

2017 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

CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN / DISTRICT TECHNICIAN – ANDY ALBERTSEN

OFFICE MANAGER – SHERI GADES

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST – JEFF HELLERMANN (ACTING DC)

SOIL CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN – RICK GRONSETH

AREA CONSERVATIONIST – GARY WATSON

STATE CONSERVATIONIST – CURTIS ELKE (ACTING)

BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – JOHN JASCHKE, ST PAUL

BOARD CONSERVATIONIST – TARA OSTENDORF, WAITE PARK

Services Provided by the District:

- 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 TEP panel for the Wetlands Conservation Act of 1991.
- Provide two native grass drill for conservation seeding.
- Administer a county well – sealing program, contingent upon funding from County Water Plan.
- Assist walk-ins and customers – provide information or direction to a contact person.
- Enter Cost-Share information into the ELink program for grant management as required by BWSR.
- Assist NRCS with filing and sorting files.
- 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 WR, promotes and manages the RIM/CREP programs for the county. Attends local MN Prairie Plan team meetings.
- Sheri Gades and Andy Albertsen attends the Chippewa River Watershed Project meetings monthly and submits CWF incentive applications.
- Andy Albertsen attend Pomme de Terre River Association meetings 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.
- 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.

Education Activities

- Conservation Conservationist Award – Thomas Orr received the award this year.
- Arbor Day – Each 6th grade student in the KMS School received a spruce tree to plant.
- Newsletter – One newsletter was printed in partnership with NRCS, and one annual report was distributed to essential partners.
- Envirothon – Encouraged participation in the event, although no one participated from the local schools.
- Water Festival – 5th & 6th grade students from Benson and KMS schools visited 18 different learning stations dealing with conservation of soil and water.
- Swift County Fair, Appleton – Conservation Booth was staffed during the 4 day fair in conjunction with the new Buffer Program Information.

Program Activities

- County Ag Inspector received 3 weed complaints. Phone calls to landowners were made. The areas were cleaned up.
- County Ag Inspector over saw 3 applicator license tests.
- Leafy Spurge beetles were collected and released in 5 locations around the county and some were sent to Pope County. A multi-county collection was held with 7 counties. Beetles were collected and brought back to their counties.
- DNR Observation Wells – The SWCD monitors 27 wells monthly for 9 months. Readings are entered on the Internet and compensation of \$30.00 per reading is received quarterly.
- Tree plantings – 4533 trees were planted in 4 shelterbelts, field windbreaks, living snow fences, and wildlife plantings covering 6 acres. Approximately 19,411 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 – 463.46 acres of conservation seeding in 40 areas throughout the County were done using the District's grass drills.
- State Cost Share Practices – 1 waste facility closure and 1 sediment control basin were completed using State Cost-Share funding.
- The District site checked 51 RIM & CREP easement parcels and 12 cost share practices.
- Farm Bill Biologist – Encouraged and worked with landowners to sign up for CRP and RIM, 147 CRP conservation plans were written in 2017, totaling 1599.4 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. In 2017 the interns drove the roads of Swift County and did some spraying of invasive species such as Wild Parsnip, Leafy Spurge, and Common Tansy to be controlled in the upcoming years. 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 1 contract in 2017 for a total of 110 acres.
- Tracked buffer compliance resulting in almost 1600 parcels being effected 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.
- ❖ 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.