

ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK FOR THE
SWIFT COUNTY SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
JANUARY 1, 2017 TO DECEMBER 31, 2017

SUPERVISORS

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

DISTRICT STAFF

FARMBILL BIOLOGIST - GEMMA KLEINSCHMIDT
DISTRICT TECHNICIAN // COUNTY AG INSPECTOR - TOM ORR
CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN / DISTRICT TECHNICIAN – ANDY ALBERTSEN
OFFICE MANAGER – SHERI GADES

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST –
SOIL TECHNICIAN – RICK GRONSETH
AREA CONSERVATIONIST- GARY WATSON
STATE CONSERVATIONIST – CATHEE PULLMAN

BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – JOHN JASCHKE, ST PAUL
BOARD CONSERVATIONISTS- TARA OSTENDORF, WAITE PARK
WETLAND SPECIALIST – KANE RADEL, MARSHALL

The District cooperates with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) under a Memorandum of Understanding whereby technical assistance on soil survey, engineering, agronomy, biology, woodland conservation and administration is furnished to the District by the NRCS office at Benson, Minnesota as their headquarters. The District reimburses NRCS for office space for all District employees over one person, based on square feet at the current lease rate.

The NRCS and SWCD prohibits discrimination in its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK 2017

SWIFT COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
1430 UTAH AVE
BENSON, MINNESOTA 56215

ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK FOR JANUARY 1, TO DECEMBER 31, 2017

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Annual Plan is to identify resource problems within our Soil and Water Conservation District. In addition to identifying these resource problems, the Plan outlines and specifies objectives to be accomplished in solving these resource problems. The Annual Plan breaks down the goals and objectives identified in the Comprehensive Plan with specific actions to be taken in the year 2017.

The Swift County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors and Staff will review this plan three times in 2017 at our May, August and December meetings.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SWIFT COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- A. Water Quality Improvement
- B. Soil Erosion and Sediment Control
- C. Provide Education and Information
- D. Improve Public Relations

II. OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS:

Objective A. WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Improve both surface and groundwater quality.

- ✓ Improve water quality in the Chippewa River, Pomme de Terre River, and Upper Minnesota River Watersheds by utilizing TMDL & WRAPS reports.
 - Promote the CRP environmental priority practice sign-up by encouraging landowners to establish grass filter strips by use of the district newsletter and media. Goal - 500 acres in filter strips.
 - EQIP Program - including irrigation upgrades, no-till practices, cover crops and composting system are scheduled to be completed. (18 applications received). The top three priorities for 2017 EQIP are: 1) erosion control, 2) water quality and 3) nutrient management. Goal – 15 erosion control practices – terraces, grass waterways, and sediment control basins.
 - Continue to work on high priority animal waste systems. NRCS/SWCD will assist with technical assistance and cost share dollars and with technical engineering. Goal – 2 landowner contracts/assistance.
 - Treatment of critical areas in each watershed using terraces, sediment basins, grade stabilization structures, and filter strip incentive campaign via watersheds. Goal - 300 acres protected.
- ❖ The Pomme de Terre River Association
 - One Supervisor, District Technician, County Commissioner, and the Swift County Environmental Service Director serve on the committees along with representatives from five other counties in the Pomme de Terre River Watershed
 - ✓ Has received a BWSR Clean Water Fund grant to implement projects in the watershed that address the fecal coliform TMDL, which the river is listed as “impaired” through Swift County. The local watershed work group has listed *water and sediment control basins* as priority practices to be addressed through a MPCA 319 grant with funding incentives attached to practices that qualify and are approved.

