



2026 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.

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Annual Objectives	2
Annual Actions	3
Objective 1: Promote healthy soils and reduce soil loss from wind and water erosion	3
Soil Health Initiative	3
Tree Planting Program.....	3
No-till Drill & Seeding Equipment.....	3
Targeted Outreach	4
Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP)	4
Structural Best Management Practices.....	4
Objective 2: Protect and improve surface and ground water quality and quantity	5
Feedlot & Nutrient Management	5
Observation Well Program	5
Ag BMP Loan Program.....	5
Structural Best Management Practices.....	5
Irrigation Water Management	5
Wetland Conservation Act	5
Minnesota Department of Agriculture Pesticide Monitoring	6
Buffer Law	6
Permits.....	6
Well Water Management	6
Objective 3: Protect, enhance, and establish native habitat and biodiversity	7
Cooperative Weed Management Area	7
Native Seed Sales Program.....	7
County Agricultural Inspector	7
Habitat Establishment/Restoration Options	7
Backyard Habitat Program	8
Conservation Reserve Program Incentives through One Watershed, One Plan	8
Objective 4: Increase District visibility and promote comprehensive community education	9
Media Relations	9
Community Engagement and Education	9
School and Youth Engagement	10
Objective 5: Provide excellent administration and governance of SWCD operations	11
Reporting	11
Plan Participation	11
SWCD Administration	11
Workload and Staffing	12
Swift SWCD Board of Supervisors	12
Swift SWCD Staff	12
Swift SWCD Staff Program Analysis	12
Budget.....	15

Introduction

The Swift County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) exists to serve the landowners, producers, residents, and visitors of Swift County by conserving soil, protecting water resources, and enhancing natural habitats. This Annual Plan establishes clear priorities, measurable goals, and accountability for District operations during calendar year 2026.

The Swift County SWCD Board of Supervisors and staff will formally review progress on this plan at the June and December 2026 Board meetings. Adjustments may be made based on funding availability, staffing capacity, weather conditions, and emerging resource concerns.

This Annual Plan complements and supports the Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans (CWMPs) that cover Swift County. Priority areas identified through those planning efforts directly inform District actions outlined within this plan.

Resource concerns are reviewed annually through the Local Work Group meeting, co-hosted by the SWCD and NRCS. Input from landowners, producers, partner agencies, and the SWCD Board is incorporated to ensure this plan reflects local needs and evolving conservation challenges.

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 the objectives Swift SWCD will work towards this year.

Objective 1: Promote healthy soils and 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 and biodiversity.

Objective 4: Increase District visibility and promote comprehensive community education.

Objective 5: Provide excellent administration and governance of SWCD operations.

Annual Actions

Objective 1: Promote healthy soils and reduce soil loss from wind and water erosion

Soil Health

- Promote cover crops, reduced tillage, and soil health planning through technical assistance and cost-share programs.
 - **Goal - 2,500 acres of cover crops contracted**
- Participate in and support the Pomme de Terre Soil Health Team.
 - **Goal - Assist with two soil health meetings**
- Implement the Clean Water Fund Grant targeting soil health practices near Benson and Appleton.
 - **Goal - 300 acres treated**
- Evaluate feasibility of additional incentives for residue management, no-till, and strip-till practices.
- Complete soil health assessments with previous contracted producers.
 - **Goal - 10 assessments**
- Host a producer-focused soil health meeting featuring local experiences and lessons learned.
 - **Goal - one meeting**

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.
- Offer tree planting and fabric installation services.
 - **Goal - 3,000 trees planted; 10,000 trees sold**
- Establish wildlife habitat tree and shrub plantings.
 - **Goal - one planting**
- Use available grant funds to support tree establishment projects.
 - **Goal - five contracts**

No-till Drill & Seeding Equipment

- Operate equipment rental program for no-till drills.
 - **Goal - 900 acres seeded**
- Offer reduced rates for cover crop seeding.
 - **Goal - 50 acres seeded**
- Promote ATV broadcast seeder services.
 - **Goal - three acres seeded**

Targeted Outreach

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

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 & Nutrient Management

- Support Swift County Environmental Services with feedlot compliance and upgrades.
- Continue to work on high priority animal waste systems. NRCS/SWCD will assist with technical assistance and/or provide cost share.
 - **Goal - one landowner assisted**

Observation Well Program

- Continue to monitor 32 observation wells four times per year for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Ag BMP Loan Program

- Administer and promote 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 irrigation water management planning.
 - **Goal - policy development for cost share and process defined**
- Inform irrigator users of the Minnesota Ag Weather Network available through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.
- Promote the Irrigation RCPP by sending sign up information to irrigators in the county.
 - **Goal - mailing to all irrigator owners in the county**
 - **Goal - five applications submitted to NRCS**

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 technical representative for information as it pertains to WCA and wetland banking.

