

2018 Annual Report

Swift County SWCD

A Soil and Water Conservation District is a legal subdivision of the State governed by a five-member Board, elected by the public. They provide the local leadership and direction for applying conservation practices to the land.

The following Annual Report, for the Swift County SWCD, is presented by the following Board members and office personnel.

SUPERVISORS

CHAIRMAN – DALE SCHLIEMAN
VICE CHAIRMAN – MARK WEIMERSKIRCH
SECRETARY – CLINTON SCHUERMAN
TREASURER – ORVIN GRONSETH
PR & I – CARL AHRNDT

BOARD MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THE SECOND THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 8:00 AM AT THE USDA BUILDING LOCATED AT 1430 UTAH AVE, BENSON, MN 56215

DISTRICT STAFF

PHEASANTS FOREVER FARM BILL BIOLOGIST – GEMMA KLEINSCHMIDT
DISTRICT MANAGER – ANDY ALBERTSEN
CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN – DALTON HERRBOLDT
OFFICE MANAGER – SHERI GADES

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST – MELANIE DICKMAN (ACTING)
SOIL CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN – RICK GRONSETH
AREA CONSERVATIONIST – JOHN MATZ
STATE CONSERVATIONIST – TROY DANIELL

BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – JOHN JASCHKE, ST PAUL
BOARD CONSERVATIONIST – TARA OSTENDORF, WAITE PARK
WETLAND SPECIALIST – LYNDIA PONTING, ST. CLOUD
CLEAN WATER SPECIALIST – BRAD WOZNEY, ST. CLOUD
BUFFER AND SOIL LOSS SPECIALIST – PAUL ERDMANN, ST. PAUL

Services Provided by the District:

- Dalton Herrboldt works with the tree planning, planting, and fabric installation.
- Technical and financial assistance through state cost share for installation of conservation practices.
- Promote conservation educational activities through displays and promotion through the annual newsletter.
- Administer State Conservation Programs such as RIM, Cost-Share, CREP, and CWF grants.
- Member of the Technical Evaluation Panel for the Wetlands Conservation Act of 1991.
- Provide two native grass drills for conservation seeding.
- Administer a county well-sealing program, with funding from County Water Plan.
- Assist walk-ins and customers – provide information or direction to a contact person.
- Report financials into the eLink program for grant management as required by BWSR.
- Support NRCS with filing and customer assistance.
- Tom Orr serves as County Ag Inspector for Swift County as contracted through the SWCD.
- Andy Albertsen works with the AgBMP loan program.
- Gemma Kleinschmidt provides Farm Bill assistance in cooperation with NRCS for CRP and WRP, promotes and manages the RIM/CREP programs for the county. Attends local MN Prairie Plan team meetings.
- Andy Albertsen attends the Chippewa River Watershed Project and Pomme de Terre River Association meetings monthly and assists with cost share applications.
- Pope-Swift Cooperative Weed Management Area helps identify invasive species in Pope and Swift Counties and provides invasive species control using biological and chemical methods through contracting with local partners.
- Assists MN DNR with promotion of the Walk-In-Access (WIA) program and helps enroll interested landowners.
- Technical Service Assistance provided through Area 2 TSA agreement.
- Andy Albertsen administers the State Buffer Law in Swift County & assists landowners throughout the process.
- The SWCD sells native grass seed and assists landowners with seed mix selection.
- The SWCD offers ATV seeding services for smaller areas.

Education Activities

- Outstanding Conservationist Award – Doug & Alicia Schliep received the award this year and attended State Convention.
- Arbor Day – Each 6th grade student in the KMS School received a conifer tree to plant.
- Newsletter – One newsletter was printed in partnership with Swift County Parks, Drainage, and Wetlands. It was mailed to every address located in Swift County. Approximately 5,600 copies were distributed.

