



2024 ANNUAL PLAN

Swift County Soil and Water
Conservation District

Mission Statement

The Swift County Soil and Water Conservation District is committed to providing high quality technical, financial, and educational assistance to landowners and land managers of Swift County by promoting sound stewardship of our land and water resources.

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Introduction

To best serve the landowners, producers, residents and visitors of Swift County, this Annual Plan is developed to establish a strategy under which the Swift County Soil and Water Conservation District will operate during the next year.

The Swift County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board of Supervisors and Staff will review this plan two times in 2024, at our June and December meetings.

This plan will be used in conjunction with the Swift County Local Water Management Plan (LWMP) and completed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans (CWMP) to provide guidance on goals and objectives for the SWCD to pursue. The priority areas defined in the LWMP and CWMP's also apply to this SWCD Annual Plan.

Resource concerns for Swift County are reviewed annually at the Local Work Group meeting. A meeting hosted by the SWCD and co-lead with NRCS, the Local Work Group gathers feedback from landowners and other interested parties in establishing the top natural resource concerns for that year. The SWCD Board participates in this meeting and incorporates feedback into this Annual Plan.

Annual Objectives

The purpose of this Annual Plan is to set realistic goals that can be accomplished by the Swift County Soil and Water Conservation District, and to specify those objectives that the SWCD will work towards this year.

Objective 1: Promote Healthy Soils - Reduce Soil Loss from Wind and Water Erosion

Objective 2: Protect and/or Improve Surface and Ground Water Quality and Quantity

Objective 3: Protect, Enhance, and Establish Native Habitat

Objective 4: Increase District Awareness and Promote Comprehensive Community Education

Objective 5: Provide and Excel in SWCD Administrative and Board of Supervisors Responsibilities

Annual Actions

Objective 1: Promote Healthy Soils - Reduce Soil Loss from Wind and Water Erosion

Soil Health Initiative

- District staff will work with producers to promote incorporation of cover crops and reduced tillage into their rotation and provide cost share for planting cover crops.
 - **Goal - 200 acres**
- Be active with the Pomme de Terre Soil Health Team and assist with organizing meetings.
 - **Goal - two meetings**
- Implement the Clean Water Fund Grant that was received for targeting soil health practices around Benson and Appleton.
 - **Goal - 600 acres**

Tree Planting Program

- Provide technical assistance for farmstead shelterbelts, field windbreaks, and wildlife plantings. Inform the public of the availability of the tree planter and fabric weed barrier machine.
- Provide tree planting and fabric installation services.
 - **Goal - 3,000 trees planted; 10,000 trees sold.**
- Establish wildlife habitat plantings.
 - **Goal - two plantings**
- Utilize grants to provide cost share for eligible projects looking to establish trees and shrubs.
 - **Goal - five contracts**
- Conduct a process mapping exercise for the tree program.
 - **Goal - complete exercise.**
- Have Dalton acquire Job Approval Authority for tree designs.

No-till Drill Program

- Provide no-till drills through our equipment rental program.
 - **Goal - 900 acres**
- Provide a reduced rate for landowners and operators using the drills to plant cover crops.
- Promote the option of our ATV broadcast seeder for hire.
 - **Goal - three acres**
- Install spare tires on all no-till drills.
 - **Goal - all drills will have spare tires.**

Targeted Outreach

- Undertake a review of targeted portions of the county (based off One Watershed, One Plan Priority Areas) and reach out to landowners who may benefit from the implementation of various Best Management Practices.
 - **Goal - 20 letters sent.**

Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP)

- Expand participation in the MAWQCP, which is a program available through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture at no cost to landowner/operator. The program offers unbiased recommendations and guidance on potential improvements to the farming operation that would benefit soil and water resources.
 - **Goal - three producer applications**

Structural Best Management Practices

- Provide cost assistance and design expertise to landowners experiencing erosion from various sources. Potential and popular practices include water and sediment control basins, alternative tile intakes, wetland restorations, grassed waterways, grade stabilization structures, and more.
 - **Goal - 500 acres treated.**
- Utilize PTMapp, where available, to assist with targeting and prioritization of projects and practices.

