

Carlton County Soil and Water Conservation District 2012 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 2012 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 multiple special projects.

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

1. The NRCS GLRI project is awaiting new federal dollars. Focus will shift away from planning and focus on implementing the previously planned practices and maintenance needs of past practices implemented in 2011. As cost share funds and technical assistance contract funds become available, the SWCD will work with NRCS to take advantage of these funds and plan more practices for implementation.

2. The NE Landscape Committee project for targeted forestry assistance will move into a outreach phase using the data base completed in 2011. Depending on these results, cost share practice planning and implementation may occur late in 2012 season.

Forestry programs that will be continued include:

3. Continue the SWCD Tree Sale.
4. Support the Kettle River Private Woodlands Council.
5. 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 Soil Fertility program with NRS and Carlton County Extension.

Urban and Rural Residential

The SWCD's Technician certifications as a Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control (CPESC) and an Erosion Control System Installer/Inspector have been allowed to expire due to lack of demand. Technical assistance will still be provided to this sector as requested. 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 as requested.

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 2012 the SWCD will:

1. Continue to pursue a long term office space.
2. Continue to work with funding partners on sustainable SWCD funding.
3. Conduct an all staff/all board retreat for strategic planning.
4. Finish revamp of web site and use Face book presence for outreach

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 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 2011 including 2 Fish and Wildlife Service projects for culvert replacement and inventory, and a implementation ramp up in the Kettle River Watershed. Less grant writing and more implementation of existing grants can be expected for 2012, although continued grant writing will be a part of the SWCDs workload for funding reasons.

Implement the Clean Water Fund grant for Elim Creek restoration and Red Clay Dam assessment will be led by the SWCD Water Resources Tech Position

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.

Projected Workload Analysis for 2012

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		1428		
SWAG			40		
NE Land Scape Forestry Implementation	50	175			
Red Clay Dam CWF 1	70		100		
Kettle River Watershed CWF2	110				
F&WS grant			200		

SWCD Administration							
Financial Management	80					280	
SWCD Management	640		200			250	
SWCD Reporting	60		60			120	
Grant admin and reporting	50		40				
SWCD Building	30						50
Grant Development	140		20				
Develop SWCD Events	60		20			32	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	2012 Amount
Ag. BMP Loans State of MN	\$ 151,000
EQIP USDA	\$ 200,000
WHIP USDA	\$ 50,000
State Cost-share State of MN	\$ 14,000

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 2012 cost share allocation to the SWCD was increased to \$10,000 from near \$6,000 in 2011. 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 Comprehensive Local Water Plan or the SWCD's Comprehensive 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.

2012 BUDGET

Revenues

County Allocation	\$104,500
NRBG Grant	\$7,500
BWSR General Services Grant	\$18,670
Project Administration	\$63,000
Fee for Services	\$6,500
Misc. Income	\$1,000

Total	
Revenues	\$201,170

Expenditures

Pay Roll	\$166,690
Education and Promo.	\$1,055
Office Operations	\$33,425
Total Expenses	\$201,170