





Conservation Easement Options for Heron Lake Watershed Landowners

					
Easement Holder (Program)	Federal Government (Wetland Easements)	Federal Government (Grasslands Easements)	State (Reinvest In Minnesota)	State (Native Prairie Bank)	Private Non-Profit (Heron Lake Area Conservation Program)
Term/Duration of Easement	Permanent		Permanent	Permanent	Permanent
Residential Development	Prohibited (existing home site, if applicable, will be excluded from easement area)		Possibly, within building envelope	Prohibited (existing home site, if applicable, will be excluded from easement area)	Possibly, within building envelope
Non-residential buildings & structures	Not allowed; temporary hunting stands/blinds are allowed		Not allowed; temporary hunting stands/blinds are allowed	Not allowed. Pre-existing structures may be allowed in some instances. Portable deer stands are allowed.	Allowed with limitations
Roads & Trails	Roads are prohibited; trails allowed with limitations		Roads are prohibited; trails allowed with limitations	Pre-existing field roads are permitted but may not be improved. Limited trails may be allowed in some instances.	Allowed with limitations
Division	Allowed		Prohibited	May be allowed. Must be determined prior to easement taking effect.	Allowed with limitations
Agriculture	Allowed; Cropping, tillage, haying, and grazing is allowed	Haying and grazing options allowed; will affect payment rate	Prohibited	Haying and grazing options allowed; will affect payment rate. Must follow a DNR-approved grazing or haying plan.	Row crop agriculture allowed on up to 20% of overall easement area; haying and grazing allowed on entire property with limitations and approved plan
Mineral Rights	Retained	Allowed with limitations	Restricted	Restricted	Restricted
Food Plots	Allowed with limitations	Prohibited	Allowed with limitations	Pre-existing food plots may be permitted in some instances and with limitations	Allowed with limitations
Public Access via Easement	No		No	No	No
Hunting	Allowed		Allowed	Allowed	Allowed
Land Management	Landowner responsibility, including weed control; some affirmative rights given to USFWS (grassland/wetland management)		Landowner responsibility; under approved conservation plan	Partnership between landowner and DNR; state has rights to manage prairie.	Landowner responsibility; under approved management plan
Property Taxes	Landowner responsibility		Landowner responsibility	Landowner responsibility. Native prairie lands may qualify for Prairie Tax Exemption (regardless of easement enrollment).	Landowner responsibility
Eligibility	Land is eligible if it contains wetlands and maintained or restorable grasslands. Properties evaluated based upon potential wildlife habitat quality.		Land must have cropping history registered with FSA for a length of 4 to 6 years, during 2012-2017. Some non-cropped land potentially eligible but limited to certain percentage.	Lands with remnant prairie that has never been plowed; prairie quality must be moderate to high quality as determined by DNR.	Any land is eligible, but only 20% of overall easement area can be in agricultural use. Properties ranked and prioritized through combination of competitive bid process and property habitat score.
Payment	Lump-sum; value determined by percentage of adjusted county-assessed land value	Lump-sum (can be paid in installments across 3 years); value determined by percentage of adjusted county-assessed land value	Installments and lump-sum; determined by value of 90% of ag land value in township	Lump-sum (can be paid in installments); determined by value of 65% of marginal ag land value in township	Lump-sum; value determined by conservation easement appraisal and landowner bid