- ✓ Contribute towards the development and implementation of One Watershed, One Plan for which the PDTRA received funding to develop.
 - ✓ Meet with landowners, lake shore property owners and city representatives to determine what priorities should be addressed and indicate what programs are available.
 - ✓ The Swift SWCD will promote and submit applications to the PDT JPB for approval for additional watershed fund incentives.
 - ✓ Assist the Pomme de Terre coordinator in promoting practices to reduce fecal coliform and turbidity impairments in the river. Practices include sediment basis, shoreline restorations, alternative tile intakes, livestock exclusion, wetland restorations, buffer strips, grassed waterways and rain gardens.
 - ✓ Assist Swift County with continued investigation and monitoring for the Pomme de Terre Watershed diagnostic study. Round two of the WRAPS (Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies) report to begin in 2017.
- ❖ Be an active member with the Area II West Central Technical Service Area (TSA) to deliver non-point engineering assistance to land users in Swift County for practices such as shoreline restorations, alternative tile intakes and sediment control basins.
- Administer and inform county residents regarding the State Revolving Loan Fund Program for Best Management Practices.
 - Informing the public through informational meetings, district newsletters, radio, news articles and personal contacts.
 - District Technician is to work with landowners/operators to establish Best Management Practices through Ag BMP. Highest priority practices will be (listed in no particular order):
 - ✓ 1- Ag Waste - Runoff control, clean water diversions
 - ✓ 4- Septic Systems – Upgrades in Pomme de Terre
 - ✓ 3- Tillage Equipment – Low interest loans
- (Based on receiving an allotment from SRF.)*
- ❖ Assist Swift County Commissioners and the local governmental unit with implementation of the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act.

- Assist with wetland determination processing and technical panel participation.
 - When needed assist with restoration and/or replacement plans.
 - Act as clearinghouse for information and maintain national wetland inventory maps.
- ❖ The District will continue to have a Farm Bill Biologist to assist with implementing Farm Bill conservation programs. (see Goal under Soil Erosion & Sediment Control objective)
 - Work with landowners who wish to sign up for general and continuous CRP sign up for 2017.
 - Promote state, federal, and local programs through newspaper articles, media and district meetings.
 - Concentrate our efforts on highest priority sites along ditch systems and look at potential side inlet structure sites.
 - Ag Inspector has been certified as a county weed inspector. Give commercial pesticide applicator test to 6-8 new people each year and give presentation to township officials at their annual meeting.
 - Promote and sign up landowners interested in the DNR Walk-In Access program with assistance from PF Biologist to.
- ❖ Continue utilizing the Cooperative Weed management Program with Pope SWCD to identify and manage the spread of invasive species.
- ❖ Administer the State Buffer Law.
 - Identify parcels that are and are not compliant.
 - Work with landowners to become compliant by stated deadlines.
 - Provide technical assistance for installing buffer strips.
 - Promote voluntary buffer strips on areas not requiring a buffer.
- ❖ Assist the Swift County Board of Commissioners and Water Planning Staff with the implementation of the water planning activities in the county.
 - One Supervisor and the District Technician will continue to serve on the local water plan task force.
 - District will promote well sealing through the EQIP and local cost share programs.
 - Identify locations for rain gardens. Goal – 2 new rain gardens.

OBJECTIVE B: SOIL EROSION & SEDIMENT CONTROL

Protect soil from wind and water erosion.

- ❖ Protect cropland from water and wind erosion by bringing the soil loss within tolerable limits by implementing various state and federal cost share and land retirement programs.

Continue to implement and encourage the WRE (Wetland Reserve Easement), RIM, and continuous CRP.

- ✓ Promote wetland restorations.
- ✓ Promote riparian land sign-ups.
- ✓ Promote marginal ag land sign-ups

Goal – 1200 acres protected

- Farm Bill Biologist will work with landowners to enroll critical areas of land in CRP and assist with developing plans to help landowners manage their vegetative cover.
- Promote RIM and WRE (Wetland Reserve Easement) sign-up and assist with establishment of vegetative cover on these acres.
- Complete RIM/CREP site inspection/maintenance reviews.
- Promote incentive program payments to landowners who qualify for practices within the Chippewa River watershed for high priority water quality practices.
- Maintain 100 staff hours to promote and plan conservation tillage and support promotional efforts by others. Goal – 2000 acres crop residue, maintaining 50% residues on fields.
- Assist NRCS with EQIP program.
 - ✓ Perform on-site field investigations.
 - ✓ Assist with technical application of engineering and agronomic practices.
 - ✓ Recommendations for certification of conservation practices for landowners/operators.
- ❖ Continue District tree planting program. Provide assistance for farmstead and field windbreaks and wildlife plantings. Inform the public of the availability of the Tree planter and Fabric Weed Barrier machine.

