

Carlton County Soil and Water Conservation District 2011 Annual Plan of Operations

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Carlton County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is to assist land occupiers in protecting and enhancing the natural resources of Carlton County. This mission is carried out through three primary program categories.

1. Conservation Education and Information
2. Technical Assistance
3. Financial Assistance

The SWCD implements programs to assist land occupiers in all land use areas of the county including: agricultural, forested, rural residential, and urban. With limited resources available, programs must be prioritized. The SWCD's Annual Plan provides this prioritization, outlining the primary objectives the SWCD will address for 2011 and the staff resources the SWCD will devote to these objectives. This plan also incorporates the SWCD's comprehensive plan, a 5 year long range plan that was updated in 2010.

Staffing:

The SWCD employs two full time staff, a Technician and a Manager, a part time Administrative Assistant for 20 hours per week, and a Water Resources Coordinator that is under contract to complete specific tasks for the Nemadji River Deer Creek TMDL study.

Comprehensive Plan Goals:

The Carlton County SWCD has identified 7 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

Some aspects of the annual plan will address multiple comprehensive plan objectives.

ANNUAL PLAN PRIMARY OBJECTIVES SUMMARY

Conservation implementation is a high priority for the SWCD. Assistance will be provided in the following areas:

Forestry

Three new grant projects will be implemented in 2011 in the forestry area.

1. Continue and expand the contract with NRCS for forestry implementation in the Nemadji and Midway River Watersheds.
2. Implement the NE Landscape Committee project for targeted forestry assistance.
3. Implement the Clean Water Fund grant for Elim Creek restoration and Red Clay Dam assessment.

Forestry programs that will be continued include:

4. Continue the SWCD Tree Sale.
5. Support the Kettle River Private Woodlands Council.
6. Forest Stewardship plan writing.

Agriculture

With more NRCS Staff at the Duluth Field office and a part time NRCS technician in Carlton County, ag producers are being better served for farm bill programs. The SWCD will continue to work with partners to bring these programs to Carlton County producers.

1. Continue to promote opportunities for conservation implementation through farm bill programs. Specifically work on a joint marketing plan with NRS and Carlton County Extension.
2. Coordinate and participate in producer education events as needed.

Urban and Rural Residential

The SWCD's Technician is a Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control (CPESC) and received certification as an Erosion Control System Installer/Inspector. The call for these services has never really materialized to the extent expected. Certifications will be allowed to expire but technical assistance will still be provided to this sector. Referrals will be made when project scope exceeds capabilities.

1. Continue to provide assistance to the private sector and local governments on urban erosion control and water quality issues.

Financial assistance will be utilized through conservation implementation in all land use areas of the county.

Administration

Significant SWCD resources are directed to the administration of the SWCD. With grants come reports and fiscal management. Accountability for program and grant dollars requires accurate and timely reporting. Continuation of existing administrative responsibilities includes:

1. Complete all needed SWCD reporting requirements.
2. Manage payroll for SWCD staff and Supervisors.
3. Conduct an annual conservation recognition event.

In addition in 2011 the SWCD will:

1. Continue to pursue a funding package for the green building project to address long term space needs.
2. Continue to work with funding partners on sustainable SWCD funding.
3. Develop a 50th Anniversary event.
4. Conduct an all staff/all board retreat for strategic planning.

Staff and Supervisors continue to manage the challenging financial situation of the SWCD. Sustainable funding remains a goal for the SWCD. With inadequate reserves, and yearly budget and cash flow issues, the SWCD will continue to work towards sustainable funding. The priority remains to maintain staff to implement the programs the SWCD is responsible for. This has involved cut backs in some areas and shifting resources in other areas. The second priority is to build a reserve operating fund to better deal with future funding decreases without major upsets to operations. The SWCD will continue expanding the charges for services programs where applicable, build administration expenses into grants for income, and working with state and local officials to build the SWCDs budget to address this sustainable funding goal.