Pesticide Monitoring

- Continue to monitor Shakopee Creek for various parameters for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

Buffer Law

- Administer the State Buffer Law by checking compliance of parcels on a regular basis.
- 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 and alternative practices.
- Promote voluntary buffer strips on areas not requiring a buffer.

Permits

- Review DNR water appropriation permit applications and respond appropriately.
- Review County variance requests as they pertain to the scope of the SWCD.

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 and biodiversity

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 application**
- 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.

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 purple loosestrife.
- Keep Swift County Commissioners and SWCD Supervisors informed of the Ag Inspector Program activities through timely reports.
- Carry out weed inspections and follow-up in cooperation with township officials.
- Inventory roads for noxious weeds.
- Work with the Swift County Highway Department 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**
- Explore the option of offering a native plant sale.
 - **Goal - assess program feasibility**

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.
- Work with the city of Benson to restore the Butterfly Garden at Ambush Park.
- Complete restoration work on easement sites needing structural repairs or habitat improvements.
 - **Goal - two sites improved**

Backyard Habitat Program

- Promote this program that offers expertise and guidance on converting lawn grass to pollinator friendly native grasses and forbs.
 - **Goal - program growth and development**
- Offer a cost share for enrolling in the program.
 - **Goal - two cost share contracts**
- Offer a workshop that details the process of a lawn conversion 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. *Subject to active CRP enrollment.
 - **Goal - two incentive payments issued**

Objective 4: Increase District visibility 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 - 2-4 posts per month**
- 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 through the 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 producers' field.
 - **Goal - one event**
- Host a Nitrate Testing Clinic 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 in Benson.
- 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.
- Host an elected official open house
 - **Goal - one event**
- Select a Swift County Outstanding Conservationist and/or other MASWCD award recipient 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 in spring and fall**
- Expand access to conservation programs for previously unengaged landowners.
 - **Goal - engage 10 new landowners not previously participating in SWCD programs**
- Create Project Profiles for completed contracts.
- Implement a Landowner Recognition Program.

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 excellent administration and governance of SWCD operations

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.
- Coordinate annually with watershed associations, NRCS, MDA, and municipalities.
 - **Goal - Leverage external funding to support local conservation implementation**

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. This may be in conjunction with neighboring counties.
 - **Goal - one meeting.**
- Keep Swift County Commissioners and State Legislators informed of District activities and needs through presentations, regular meetings, correspondence, etc.
- Attend MASWCD Legislative Days in March and meet with our state legislators.
- Inform partner agencies (watershed districts, watershed associations, etc.) that SWCD board meeting agendas and minutes will be posted on the SWCD website.
- 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**
- Explore options for becoming compliant with the ADA website requirements.
- Swift SWCD staff and Pheasants Forever Wildlife Biologist will partake in team building activities throughout the course of the year. Each staff will plan an activity, for a total of five during the year.

Workload and Staffing

Swift SWCD Board of Supervisors

Supervisor	District	Townships	Term Expiration	Years of Service (thru 2026)
Scott Olson	1	Hegbert, Shible, Appleton, Edison, West Bank	12/31/2028	7
Sheri Gades	2	Fairfield, Tara, Moyer, Marysland	12/31/2026	1
Alan Golden	3	Clontarf, Benson, Six Mile Grove, Torning	12/31/2026	4
Orvin Gronseth	4	Camp Lake, Kerkhoven, Kildare, Hayes	12/31/2026	40
Mark Weimerskirch	5	Swenoda, Cashel, Dublin, Pillsbury	12/31/2028	39

Swift SWCD Staff

Employee	Title	Years of Service with Swift SWCD (thru 2026)
Andy Albertsen	District Manager	10
Jordan Erickson	Finance & Office Coordinator	1
Dalton Herrboldt	Conservation Technician II	8
Cadence Larson	Soil Health Conservationist I	2.5
Ryan Forster (Pheasants Forever)	Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist	1.5
Barry Bouwman (Independent Contractor)	Ag Inspector	3

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.