Objective 2: Protect and/or Improve Surface and Ground Water Quality and Quantity

Feedlot Program

- Work with Swift County Environmental Services by providing technical expertise for updating various feedlot components.
- Work with county staff on areas identified as needing improvements, specifically feedlots that are out of compliance and side inlet structures in need of repair along county ditches.
- Utilize the Nutrient Management position through the West Central Technical Service Area based out of Todd SWCD for assisting feedlot owners with planning and Best Management Practice implementation.
 - **Goal - one landowner assisted.**
- Continue to work on high priority animal waste systems. NRCS/SWCD will assist with technical assistance and/or provide cost share.
 - **Goal - one landowner contact**

Observation Well Program

- Continue to monitor 28 observation wells nine times per year for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Ag BMP Loan Program

- Administer and inform county residents about the Ag BMP Loan Program.
 - **Goal - two applications**

Structural Best Management Practices

- Provide cost assistance and design expertise to landowners experiencing erosion from various sources. Potential and popular practices include water and sediment control basins, alternative tile intakes, wetland restorations, grassed waterways, grade stabilization structures, and more.
 - **Goal - 500 acres treated (duplicate from Objective 1)**
- Utilize PTMapp, where available, to assist with targeting and prioritization of projects and practices.

Irrigation Water Management

- Promote the use of soil moisture sensors and a soil-water balance tracking method. This will include corresponding with others who have successfully implemented irrigation water management tracking software.
 - **Goal - statewide program establishment**
- Assist in planning the annual Irrigator Management Clinic.
 - **Goal - one event**
- Send mailing to all irrigator owners in the county advertising a workshop or conservation opportunities through cost share.
 - **Goal - one mailing.**
- Promote the NRCS RCPP sign up for irrigation improvements.
 - **Goal - two landowners to sign up.**
- Inform irrigator users of the newly established Ag Weather Station in Moyer Township and inquire about need for additional stations.

Wetland Conservation Act

- Assist Swift County with implementation of the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act.
- Assist with wetland determination processing and be an active member of the technical evaluation panel.
- When needed, assist with restoration and/or replacement plans.
- Act as clearinghouse for information as it pertains to WCA and wetland banking.

Minnesota Department of Agriculture Pesticide Monitoring

- Continue to monitor Shakopee Creek for various parameters established by the MDA.

Buffer Law

- Administer the State Buffer Law.
- Maintain a county buffer database and update compliance status using the state BuffCAT system.
 - **Goal - 100% compliance countywide**
- Work with landowners and the county to bring all parcels into compliance.
- Provide technical assistance for installing buffer strips.
- Promote voluntary buffer strips on areas not requiring a buffer.

Permits

- Review DNR water permit applications and respond appropriately.

Well Water Management

- Assist communities with executing their wellhead protection plans.
- Support the cities of Kerkhoven, Murdock, and DeGraff in the development of their Wellhead Protection Plans.
- Provide well water testing kits to interested well owners.

Objective 3: Protect, Enhance, and Establish Native Habitat

Cooperative Weed Management Area

- Continue utilizing the Cooperative Weed Management Program with Pope SWCD to identify and manage the spread of terrestrial invasive species.
- Seek funding that allows for the continuation and expansion of services provided under the CWMA.
 - **Goal - two grant applications**
- Track the spread of various terrestrial invasive species.
- Utilize online mapping to map location and size of invasive species sites.
- Address questions that pertain to weed control.
- Use chemical or biological methods, as time and funds allow, to control the spread of weeds.
- Work with County Staff to prioritize spraying locations along county roads to eliminate the presence of Wild Parsnip.

Native Seed Sales Program

- Provide information to potential clients on how to create a successful stand of grasses/forbs. Offer a seed sale option to interested landowners.
 - **Goal - 14 seed sales**

County Agricultural Inspector

- Administer the program through a subcontracted agreement with Swift County.
- Ensure the subcontractor enforces the MN Noxious Weed Law, publishes the General Weed Notice by May 15th, conducts seed dealer inspections as appropriate, and conducts testing for commercial and non-commercial pesticide applicators as requested.
- Continue to maintain existing and develop new bio-control sites in Swift County for the control of leafy spurge and spotted knapweed.
- Keep Swift County Commissioners and SWCD Supervisors informed of the Ag Inspector Program activities through timely reports.
- Carryout weed inspections and follow-up in cooperation with township officials.
- Inventory roads for noxious weeds.
- Work with the Swift County Highway Department to streamline herbicide treatment.

Habitat Establishment/Restoration Options

- Continue to implement and encourage enrollment in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM), and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).
 - **Goal - one easement**
 - **Goal - 3,000 acres enrolled/re-enrolled in CRP.**
- Complete RIM/CREP site inspection/maintenance reviews.
 - **Goal - complete annual inspections**
- Stay actively aware and promote funding available to help enhance privately protected land, such as through the Minnesota Land Trust, Native Prairie Bank, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Board of Water and Soil Resources, or other programs.
- Promote the Walk in Access Program
 - **Goal - two enrollments**
- Host a CRP 101 Workshop after the new Farm Bill is announced with all CRP info. Provide updates and overviews of CRP offerings. Include Pheasants Forever and the Farm Service Agency. Invite vendors to attend.
 - **Goal - one event**

Backyard Habitat Program

- Promote a newly created program that offers expertise and guidance on converting lawn to pollinator friendly native grasses and forbs.
 - **Goal - program growth and development**
- Offer a cost share option for lawn conversion.
 - **Goal - one cost share contract**
- Offer a workshop that details the process and provides design and species selection advice.
 - **Goal - one workshop**

Conservation Reserve Program Incentives through One Watershed, One Plan

- Provide CRP incentive payment to landowners signing up for CRP in watersheds that have funding for CRP incentives.
 - **Goal - two incentive payments issued.**

Objective 4: Increase District Awareness and Promote Comprehensive Community Education

Media Relations

- Publish news articles in local papers highlighting the District projects, programs, and events. Publish articles that promote conservation practices and land stewardship.
 - **Goal - six articles**
- The District will utilize their Facebook account to provide another means of engaging with the community.
 - **Goal - one post per week**
- Inform the public through informational meetings, radio, and personal contacts.
 - **Goal - two events**
- Utilize the SWCD drone and GoPro for various projects and practices to promote the adoption of various Best Management Practices and use of SWCD equipment and services.
- Publish updated information on the District website. Utilize email listserv to help spread the word on district events and opportunities.
- Promote conservation practices and programs by use of District newsletter. Highlight landowners and projects that promote conservation activities.
 - **Goal - one newsletter**

Community Engagement and Education

- Set up a booth at the Swift County Fair. Provide updated and relevant information.
- Partner with a landowner to develop a Soil Health Demonstration Site. A potential may include a comparison of strip till, no till, and conventional till and/or cover crop vs no cover crop.
 - **Goal - one site**
- Host a Soil Health Open House event.
 - **Goal - one event**
- Host a Tree Open House event.
 - **Goal - one event**
- Host a Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Workshop and have certified farmers speak about the process and benefits.
 - **Goal - one workshop**
- Engage local crop consultants and agronomists and educate them about the SWCD and our offerings.
 - **Goal - ten contacts/meetings**
- Assist with planning the Irrigator Clinic annually.
 - **Goal - one event**
- Hold an Irrigation Field Day at a local producer's field.
 - **Goal - one event**
- Provide well water testing for nitrates for county residents.
 - **Goal - one clinic**
- Attend the Annual Township Meeting in March and provide handouts on applicable programs.
 - **Goal - one event**

- The SWCD will work with other groups and agencies in the continued maintenance of the outdoor learning area at Ambush Park.
 - **Goal - develop a plan and budget to renovate the Butterfly Garden**
- Board and/or staff will attend county commissioner meetings to update them on the summary of SWCD activities.
 - **Goal - attend three meetings.**
- SWCD will invite one county commissioner to each monthly Board meeting.
- Select a Swift County Outstanding Conservationist and recognize them at the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Annual Conference in December.
- Maintain the 2+ mile stretch along State Highway 9 north of Benson as part of the Minnesota Department of Transportation Adopt-A-Highway program.
 - **Goal - clean twice**

School and Youth Engagement

- Work with area schools to teach conservation practices and learn of the benefits associated with it through the local Nature Day event.
 - Provide one environmental presentation for students discussing a soil or water related theme.
 - Host a Nature Day event for Benson and KMS 5th and 6th graders at Ambush Park.
 - Promote participation in the Area Envirothon and Poster Contest.
 - **Goal - two events/activities**
- Improve the Districts overall education and information efforts in schools, churches, and other establishments.
 - Hand out evergreen tree seedlings to KMS, Benson, and Appleton Elementary students for Arbor Day.
 - **Goal - two events/activities**

Objective 5: Provide and Excel in SWCD Administrative and Board of Supervisor Responsibilities

Reporting

- Prepare and present the SWCD annual budget to the Swift County Commissioners.
- Assure that year-end financial reports are prepared and submitted to appropriate agencies and posted online by required deadlines.
 - **Goal - reports submitted accurately and on time.**
- Upload all required data and information into the State reporting system, eLink.
 - **Goal - reports submitted accurately and on time.**
- Complete all employee and SWCD required tax reporting.
 - **Goal - reports submitted accurately and on time.**

Plan Participation

- Assist in administering the Swift County Local Water Management Plan.
 - **Goal - two meetings per year**
- Prepare District Annual Plan and upload to SWCD website.
- Serve as active members in One Watershed One Plan planning activities in the Pomme de Terre, Chippewa, and Upper Minnesota River Watersheds.
- One Supervisor and one County Commissioner will serve on the Pomme de Terre River Association and Chippewa River Watershed Association Joint Powers Boards. One SWCD staff and one Swift County staff serve on the Technical Advisory Committee for each respective watershed. One Supervisor and one County Commissioner will also serve on the Policy Committee for the Upper Minnesota River One Watershed, One Plan.

SWCD Administration

- Continue memberships in the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) and the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD).
- Review all Board established policies and update the Swift SWCD Policy Handbook annually.
- Prepare and distribute the District Annual Report and upload onto SWCD website.
- Attend the MASWCD State Convention in December.
- Host a Local Work Group Meeting to gather feedback from local landowners.
 - **Goal - one meeting.**
- Keep Swift County Commissioners and State Legislators informed of District activities and needs through presentations, regular meetings, etc.
- Attend MASWCD Legislative Days in March and meet with our legislators.
- Inform partner agencies (watershed districts, watershed associations, etc.) that SWCD board meeting agendas and minutes will be posted on the SWCD web site.
- Maintain awareness of new and revolving grant opportunities, pursue as applicable.
- Be an active member with the Area II West Central Technical Service Area (WCTSA) to deliver engineering assistance to land users in Swift County for practices such as shoreline restorations, alternative tile intakes, water and sediment control basins, streambank stabilizations and other projects as necessary.
- Supervisors will attend Area/State MASWCD meetings.
 - **Goal - representation at all meetings**
- Work with David Drown and Associates on completing a full classification and compensation study for Swift SWCD.
- Work with Ann Goering, attorney, on updating the Swift SWCD Personnel Policy Handbook.
- Complete transition to new office building by April 2024.
- Convert cost share folders to 4-part folders and create folder checklists.

Workload and Staffing

Swift SWCD Board of Supervisors

Supervisor	District	Townships	Term Expiration	Years of Service (thru 2024)
Scott Olson	1	Hegbert, Shible, Appleton, Edison, West Bank	12/31/2024	5
Dale Schlieman	2	Fairfield, Tara, Moyer, Marysland	12/31/2026	17
Alan Golden	3	Clontarf, Benson, Six Mile Grove, Torning	12/31/2026	2
Orvin Gronseth	4	Camp Lake, Kerkhoven, Kildare, Hayes	12/31/2026	38
Mark Weimerskirch	5	Swenoda, Cashel, Dublin, Pillsbury	12/31/2024	37

Swift SWCD Staff

Employee	Title	Years of Service with Swift SWCD (thru 2024)
Andy Albertsen	District Manager	8
Sheri Gades	Office Manager	17
Dalton Herrboldt	Conservation Technician	6
Gemma Kleinschmidt (Pheasants Forever)	Senior Farm Bill Biologist	8
Tom Orr	Ag Inspector	7 (plus 40)

Swift SWCD Staff Program Analysis

IMPORTANT NOTE: The following tables represent the three staff directly employed by Swift SWCD. They do not consider the time of the Farm Bill Biologist, Ag Inspector, or West Central Technical Service Area Engineers and Technicians that provide services to Swift County landowners. These positions provide an estimated 2,800+ hours of additional services that would fall into several of the stated Plan Objectives.