- Provide tree matting fabric service.
- Goal – 6,000 trees planted
- Goal – 2 miles of field windbreaks and 8 field windbreaks
- Promote tree planting on CRP. On CRP Forestry practices – and DNR Forester will assist with plans.
- Promote the No - Till Drill program. Drill usage of 1,500 acres.
- Acquire and promote the use of broadcast seeder. Goal – 15 acres.

OBJECTIVE C: EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

To increase public awareness of the Soil and Water Conservation activities in Swift County.

- ❖ Develop new interest in the cost-share and land retirement programs. These programs include State Cost-Share, EQIP, RIM, WRE, CRP, State Revolving Loan Fund, and Walk In Access program.
 - Individual farm contacts are to be made by a District Technician/Farm Bill Biologist to promote all cost share and land retirement programs.
 - District will continue to function as a clearinghouse for the existing conservation programs available.
 - Continue to promote the conservation tillage practices in our District.
 - Supervisors will attend one of the four Area meetings held during 2017.
 - The SWCD will work with other groups and agencies in the continued maintenance of the outdoor learning area at Ambush Park.
 - Conduct a county bus tour of local projects in conjunction with CRWP.
 - Work with area schools to teach conservation practices and learn of the benefits associated with it through the local Water Festival.

- ✓ Do one environmental presentation teaching elementary students the benefits of trees in conjunction with Arbor Day.
- ✓ Host a water festival for area 5th and/or 6th graders at the Outdoor Learning Center.
- Host a Cover Crops field day.
- Host a Rain Garden Workshop.

- Educate the landowners and operators in the Shakopee Creek watershed of the sedimentation problems and solutions in the priority area.

- Inform citizens of yearly rain fall utilizing the data collected through the 6 monitors in the county. We will be submitting yearly data to the local newspapers and in our SWCD newsletter.

- ❖ Re-create website to provide updated information to reflect District services.

- ❖ Promote conservation practices and programs by use of District newsletter. This will be published once in 2017. Work with FSA possibly utilizing their newsletter also.

- ❖ Improve the Districts overall education and information efforts in schools, churches and other establishments.
 - Soil Stewardship materials will be provided to schools.
 - Promote and participate in the State Envirothon.

 - Hand out evergreen tree seedlings to KMS sixth grade students for Arbor Day 2017.

 - Assist with the Chippewa River Watershed project annual meeting.

- ❖ Continue to monitor 26 observation wells throughout the county

OBJECTIVE D: IMPROVE PUBLIC RELATIONS

Improve relationships with the Public and County Boards.

- ❖ Board will visit with county commissioners to update them on the quarterly summary of activities.

- ❖ SWCD will invite one of the county commissioners to each monthly Board meeting.

- ❖ Publish news articles in area papers highlighting the district and its current or pending events/projects. Publish articles that promote various

conservation practices and good land stewardship. District board & staff will strive for a goal of 2-3 articles in 2017.

III: COST-SHARE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

A: HIGH PRIORITY WIND AND WATER EROSION PROBLEMS:

High priority erosion problems means areas where erosion from wind or water is occurring equal to, or in excess of 2 x T tons per acres per year or is occurring on any area that exhibits active gully erosion or is identified as high priority in the comprehensive local water plan or the conservation district's comprehensive plan.

