

## State Technical Committee

### Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

The 2018 Farm Bill has resulted in a new manual and guidance. There are several processes and conditions that can be considered for FY21 consideration and implementation with the manual's release this last February. The important item for Minnesota to address...

- Wetland Restoration Criteria and Guidelines (WRCG) - The primary function of the State-specific WRCG document is to serve as a decision-making aid for various technical determinations that occur for each offer of the wetland easement program. The WRCG provides the framework in which the assist Minnesota in the administration and implementation of ACEP-WRE. This document is periodically reviewed over time when conditions in the landscape or the parameters of the program change.

The following is to be addressed for Minnesota's WRCG:

Identification of historic wetland types in the State, with a focus on those commonly enrolled in or restored under ACEP-WRE.

A brief description of the characteristics, including associated habitats, and the common wetland functions and values of each.

- State distribution (maps or geospatial layers if available).
- A list of the references or sources of information.
- Common approaches to restoration of the identified wetland types, including where applicable, descriptions of practices or measures used to achieve wetland restoration in the context of changed offsite hydrologic conditions (e.g., levees, dams, drainage, etc.).

Addresses alternative communities that may be established on ACEP-WRE sites.

A brief description of each, including the hydrologic regime, native vegetative community and other characteristics, associated habitats, and the common wetland functions and values of each.

State distribution (maps or geospatial layers if available).

The conditions and criteria under which an alternative community may be established and the historic wetland types or functions and values normally associated with those wetland types that the alternative community would be in lieu of.

Any State-established limits to the types or extents of alternative communities that may be established or managed for on an individual site.

Considerations and basis the State will use for authorizing wetland restoration to include the establishment or management of an alternative community, including how such community will—:

Substantially replace the original habitat functions and values while providing significant support or benefit for migratory waterfowl or other wetland-dependent wildlife, or

Address specific resource concerns or needs for the restoration of wetland functions and values for wetland-dependent wildlife as identified in State wildlife action plans or NRCS national initiatives, and the specific plans wherein the resource concerns or needs were identified.

Adjacent land eligibility considerations and limitations.

Technical criteria and thresholds specific to the individual land eligibility categories to aid in determining and documenting land eligibility.

Technical considerations and parameters that will be used for waiver determinations under the purview of the State conservationist related to land eligibility, such as—

Larger widths or linkage distances for riparian areas enrolled under the riparian area land eligibility category.

Enrollment of lands with excessive restoration costs.

Additional specific criteria developed for consideration of lands established to trees under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

The technical considerations that may be used in the State to develop ranking factors, special ranking considerations, or ranking pools used to prioritize projects for selection.

Practices and activities eligible for ACEP-WRE funding.

Additional items or requirements that the State conservationist has identified must be included in or addressed in the conservation plan.

Technical considerations and parameters used in prescribing common CUAs, such as mowing, grazing, or water level management, for the wetland habitat types.

The convening of a sub-committee is likely a consideration to address this state-specific planning.