

WHAT IS A CONSERVATION DISTRICT?

In the early 1930s, along with the greatest depression this nation ever experienced, came an equally unparalleled ecological disaster known as the Dust Bowl. Following a severe and sustained drought in the Great Plains, the region's soil began to erode and blow away, creating huge black dust storms that blotted out the sun and swallowed the countryside. Thousands of "dust refugees" left the black fog to seek better lives.

But the storms stretched across the nation. They reached south to Texas and east to New York. Dust even sifted into the White House and onto the desk of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

On Capitol Hill, while testifying about the erosion problem, soil scientist Hugh Hammond Bennett threw back the curtains to reveal a sky blackened by dust. Congress unanimously passed legislation declaring soil and water conservation a national policy and priority. Since about three-fourths of the continental United States is privately owned, Congress realized that only active, voluntary support from landowners would guarantee the success of conservation work on private land.

In 1937, President Roosevelt wrote the governors of all the states recommending legislation that would allow local landowners to form soil conservation districts.

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Swift County Soil & Water Conservation District Services



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SWIFT COUNTY SWCD

The Swift County SWCD has a variety of services to offer. Landowners and operators can receive one stop shopping for all their conservation needs.....from engineering and designing conservation practices to assisting in farm planning and implementing tree and grass plantings. The SWCD has engineering staff available at the area level to survey and design plans for waterways, terraces, ag waste management systems, sediment basins, diversions and other practices. The SWCD can help install tree planting for shelterbelts, riparian buffers, wildlife plantings, direct hardwood seeding, field windbreaks and living snow fences. A grass drill is available for landowners with native grass plantings to be seeded for CRP and other programs.

CRP PROGRAM

The continuous CRP sign up provisions allow agricultural producers to enroll environmentally sensitive land, at any time of the year, for a period of 10-15 years. There are a number of practices eligible for enrollment under the continuous sign up program. Continuous CRP practices include: filter strips, field windbreaks, farmstead shelterbelts, living snow fences, grass waterways, wetland restorations and several other practices that will enhance wildlife habitat.



TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

The Swift County SWCD offers over 35 varieties of trees and shrubs for conservation practices. Orders are placed in the fall and over the winter for the spring planting season.



The SWCD works with landowners to choose the best varieties for the tree site. The SWCD also works with local conservation clubs and watershed organizations to assist landowners with cost sharing programs for wildlife plantings and conservation practices.

BMP PROGRAM

The SWCD in conjunction with the MN Department of Agriculture and area banks offer a Best Management Practices loan program. This is for landowners who want to borrow money at 3% interest for upgrading old septic systems, feedlots, and purchasing conservation tillage equipment. Low interest loan dollars can also be used for the "out-of-pocket" costs associated with installing a conservation practice. The landowner then works with the bank of their choice securing the loan.

SERVICES

Tree Planting Program

- Design layout & plant windbreaks, shelterbelts, living snowfences, and wildlife plantings.

Weed Control

- Weed Fabric
- Tree Tubes
- Tree Stakes

Drill Program

- DuraTech 10-1/2 ft. no-till drill

Conservation Education Programs

- Soil & Water Stewardship Week
- Envirothon
- Poster Contest
- Fair Booth
- Newsletter
- Ambush Park Learning Center



Other Services

- State Cost Share
- AgBMP Loan Program
- Farmbill Asst. Grant
- Rainfall Monitors
- Observation Well Monitoring Program
- Special Watershed Projects
- Water Quality Monitoring