State cost-share funds will be used to install critical area stabilization, diversions, field windbreaks, grass waterways, waste management, riparian buffer strips, sediment retention's, erosion or water control structures, streambank, shore land and roadside protection and terraces

B. HIGH PRIORITY WATER QUALITY

High priority water quality problems means areas where sediment, nutrients, chemicals, or other pollutants discharge to Department of Natural Resources designated protected waters or to any high priority waters as identified in a comprehensive local water plan or the conservation district's comprehensive plan, or discharged to a sinkhole or groundwater. The pollutant delivery rate to the water source is in amounts that will impair the quality or usefulness of the water resource.

As stated in the District's Comprehensive Plan, potential for critical sedimentation in Swift County occurs on approximately 1818 acres.

1. Terracing, field windbreaks, grass waterways, and grass filter strips, CRP program and Conservation Tillage will continue to be promoted to control high priority sedimentation areas.
2. Install 10 structures where needed to control gully erosion. Terraces for ephemeral erosion as well as conservation tillage.
3. Use State Cost Share, land retirement programs, and CRWP funds for funding wetland restorations in the Chippewa River water shed.
4. Promote additional water shed funding for projects in the Pomme de Terre watershed.

Funds needed to install practices to control high priority sedimentation problems are listed in Part C Allocation of State Cost Share Funds.

C: ALLOCATION OF STATE COST-SHARE FUNDS:

The Swift County SWCD anticipates that its allocation for 2017 is \$10,055.00. The total dollars will be used to install high priority wind and water erosion programs. The county receives dollars through the State Low Interest Loan Program Revolving Fund (SRF) the district will concentrate on using State Cost Share dollars for practices which have a SRF Loan.

According to their job approval authority, Tom Orr (SWCD) and NRCS (Rick Gronseth) have been appointed as the technical representatives for the State Cost-share program.

Priority for Funding:

1. TERRACES	High Priority
2. AG WASTE SYSTEM	High Priority
3. FIELD WINDBREAKS	High Priority
4. TECHNICAL ADMINISTRATION	
TOTAL	\$ 10,055.00

D: ADDITIONAL IMPLEMENTATION \$

SRF Loan Funds	210,000.00
Additional Loan Funds	100,000.00
WCA	<u>5,000.00</u>
TOTAL***	\$315,000.00

Additional Programs and funding sources: Federal EQIP dollars through NRCS, CRP, RIM and WRE, the RIM Riparian Clean Water Fund program, and the Clean Water Fund grant.

***There is also potential for funding for land owners through the Chippewa River Watershed Project, Pomme de Terre Watershed, and Clean Water Legacy grand funding through the Pope County SWCD.

IV: STAFFING NEEDS WORKLOAD ANALYSES WORKSHEET

Our staff consists of a Farmbill Biologist, Office Manager, District Technician, Conservation Technician, NRCS Conservationist, and NRCS Soil Conservation Technician.

2017 STAFF OBJECTIVES: | District Tech | Office Mgr. | Farmbill Biologist | Conservation Tech

A: WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT: .60 .30 .60 .65

Improve surface water and water quality land treatments, 2014-farm bill, well water monitoring. Help implement Swift County Comprehensive Water Plan, CRP and RIM Programs.

B: SOIL EROSION: .50 .25 .60 .50

Promote State-Cost Share Program through farm contacts, Information campaigns. Control severe soil erosion on CRP, RIM Programs, tree maintenance Program, tree planting, living snow fences and tree matting application and grass drill program.

C: EDUCATION AND INFORMATION: .40 .45 .25 .40

Work with Special promotions, Conservation tillage, CRP, RIM Programs and Inter-agency coordination. Implement education and information, Soil Stewardship material, Workshops, radio and newspapers, schools.

Total staff time for FY 2017 1.50 1.00 1.50 1.50

TOTAL Staff time 5.50^^

^^ This total includes the NRCS District Conservationist time and NRCS Soil Conservation Technician.

See Attachment: