



2025 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 2025, at our June and December meetings.

This plan will be used in conjunction with the Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans (CWMP) to provide guidance on goals and objectives for the SWCD to pursue. The priority areas defined in the 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 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 - 2,000 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 - 400 acres**
- Establish policy for cost share.
- Administer the Soil Health RCPP.

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 - one plantings**
- Utilize grants to provide cost share for eligible projects looking to establish trees and shrubs.
 - **Goal - five contracts**

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**

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 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.
- 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 29 observation wells four 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 irrigation water management plan.
 - **Goal - policy development for cost share and process defined.**
- Send mailing to all irrigator owners in the county advertising a workshop or conservation opportunities through cost share.
 - **Goal - one mailing.**
- 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 Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

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 - one 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**
- Work with the City of Benson on converting mowed grass to native pollinator habitat. Pursue grant funding to assist with implementation as applicable.
- Complete restoration work on three easements needing structural repairs.

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 - two 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 - six 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**
- 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**
- 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**
- Participate in the annual Kid's Day Parade
- The SWCD will work with other groups and agencies in the continued maintenance of the outdoor learning area at Ambush Park.
 - **Goal - implement plan 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**
- Update file management system on the SWCD network to improve collaboration.

Workload and Staffing

Swift SWCD Board of Supervisors

Supervisor	District	Townships	Term Expiration	Years of Service (thru 2025)
Scott Olson	1	Hegbert, Shible, Appleton, Edison, West Bank	12/31/2028	6
Dale Schlieman	2	Fairfield, Tara, Moyer, Marysland	12/31/2026	18
Alan Golden	3	Clontarf, Benson, Six Mile Grove, Torning	12/31/2026	3
Orvin Gronseth	4	Camp Lake, Kerkhoven, Kildare, Hayes	12/31/2026	39
Mark Weimerskirch	5	Swenoda, Cashel, Dublin, Pillsbury	12/31/2028	38

Swift SWCD Staff

Employee	Title	Years of Service with Swift SWCD (thru 2025)
Andy Albertsen	District Manager	9
Sheri Gades	Office Manager	18
Dalton Herrboldt	Conservation Technician II	7
Cadence Larson	Soil Health Conservationist I	1.5
Vacant (Pheasants Forever)	Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist	8
Barry Bouwman (Independent Contractor)	Ag Inspector	1

Swift SWCD Staff Program Analysis

IMPORTANT NOTE: The following tables represent the four staff directly employed by Swift SWCD. They do not consider the time of the Farm Bill Wildlife 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.

2025 Staff Time Budget

Objective	Program/Activity	District Manager	Office Manager	Conservation Tech II	Soil Health Conservationist I	Staff Total
1	Tree Sales	50	50	500	10	610
1	Tree Planting	50	0	140	90	280
1	No-Till Drill Rental	20	0	200	10	230
1	MAWQCP	50	0	0	50	100
1	Seed Sales	5	10	35	0	50
1	ATV Seeding	5	0	10	5	20
1 & 2 (50/50 split)	Landowner/Project Assistance-Agricultural	250	50	50	1080	1430
1 & 2 (50/50 split)	Landowner/Project Assistance-Community/Household	60	10	30	50	150
2	Observation Well	0	0	60	0	60
2	Wetland Conservation Act	60	0	0	0	60
2	Buffer Law	145	5	15	25	190
2	Ag BMP Loan Program	20	0	0	0	20
2	Water Sampling	5	0	10	15	30
3	CREP/RIM	20	0	250	0	270
3	Backyard Habitat Program	40	10	40	0	90
3	Coop. Weed Mgmt. Program	5	0	5	5	15
4	Education, Outreach, Events, & Promotion	130	120	20	300	570
5	Administration	25	20	0	0	45
5	Leave (Holiday/Annual/Sick/etc.)	325	335	325	180	1165
5	Finances	40	600	0	0	640
5	SWCD Management & Planning	250	145	25	40	460
5	Chippewa River CWMP	100	0	40	40	180
5	Reporting	50	250	20	20	340
5	Training	50	40	50	125	265
5	SWCD Board Support	100	175	25	25	325
5	Pomme de Terre CWMP	50	0	90	10	150
5	NRCS Programs/Assistance	10	5	0	0	15
5	Upper MN CWMP	40	0	0	0	40
5	County Engagement	75	5	0	0	80
5	Maintenance	50	0	140	0	190
	Total	2080	1830	2080	2080	8070

2025 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	335	16	90	5	925	44	730	35	2,080	26
2: Protect Surface and Groundwater	385	19	35	2	125	6	605	29	1,150	14
3: Native Habitat	65	3	10	1	295	14	5	0	375	5
4: District Awareness and Education	130	6	120	7	20	1	300	14	570	7
5: Administration (Planning, Management, Finances, etc.)	1,165	56	1,575	86	715	34	440	21	3,895	48
Total	2,080	100	1,830	100	2,080	100	2,080	100	8,070	100

Budget

2025 Swift SWCD Budget

EXPENDITURES	2023	2024	2024	2025
	Actuals	Budget	Actuals	Budget
Total District Operations - Personnel Services	\$ 270,181	\$ 368,000	\$ 317,401	\$ 400,000
Total District Operations - Other Serv. & Chgs.	\$ 56,323	\$ 223,573	\$ 273,869	\$ 113,634
Total District Operations - Supplies	\$ 4,500	\$ 6,700	\$ 4,604	\$ 7,700
Total Project Expenses	\$ 179,918	\$ 209,594	\$ 160,314	\$ 435,094
Total District Product Expenses	\$ 81,641	\$ 64,500	\$ 57,786	\$ 61,500
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 592,563	\$ 872,367	\$ 813,974	\$ 1,017,928
REVENUES	2023	2024	2024	2025
	Actuals	Budget	Actuals	Budget
<u>County Revenue</u>				
County Allocation	\$ 84,000	\$ 84,000	\$ 84,000	\$ 84,000
WCA Grant	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
County Ag Inspector	\$ 13,500	\$ 13,500	\$ 13,500	\$ 13,500
County Water Plan	\$ 7,636	\$ 7,500	\$ -	\$ -
County Misc. Revenue (AIS funds/other)	\$ 2,259	\$ 5,000	\$ 561	\$ 27,500
Total County Revenue	\$ 112,395	\$ 115,000	\$ 103,061	\$ 130,000
Total State Revenue	\$ 492,289	\$ 653,367	\$ 562,646	\$ 777,428
Total Charges for Services	\$ 108,092	\$ 86,500	\$ 93,575	\$ 86,900
Total Miscellaneous Revenues	\$ 19,343	\$ 17,500	\$ 38,553	\$ 23,600
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 732,119	\$ 872,367	\$ 797,835	\$ 1,017,928
Difference Revenues over Expenditures	\$ 139,556	\$ (0)	\$ (16,139)	\$ -