2024 Staff Time Budget

Objective	Program/Activity	District Manager	Office Manager	Conservation Tech	Hew Hire	Staff Total
1	Soil Health Initiative	50	20	0	400	470
1	Tree Sales	90	0	500	20	610
1	Tree Planting	50	0	135	90	275
1	No-Till Drill Rental	20	0	200	13	233
1	MAWQCP	50	0	0	50	100
1	Seed Sales	3	0	35	3	41
1	ATV Seeding	3	0	7	3	13
1 & 2 (50/50 split)	Landowner/Project Assistance-Agricultural	221	15	25	282	543
1 & 2 (50/50 split)	Landowner/Project Assistance-Community/Household	50	15	75	27	167
2	MNDNR Well Observations	0	0	90	0	90
2	Wetland Conservation Act	60	0	0	0	60
2	Buffer Law	125	5	15	83	228
2	Ag BMP Loan Program	0	20	0	0	20
2	MDA Pesticide Sampling	5	0	0	10	15
3	CREP/RIM	10	0	250	0	260
3	Backyard Habitat Program	75	20	84	0	179
3	Ag Inspector	0	1	0	17	18
3	Cooperative Weed Mgmt. Program	5	0	0	7	12
4	Education & Outreach & Events & Promotion	80	100	20	13	213
4	Nature Day	30	40	10	7	87
4	Newsletters/Print Media	40	0	7	7	54
4	Social Media	25	0	15	7	47
5	Leave (Holiday/Annual/Sick/etc.)	300	335	375	167	1177
5	Finances	40	600	0	0	640
5	SWCD Management & Planning	250	134	25	17	426
5	Chippewa River CWMP	75	0	0	33	108
5	Reporting	50	250	20	20	340
5	Training	80	60	80	80	300
5	SWCD Board Support	100	175	15	30	320
5	Pomme de Terre CWMP	70	0	100	0	170
5	NRCS Programs/Assistance	10	25	5	7	47
5	Upper MN CWMP	40	0	0	0	40
5	County Engagement	75	5	0	0	80
5	Water Plan	6	0	0	0	6
	Total	2088	1820	2088	1392	7388

2024 Staff Time Budget Breakdown by Objective

Objective	District Manager		Office Manager		Conservation Technician		New Hire		Total	
	Hours	%	Hours	%	Hours	%	Hours	%	Hours	%
1: Healthy Soil, Reduce Wind and Water Erosion	401.5	19.2	35.0	1.9	927.0	44.4	734.5	52.8	2098.0	28.4
2: Protect Surface and Groundwater	325.5	15.6	40.0	2.2	155.0	7.4	247.5	17.8	768.0	10.4
3: Native Habitat	90.0	4.3	21.0	1.2	334.0	16.0	23.0	1.7	468.0	6.3
4: District Awareness and Education	175.0	8.4	140.0	7.7	52.0	2.5	33.0	2.4	400.0	5.4
5: Administration	1,096.0	52.5	1,584.0	87.0	620.0	29.7	353.0	25.3	3,653.0	49.4
Total	2,088	100	1,820	100	2,088	100	1,392	100	7,388	100

Budget

2024 Swift SWCD Budget

EXPENDITURES	2022 Actuals	2023 Budget	2023 Actuals	2024 Budget
Total District Operations - Personnel Services	\$ 236,131	\$ 272,500	\$ 142,219	\$ 368,000
Total District Operations - Other Serv. & Chgs.	\$ 51,954	\$ 52,000	\$ 17,588	\$ 224,573
Total District Operations - Supplies	\$ 5,722	\$ 5,200	\$ 3,307	\$ 6,700
Total Project Expenses	\$ 178,987	\$ 113,814	\$ 101,299	\$ 209,594
Total District Product Expenses	\$ 46,448	\$ 53,000	\$ 64,917	\$ 64,500
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 519,242	\$ 496,514	\$ 329,329	\$ 873,367

REVENUES	2022 Actuals	2023 Budget	2023 Actuals	2024 Budget
County Revenue				
County Allocation	\$ 80,000	\$ 85,000	\$ 63,000	\$ 85,000
WCA Grant	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
County Ag Inspector	\$ 13,500	\$ 13,500	\$ 7,875	\$ 13,500
County Water Plan	N/A	N/A	\$ 3,527	\$ 7,500
County Staff Time	\$ 1,876	\$ 3,500	\$ -	\$ -
County Misc. Revenue (AIS funds/other)	\$ 11,971	\$ 8,000	\$ 2,259	\$ 5,000
Total County Revenue	\$ 363,828	\$ 115,000	\$ 81,661	\$ 116,000
Total State Revenue	\$ 363,828	\$ 306,264	\$ 517,075	\$ 653,367
Total Charges for Services	\$ 66,427	\$ 72,700	\$ 97,144	\$ 86,500
Total Miscellaneous Revenues	\$ 8,090	\$ 2,950	\$ 9,671	\$ 17,500
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 550,693	\$ 496,914	\$ 705,552	\$ 873,367

Difference Revenues over Expenditures	\$ 31,451	\$ 400	\$ 376,222	\$ (0)
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