2026 Staff Time Budget

Objective	Program/Activity	District Manager	Finance & Outreach Coordinator	Conservation Tech II	Soil Health Conservationist I	Staff Total
1	Tree Sales	75	50	500	25	650
1	Tree Planting	35	0	140	90	265
1	Drills	25	0	200	0	225
1	MAWQCP	25	0	0	50	75
1	Seed Sales	5	5	40	0	50
1	ATV Seeding	10	0	15	0	25
1 & 2 (50/50 split)	Landowner/Project Assistance	315	50	155	975	1495
2	Well Observations	0	0	60	0	60
2	Wetland Conservation Act	65	0	0	0	65
2	Buffers	100	0	15	15	130
2	Ag BMP Loan Program	5	25	0	0	30
2	Water Sampling	15	0	15	0	30
3	CREP/RIM	30	0	180	0	210
3	Ag Inspector Program	15	0	5	25	45
4	Education, Outreach, Events, & Promotion	150	360	75	300	885
5	SWCD Administration	200	100	50	20	370
5	Leave (Holiday/Annual/Sick/etc.)	325	150	325	325	1125
5	Finances	40	600	10	15	665
5	SWCD Management, Planning, Coordination	250	100	50	50	450
5	Reporting	50	250	20	25	345
5	Training	60	150	50	100	360
5	SWCD Board Support	200	200	25	25	450
5	NRCS Programs/Assistance	5	5	5	5	20
5	County Staff/Board/Work Engagement	50	5	5	5	65
5	Maintenance/Cleaning (Office, Shed, Equipment)	30	30	140	30	230
	Total	2080	2080	2080	2080	8320

2026 Staff Time Budget Breakdown by Objective

Objective	District Manager		Finance & Outreach Coordinator		Conservation Tech II		Soil Health Conservationist I		Total	
	Hours	%	Hours	%	Hours	%	Hours	%	Hours	%
1: Healthy Soil, Reduce Wind and Water Erosion	332.5	16	80	4	972.5	47	652.5	31	2,037.5	24
2: Protect Surface and Groundwater	342.5	16	50	2	167.5	8	502.5	24	1,062.5	13
3: Native Habitat	45	2	0	0	185	9	25	1	255	3
4: District Awareness and Education	150	7	360	17	75	4	300	14	885	11
5: Administration (Planning, Management, Finances, etc.)	1,210	58	1,590	76	680	33	600	29	4080	49
Total	2,080	100	2,080	100	2,080	100	2,080	100	8,320	100

Budget

2026 Swift SWCD Budget

EXPENDITURES	2024 Actuals	2025 Budget	2025 Actuals	2026 Budget
District Operations - Personnel Services	\$ 315,960	\$ 400,000	\$ 369,298	\$ 374,000
District Operations - Office Building Expense	\$ 62,676	\$ 18,372	\$ 19,388	\$ 27,000
District Operations - Other Services & Charges	\$ 212,226	\$ 95,262	\$ 84,754	\$ 61,600
District Operations - Supplies	\$ 4,603	\$ 7,700	\$ 2,207	\$ 7,000
Project Expenses	\$ 159,314	\$ 435,094	\$ 497,667	\$ 361,344
District Product Expenses	\$ 57,786	\$ 61,500	\$ 62,694	\$ 67,500
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 812,565	\$ 1,017,928	\$ 1,036,008	\$ 898,444
REVENUES	2024 Actuals	2025 Budget	2025 Actuals	2026 Budget
County Revenue				
County Allocation	\$ 84,000	\$ 84,000	\$ 77,000	\$ 89,000
WCA Grant	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
County Ag Inspector	\$ 13,500	\$ 13,500	\$ 13,500	\$ 16,500
County Water Plan	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,000	\$ 1,000
County Misc. Revenue (AIS funds/other)	\$ 561	\$ 27,500	\$ 21,951	\$ 1,000
Total County Revenue	\$ 103,061	\$ 130,000	\$ 121,451	\$ 112,500
State Revenue	\$ 563,343	\$ 777,428	\$ 719,895	\$ 660,698
Charges for Services	\$ 93,910	\$ 86,900	\$ 91,178	\$ 87,800
Miscellaneous Revenues	\$ 38,552	\$ 23,600	\$ 31,393	\$ 34,600
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 798,866	\$ 1,017,928	\$ 963,917	\$ 895,598
Difference Revenues over Expenditures	\$ (13,698)	\$ -	\$ (72,090)	\$ (2,846)
	2024 Audit completed		Actuals thru 12/31	