

What is a wetland credit?

Wetland mitigation **credits are used** to offset ecological losses that occur in **wetlands** and streams.

A wetland bank 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.

Who determines if I have a wetland?

Usually, the first step is to visit your local NRCS office and ask for a certified wetland determination. This process usually takes multiple weeks, as they determine where/if there are wetlands on your property.

Do I have to create a wetland to purchase a wetland credit?

The short answer to this is no, you do not have to create a wetland to purchase a wetland credit.

What are the steps in buying a wetland credit?

1. Have a Certified Wetland Determination on the property.
2. Work together with your local SWCD, LGU (local government unit), and NRCS in making a mitigation plan.
3. Find wetland credits for sale in the bank service area your property is in. Available Wetland Credits can be found on the BWSR website, <https://apps.bwsr.state.mn.us/credits/>
4. Send all signed paperwork with credit mitigation plan, fees to BWSR for final approval.
5. After approval, said mitigation may commence.

Are all wetland credits the same?

There are 2 types of wetland credits that can be purchased. Ag credits are common for ag producers, usually to drain a wetland that they want to drain or fill in. They are usually less expensive than Army Corps approved credits. Army Corps credits are generally purchased when doing highway projects, or large commercial work.

Can't I just flood a problem area, and receive wetland credits?

The short answer to this is no. There are multiple factors to consider.

1. The land can't currently be a wetland, or a wetland in the area of consideration.
2. There needs to be a significant environmental benefit gained.
3. The history and soil profile of the land is examined on whether returning the land to its natural wetland is possible.
4. CRP does not eliminate its ability to receive wetland credits. It must be "out" of CRP and use all the determinations previously referenced.
5. The land that is in an approved project for wetland credits, is put into a permanent easement that is administered by the state of MN. The land is still owned by the landowner with restrictions. The easement land cannot have motorized units, unless to control noxious weeds or other caretaking of the land.

What are some of the environmental benefits?

Most wetland banks created are more than a 1:1 ratio of acres to wetland credits. While it takes 1 wetland credit to mitigate 1 acre, it may have taken 1.5 acres to create said credit. Example: If your approved project acreage is 40 acres, it is likely the wetland credits received are around 25. In many cases, the new wetland area may enhance waterfowl habitat, which is good for hunting.

How long does it take to receive all my credits if I build a wetland bank?

An owner interested in creating a wetland bank normally would work with an independent contractor or BWSR to create a plan. The plan has to be approved by a county TEP, a panel that includes the SWCD, LGU, and BWSR. Typically, engineers are brought in to develop this plan. Excavation and seeding of different species of plants are major components of the plan. Once the bank is excavated, and planted, there is an initial 15% of credits deposited into the owner's wetland bank. For the next 3 to 4 years, hydrology reports and plant surveys are done each growing season. When these reports and surveys are examined by TEP, there is a deposit of 15-20% of credits. Once all credits are received, no more monitoring or surveying is needed. However, the land stays in the permanent easement. In the end, the process to receiving all credits can be over 5 years.

What are prices of wetland credits?

Just like real estate, wetland credit prices are variable on need and location. Many wetland bank service areas do not have many ag credits available, and they are in high demand. A general range for ag credits is between \$15,000 - \$25,000 per credit which is payable to the bank owner. There are 2 fees collected during purchase as well. BWSR collects a withdrawal fee, which is typically between \$1,000-\$1,500 per credit, and an easement stewardship fee, which currently is \$302 per credit.

Fieldstock has been involved in creating wetland credits for sale since 2012. With multiple banks in service areas 7 and 9, Fieldstock continues to gain knowledge and important contacts that have helped improve efficiency and sale of wetland credits. When you need to talk to someone about your land, and how utilizing wetland credits may be beneficial to you, contact the west central Minnesota wetland specialists. Here is a video of one of our projects in district 7. Enjoy! <https://youtu.be/LEPifA4Y6as>