

# WCA REPLACEMENT PLANS



No person may impact a wetland, wholly or partially, (unless eligible for an exemption or no-loss) without first having a wetland replacement plan approved by the local government unit. Before approval of a replacement plan, the local government unit (LGU) must ensure that the applicant has exhausted all possibilities to avoid and minimize wetland impacts according to sequencing requirements (MN rules part 8420.0520). To see who the LGU is in different parts of the county, please refer to the WCA Jurisdiction map.

## Wetland Replacement ('Mitigation')

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, restore previously drained wetlands, or purchase credits from a wetland bank (below) to replace the ones lost. The [Minnesota Local/State/Federal Application Forms for Water/Wetland Projects](#) is the standard forms for replacement plan applications. It includes a number of basic questions (contact information, amount/type of wetland impact, project location, description) as well as a discussion of project alternatives (applicants must provide 2), and the method of wetland replacement. The application must explain how impacting the wetland is the only reasonable and prudent option to accomplish the goals of the project and how the applicant has minimized the impact. A survey and application fee are also required.

### Actions Eligible for Replacement Credit (for onsite mitigation or banking):

- Upland Buffers
- Restoration of Drained Areas
- Vegetative Restoration of Farmed Wetlands
- Protection of wetlands previously restored via conservation easements
- Wetland creations
- Restoration and protection of exception natural resource value

## Purchasing Credits from a Wetland Bank

This replacement must generally be in the same watershed or county as the original wetlands. Since direct, on-site replacement is often very costly and 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.

Wetland banking is also 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. Wetland banking credits vary in cost, but generally run around \$1.00 per square foot.

## Crow Wing County Contact Info

If you are planning to impact a wetland in Crow Wing County, please allow yourself enough time to go through the process, as there can be a fair amount of paperwork as well as several meetings to attend. If you have any questions or want to determine if your activity may be exempt from the replacement plan process, please refer to some of the other wetland factsheets or contact Mitch Brinks with the Environmental Services Division. His contact info is below.



**Questions???** Contact Land Services (218) 824-1010, [landservices@crowwing.us](mailto:landservices@crowwing.us)