food plots shall be no larger than 10% of the total easement area.
3. Food plots shall not exceed 5 acres unless allowance is made by BWSR staff.
4. Food plot crops must be left over winter for wildlife. No fall harvest or tillage operations are allowed.
5. Food plots are not allowed on MNCREP Cropland acres with active CRP contracts on easements enrolled through MN CREP. See MN CREP General Program Guidance Document for additional information.

Technical Requirements

Food plots do not need a permanent vegetative cover if they are managed and maintained for wildlife. A temporary cover must be established on the practice area if weed and/or erosion control is necessary, and the food plot cannot be immediately planted.

Not all sites require or will support a food plot due to location or topography (narrow riparian areas, slopes in excess of 6%, or wetness would be examples). Food plots should not exceed 10% of the easement acreage or 5 acres, whichever is less. If desired food plot acreage exceeds this amount, the BWSR Easement Section Manager will need to consider its approval.

If a food plot is discontinued, it must be immediately established to a permanent vegetative cover and the associated establishment costs are the responsibility of the landowner(s).

Minnesota Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Upland Wildlife Habitat Management Conservation Practice Standard and Job Sheets can be found on the [NRCS Field Office Technical Guide Website \(https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/state/MN/documents/section=4&folder=-242\)](https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/state/MN/documents/section=4&folder=-242).

Financial Requirements

Cost-sharing is not available through BWSR Easement programs to establish food plots or temporary cover on the food plot area.

Other Guidance

Location

Food plot should be placed within an upland practice area (RR-1, RR-2, RR-9, etc.) and not within a wetland practice area (RR-8, RR-12, RR-13, etc.).

- Typically, food plots should not be placed within the 100-year floodplain zone. Perennial cover options may fit some situations and be allowed.
- Food plots should not be placed within National Wetlands Inventory classified wetlands.
- Food plots should be located near woody cover, a large contiguous wetland, or some other source of winter cover.

Number of Food Plots

Generally, only two food plot areas will be considered. This is site dependent as not all sites will support food plots or multiple food plots.

If more than one food plot is requested, food plots should be separated by a sufficient distance to maximize wildlife benefits and accessibility.

Minerals/Nutrients

Food plot crop rotations should be considered to maintain healthy soils and reduce the risk of depleting nutrients in the soil.

Minerals and/or nutrients may be necessary to ensure a successful food plot establishment. Consider the resource (e.g., drinking water) being protected by the easement and food plot location when considering adding minerals/nutrients to the soil.

Requesting a Food Plot

Revision Request or Practice Implementation/Amendment Request Form (PIRF)

To initiate the plan amendment request, the SWCD must complete, obtain signatures, and submit the following forms to [BWSR Easement Programs staff \(bwsr.rim@state.mn.us\)](mailto:bwsr.rim@state.mn.us):

1. Revision Request or Practice Implementation/Amendment Request Form
 - a. A Revision Request is needed if the conservation plan change is made prior to submittal of the first cost-share voucher.
 - b. A Practice Implementation/Amendment Request Form is needed if the conservation plan change is made after submittal of the first cost-share voucher. Use one form for each practice area to be changed. \$0 should be entered under the *Max C/S \$ Available* and *Total C/S \$ Requested* fields of the form.
2. Amended Conservation Plan Workbook
 - a. Review the *Wildlife Food Source Plantings* section of the Operation and Maintenance Plan with the landowner.
3. Amended Conservation Plan Map

If a PIRF is denied, an explanation will be provided with recommendations for revisions, if applicable.

Contact [BWSR Easement Programs staff \(bwsr.rim@state.mn.us\)](mailto:bwsr.rim@state.mn.us) for additional information.