Conservation Education

Although education and outreach programs have taken the brunt of budget cuts in recent years, the SWCD is committed to maintaining programs and opportunities for conservation education in the county. SWCD awareness and program promotion will be continued through news releases, public presentations and meetings, and direct mailings. Adult and student education activities will be continued, taking advantage of conservation partners to assist in these efforts.

Special Projects

The SWCD will continue leading a TMDL study on the Nemadji River and Deer Creek that began in 2008. Watersheds with TMDL's encompassing the other two major watersheds of the county will likely provide more opportunities for the SWCD to access implementation funding.

With federal funding of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, there are many grant opportunities for conservation implementation in the Lake Superior portion of the county. The SWCD was successful in acquiring several grants in 2010. Less grant writing and more implementation of existing grants can be expected for 2011.

Supervisors' have an active roll in many aspects of Carlton SWCD operations and programs. The following workload analysis reflects the collective time spent by staff and supervisors on specific areas of operation.

Workload Analysis

Category / Activity	Manager	Tech	Water Reso. Coor	Admin. Assist.	Board
Forestry					
Tree Program	140	20		180	30
Fee For Services Assistance		180			
Forestry Technical Assistance		200			
Woodland Council		20			
Agriculture					
Farm Bill Programs Promotion	30				
NRCS GLRI		170			
Agriculture Technical Assist.		60			
Urban/Rural Residential					
Urban Tech. Assist Program		15			
Education/Outreach					
Student Education	20	40		70	20
Adult Outreach	20	150		20	20
Wetland Consvr. Act					
LGU Assistance		200			
Fee for Service Assistance		100			
Special Projects					
TMDL Project	50		1728		
SWAG			40		
Coastal TA	50	175			
SWCD Administration					
Financial Management	80			280	
SWCD Management	760	200		250	
SWCD Reporting	60	60		20	
Grant admin and reporting	50	40			
SWCD Building	30				50
Grant Development	140	20			
Develop SWCD Events	120	20		132	20
SWCD Planning	50				15
MASWCD/Area III/ MACDE	120				120
Training	50	100		40	
TOTAL	1770	1770	1768	992	275

Notes to Workload Analysis:

234 staff days/year subtract 26 days for holidays and vacation days = 208 days /full time staff

208 day x 8.5 hours = **1768 hours** /year for full time employee

Administrative Assistant works 20hrs/wk x 52 weeks – 6 days leave/holidays = **992 hours**

COST-SHARE PROGRAMS

The Carlton County SWCD has financial tools to aid county residents in implementation of erosion and sediment control, and water quality best management practices.

Source	2010 Amount
Ag. BMP Loans State of MN	\$ 249,000
EQIP USDA	\$ 200,000
WHIP USDA	\$ 50,000
State Cost-share State of MN	\$ 6,000

In addition to this financial assistance the SWCD offers planning and design assistance in cooperation with conservation partners. Both NRCS and Technical Services Area III provide the SWCD with engineering capabilities for conservation practice design. The SWCD technician provides technical assistance in some non-engineering practices. With these programs the Carlton County SWCD will address high priority water quality problems.

The 2011 cost share allocation to the SWCD was reduced from \$13,000 to near \$6,000. This allocation will be used to implement high priority erosion control and water quality practices throughout the county.

High priority water quality problems are areas where sediment, nutrients, chemicals, or other pollutants discharge to Department of Natural Resources designated protected waters, or any high priority waters as identified in the Compressive Local Water Plan or the SWCD's Compressive Plan, or discharge to a sinkhole or ground water. High priority erosion problems are areas where erosion from wind and/or water is occurring at levels equal to or exceeding 2T, or any area that exhibits active gully erosion, bank erosion, or areas identified in the Comprehensive Local Water Plan or the SWCD's Comprehensive Plan.

2011 BUDGET

Revenues

County Allocation	\$98,600
NRBG Grant	\$7,500
BWSR General Services Grant	\$18,100
Project Administration	\$42,900
Fee for Services	\$8,000
Misc. Income	\$4,900

Total	
Revenues	\$180,000

Expenditures

Pay Roll	\$150,000
Education and Promo.	\$2,000
Office Operations	\$28,000
Total Expenses	\$180,000