- Envirothon – Encouraged participation in the event, although no one participated from the local schools. Staff assisted with Area 2 Envirothon held at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center.
- Water Festival – 5th & 6th grade students from Benson and KMS schools visited 17 different learning stations related to conservation of soil and water.
- Swift County Fair, Conservation Booth was staffed during the 4-day fair. One rain barrel was given away during the free sign up.
- The SWCD adopted a three mile stretch of Minnesota State Highway 9, from County Road 20 to the sugar beet plant.
- The district purchased logo decals for the enclosed trailer.
- SWCD held a Strategic Planning Meeting in which priorities for the District were established. Discussions were held on potential areas for growth using a Sow, Grow, Harvest, Plow activity. The District Mission Statement was also revised.
- Lower Shakopee AIG Field Days – Swift SWCD assisted CRWP and LSP in planning a series of five field days. Topics were Conservation Drainage, Tillage, Cover Crops, Conservation Leases, and Soil Health/Grazing. The events were lightly attended, weather played a factor.

Program Activities

- County Ag Inspector received six weed complaints. Phone calls to landowners were made. The areas were cleaned up.
- County Ag Inspector administered three applicator license tests.
- Leafy Spurge beetles were requested from Swift county for deposit at nine other locations.
- DNR Observation Wells – The SWCD monitors 28 observation wells monthly for nine months. Readings are entered online and available to the public.
- Fourteen tree plantings, 1,997 trees were planted in 9 shelterbelts, 3 field windbreaks, and 2 wildlife plantings. Approximately 6386 feet of weed barrier fabric was applied.
- Rainfall Monitoring – Six sites in Swift County are used to monitor precipitation. Reports are submitted monthly.
- Grass Drill Seeding – 403 acres of conservation seeding in 35 areas throughout the County were done using the District’s grass drills.
- ATV seeding – two seedings totaling 1.75 acres were completed. They were for buffer law compliance.
- State Cost Share Practices – one cover crop seeding and one sediment control basin were completed using State Cost-Share funding.
- The SWCD approved policy that allows the use of state cost share funding to be available for cover crops. One contract was approved in 2018 for 340 acres.
- The District site checked 71 RIM & CREP easement parcels, 2 RIM violations were addressed and 24 cost share practices.

- Three CREP applications were submitted and approved, which will result in 96.26 acres being permanently protected in 2019.
- Farm Bill Biologist – Encouraged and worked with landowners to sign up for CRP and RIM, 79 CRP conservation plans were written in 2018, totaling 1675.46 acres
- EQIP – There were 7 applications and 4 contracts for the 2017 year. There were 320 acres signed up for various practices. Also there were 11 applications for CSP.
- Swift County was involved with Pope County in a cooperative weed management plan. Weed of the Week articles were published in the Agralite News. Coordinated with County Roads Supervisor to locate areas that need weed control.
- Identified invasive weed species in Swift County and used GPS to map and to monitor the spread of these plants.
- Sign up for the MN Walk-In Access Program enrolled two contracts in 2018 for a total of 155 acres.
- Tracked buffer compliance resulting in almost 1800 parcels being affected by the Buffer Law.
- Mailed letters and made phone calls to the landowners effected by the Buffer Law.

Agency Coordination

The District office is involved with several multi-agency groups that meet on a regular basis.

These include the following:

- ❖ Pomme de Terre River Association – Portions of the watershed are being sampled for water quality. MPCA is sampling locations in Swift County at this time. There were 18 alternative tile intakes installed on Doug Schliep’s farm in Fairfield township.
- ❖ Chippewa River Watershed Project.
- ❖ County Ag Inspector gave presentation at township official’s annual meeting.
- ❖ County Local Water Management Plan – The District is involved with the County Local Water Management committee.
- ❖ NRCS – The District is involved with the Public Input meeting and Local Workgroup meetings.
- ❖ MN Dept. of Ag. – The District works with the MDA in administering the MN Ag Water Quality Certification Program in Swift County.

Other

The construction of the new storage building was completed, and shelves built. The tree shed was also cleaned out and new dividers were constructed.