

CARLTON COUNTY SOIL AND
WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

COMPREHENSIVE
PLAN
FOR

2010 THROUGH 2014

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DEFINITION OF PURPOSE FOR THE CARLTON SWCD

The Carlton County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a subdivision of state government, created by the state under MN Statute Chapter 103C in 1961. The State charged the SWCD with assisting land occupiers with implementation of practices that conserve the soil and water resource of the State. A board of five (5) supervisors, elected at the general election, governs the District. The term of office is four (4) years.

The mission of the Carlton County SWCD is to **“Assist land occupiers in protecting and enhancing the natural resources of Carlton County.”** The Carlton SWCD works to fulfill this mission in Carlton County by providing leadership in water quality and soil erosion issues including: Environmental and Conservation Education, Resource Planning, Project Planning and Implementation, and Financial Assistance Programs for Conservation Practice Implementation.

The Comprehensive Plan is a tool for the SWCD to effectively carry out this mission. It is also a requirement for receiving state funds, and assistance from the United States Department of Agriculture. The Plan is developed for a 5-year period, and adopted by the SWCD board. All lands within the jurisdiction of the SWCD, which is all of Carlton County, are included in this plan.

INTRODUCTION

The Carlton SWCD considered goals in the Carlton County Water Plan (revised 2009) in revising the SWCD’s Comprehensive plan for 2010. Existing resource assessments in various plans and programs were also consulted for this Comprehensive plan.

The Carlton County SWCD will continue to work with its Federal, State, and Local conservation partners to implement resource protection and enhancement in Carlton County. Technical and financial assistance for both water quality and erosion and sediment control best management practice implementation in all resource areas of the county will continue to be a high priority for the SWCD. The SWCD will use the practices in the Natural Resource Conservation Service “Field Office Technical Guide”, as well as develop other practices as needed, to address resource protection in Carlton County.

PRIORITY LONG RANGE GOALS

The Carlton County SWCD has identified 6 goals as priorities to be addressed in this Comprehensive Plan.

1. Seek funding to sustain SWCD operations and deliver technical and financial assistance to county landowners
2. Develop long term space for SWCD operations
3. Cooperate with Carlton County in implementation of its Water Plan
4. Cooperate with Carlton County in implementation of property tax programs.
5. Build on the existing SWCD education program to engage Carlton County youth in the responsible use of natural resources.
6. Expand civic engagement opportunities
7. Continue results based planning and budgeting

PRIORITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Seek funding to sustain SWCD operations and deliver technical and financial assistance to county landowners.

In 2009 SWCD staff includes a Forestry/wetland Technician, Water Resources Coordinator, and an NRCS part time technician that primarily works with the agricultural sector. Together with a part time Administrative Assistant, a Manager, and Technical Services Area 3 staff, most sectors of land use are covered by SWCD staff with overlap that adds to program coverage. While past plans called for funding to expand, focus in this plan should be to maintain and sustain through new programs and opportunities.

Objectives:

- A. Continue TMDL contracts to sustain Water Resources Coordinator.
- B. Continue cooperation with NRCS to provide a base for Carlton County NRCS staff presence.
- C. Continue forestry programs including tree sale, stewardship planning, and planting services and develop new sources to fund forestry assistance program.
- D. Continue to lead local technical assistance to landowners through SWCD staff for wise use of Carlton County Resources.
- E. Track carbon sequestration programs and lead local coordination of verifying credits as appropriate.
- F. Develop Biomass utilization programs with local, state, and federal partners.

2. Develop long term space for SWCD operations.

The SWCD has a need for an office location that provides expansion opportunities, equipment storage, program demonstration space, and stable, accessible, and safe office operation space.

Objectives:

- A. Search for properties to meet the SWCD needs.
- B. Develop funding strategies for purchase of property.

3. Support Carlton County in implementation of its Water Plan.

The 2010 revised water plan includes education initiatives common to Carlton County and the SWCD. Specifically priority # 3 *Promote and Educate the Public about the County's Water Resources*

Objectives: (from Carlton County Water Plan)

Goal 1: Promote programs currently in place to enhance our water resources.

Actions:

1. Promote Carlton County SWCD programs including state cost share and low interest loan program for water quality improvement and implementation of soil erosion control best management practices.
2. Promote Carlton County SWCD planning efforts through other state and federal agencies including forest stewardship, farmland, and shoreland re-vegetation planning as important first steps in land and water best management practices implementation.
3. Promote available Carlton County SWCD technical assistance resources for water quality improvement and soil erosion control practices implementation.
4. Support and advocate increased resources for Carlton County SWCD to address the growing planning and technical assistance workload for water quality improvement and soil erosion control practice implementation.
5. Promote the Carlton County Planning and Zoning office's program for private well testing.

Goal 2: Educate the public on how to be good stewards of the land and water.

Actions:

1. Educate both landowners and contractors on the Wetland Conservation Act, including workshops for realtors, contractors and developers.
2. Educate both landowners and contractors on erosion control and stormwater best management practices, including workshops for contractors and developers.
3. Educate the public that health and septic systems are tied together.
4. Develop presentations and brochures that focus on land and water stewardship.
5. Educate the public on shoreland best management practices including restoring and maintaining buffers, fix eroding shorelines and healthy aquatic vegetation.
8. Educate landowners on BMPs including reducing soil erosion, proper application of fertilizers and pesticides, livestock management, shoreland buffers and aquatic vegetation.
9. Continue the momentum of the 2008 Carlton County Waters Summit by holding annual workshops or seminars for shoreland property owners.

4. Support Carlton County in marketing and technical assistance for implementation of tax incentive programs to landowners. The Sustainable Forestry Incentives Act and Green Acres and Rural Preserves tax programs define roles for the SWCD.

Objectives:

- A. Coordinate with Carlton County in the required technical assistance for landowners enrolling in property tax programs.
- B. Promote conservation through planning requirement for landowner enrolling in property tax programs.

5. Build on the existing SWCD education program to engage Carlton County youth in the responsible use of natural resources.

The SWCD has traditionally been involved in Environmental Education efforts on several levels. Participation in local programs such as the Arbor Day tree planting day with fourth graders and the Conservation Education Field Days with sixth graders gives the SWCD an opportunity to introduce kids and teachers to the SWCD. Carlton County usually has a good number of High Schools participate in the Area “Envirothon”, and SWCD staff has been involved in helping teams prepare for this competition. The addition of an Outdoor Learning Center in Carlton will serve all the school districts on the east end on the county.

Objectives:

- A. Develop ways to utilize Carlton School Forest for Carlton School District students and surrounding district students.
- B. Work with Environmental Educator contacts in local schools to expand participation in Area Envirothon, and other educational opportunities for students.
- C. Explore apprenticeship opportunities for students to help with technical work at the SWCD.

6. Civic engagement.

Building on past success including the Waters Summit and citizen monitoring The SWCD will work to engage more citizens and interest groups in conservation in the county.

Objectives:

- A. Hold conferences for target groups to disseminate program information.
- B. Use information and education resources such as web site, newsletters, and direct mailings to update target groups on program information.
- C. Develop a SWCD calendar as a SWCD promotion tool.
- D. Develop local clean water council to advise the SWCD on conservation priorities.

7. Continue results based planning and budgeting.

To be competitive in the Clean Water era the SWCD should move to identify priority projects and initiatives to be implemented. This will align the SWCD better with Legislative targets, state agency grant programs, and the governors funding proposals.

Objectives:

- A. Continue to develop and apply for grants based on priority conservation concerns in the county.
- B. Continue outcome budgeting.