



Swift County Soil & Water Conservation District
205 14th St. North, Benson, MN 56215
320-289-6033
www.swiftswcd.org

Position Description

Position Title:	Soil Health Conservationist I, II and III
Position Location:	Swift County, Benson, MN
Employment Terms:	Full-Time, Monday-Friday, 8:00 - 4:30
Salary:	Soil Health Conservationist I: Pay Grade 4, \$22.82-\$36.06 Soil Health Conservationist II: Pay Grade 5, \$24.81-\$38.94 Soil Health Conservationist III: Pay Grade 6, \$26.95-\$42.06 Promotion potential based on position specific career ladder.
Benefits:	\$750/month health insurance stipend \$30/month cell phone stipend Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) with employer match 13 paid holidays Annual leave Earned Sick and Safe Time leave Annual Cost of Living Adjustment Access to the Employee Assistance Program through MCIT

POSITION PURPOSE

The Swift County Soil and Water Conservation District Soil Health Conservationist I/II/III career ladder positions are responsible for on the ground activities that improve the natural resources of Swift County. This individual will be responsible for promoting sustainable land management practices aimed at improving soil health, conserving natural resources, and enhancing agricultural productivity. This role involves collaborating with farmers, landowners, and community members to implement conservation strategies and provide education and outreach on soil health principles. This position will provide expertise and support to the Swift SWCD through the planning and implementation of conservation practices.

A main component of the position will be reaching out to landowners and discussing their goals related to soil and water conservation. The selected candidate will become familiar with various programs and practices that are available to the landowners in this area who want to implement a conservation practice. Project emphasis will be soil and water quality improvement through Best Management Practice implementation. This position will include site visits conducted with individual landowners to discuss conservation opportunities on their land. This position is under the general supervision of the District Manager.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. SWCD Programs and Planning

- A. Manage activities that include communicating with landowners about the value of conservation on all land types (ag, urban, lakeshore) and discussing Best Management Practices centered around soil health and water quality improvement.
- B. Provide technical assistance and guidance to farmers and landowners on soil health management practices, including cover cropping, crop rotation, and reduced tillage.
- C. Conduct soil health assessments and analyses to identify soil degradation issues and recommend appropriate conservation practices.
- D. Develop and implement soil conservation plans tailored to the specific needs of individual landowners and agricultural operations.
- E. Assist producers with in-field soil health tests.
- F. Promote cost share opportunities provided by the SWCD and partners.
- G. Prepare technical information and assist with preparation of SWCD program plans, reports, and/or grant applications within required deadlines.
- H. Assist producers by providing solutions or by partnering with other soil health resources and/or professionals.
- I. Assist in long range planning efforts for Swift SWCD, bringing forward creative and innovative ideas for how to generate conservation adoption in the county.
- J. Collaborate with government agencies, non-profit organizations, and research institutions to promote soil health initiatives and support policy development.
- K. Performs technical work, according to the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide and within ecological Job Approval Authority, without detailed instructions, after adequate training.
- L. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of soil conservation programs and initiatives and recommend adjustments as needed.
- M. Maintain accurate records and documentation related to soil health assessments, conservation plans, and program activities.
- N. Other duties as assigned by the District Manager.

2. Education, Outreach, and Promotion

- A. Develop and implement workshops and field days designed to educate growers, farm-related and grower-led organizations on best practices, and other innovative conservation systems that benefit natural resource quality, farm productivity, and soil health conservation techniques.
- B. Assist with the planning and implementation of SWCD educational programs with the public and schools.
- C. Build capacity and expertise within the ag retailer's precision ag and agronomy sales teams to increase knowledge of SWCD programs, conservation practices, and cost share programs.
- D. Provide training opportunities to ag retailers on state and USDA conservation programs to improve awareness, provide grower access to assistance, and on-the-ground coordination with the SWCD and agricultural organizations.

3. Liaison to Board

- A. Create and provide the board with a monthly report of activities and information.

- B. Work with the Board to address Swift County natural resources needs using available resources and promote the Board's strategic goals.

4. Continued Learning

- A. Stay informed with all the various conservation programs available for producers as they are developed.
- B. Attend training sessions to stay up to date regarding soil health.
- C. Work towards acquiring Job Approval Authority for soil health practices and progressively work toward conservation planner certification.
- D. Stay informed about advancements in soil science, conservation technology, and agricultural best practices to continuously improve soil health programs.
- E. Identify and request appropriate trainings, and attend training sessions, courses, classes, seminars, conventions, conferences, and other meetings to keep up to date with career development by improving relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

- A. Ability to work and communicate effectively with landowners and partner agencies.
- B. Familiar with common agricultural practices.
- C. Must have the ability to lead program responsibilities and work independently.
- D. Must be able to work in a team atmosphere and work well with co-workers and partners.
- E. The ability to multi-task in an office setting.
- F. Must be willing and able to follow instruction, manage multiple projects, adapt to changing job duties and/or responsibilities such as new or innovative projects/programs.
- G. Strong organizational, interpersonal, and communication skills, both written and verbal, with attention to detail.
- H. Ability to operate a pickup truck, trailer, ATV and UTV.
- I. Collaborate with private landowners, contractors, and agency professionals in a respectful manner.
- J. Maintain a working knowledge of all programs managed by the Swift SWCD and offered through NRCS.
- K. Adhere to Swift SWCD policies.
- L. Self-driven and highly motivated.
- M. Work independently and as a part of a team.
- N. Knowledge of interpreting soil data, Web Soil Survey, field surveys, and general hydrology concepts.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- A. A combination of four years of work experience and/or education in Agronomy, Soil Science, Agriculture, Natural Resource Management, Soil Health, Environmental Studies, or a closely related field.
- B. Must be self-motivated with the ability to multi-task, be extremely organized and detail oriented, and serve as a positive, professional example to colleagues and constituents with regards to workplace actions, attitude, decision making, and adherence to policy.
- C. The ability to work with little direction, manage multiple projects and maintain a high level of efficiency.

- D. Background in agriculture or natural resources with an interest in conservation, engineering, or enhancement of natural resources.
- E. Have a working knowledge of the standard Microsoft Office suite of programs (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, and Publisher).
- F. Strong written and verbal communication and public relation skills as well as a capability to work with a wide variety of people from diverse groups and organizations.
- G. Experience working with diverse agricultural stakeholders, including farmers, ranchers, and conservation groups.
- H. Be familiar with modern production agriculture systems, including precision ag, nutrient and pest management, and other agronomic services that improve productivity while minimizing natural resource concerns.
- I. Able to pass a background check.
- J. Must possess or obtain a valid Minnesota driver's license.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- A. Strong understanding of soil science, agronomy, and conservation principles.
- B. Proficiency in conducting soil health assessments and interpreting soil test results.
- C. Demonstrated experience in developing and implementing conservation plans.
- D. Certification as a Certified Professional Soil Scientist (CPSS) or Certified Crop Adviser (CCA), or ability to obtain certification.
- E. Experience with ArcPro software and/or GPS survey equipment.
- F. Leadership experience and an agricultural background are helpful.
- G. Existing USDA Job Approval Authority.

PHYSICAL JOB REQUIREMENTS AND WORKING CONDITIONS

- A. Work is performed indoors and outdoors at various sites throughout Swift County.
- B. Lifting up to 50 pounds on an occasional basis.
- C. Exposure to outdoor conditions during fieldwork, such as walking cropland fields in all temperatures and humidity and exposure to equipment noise.

CAREER LADDER CLASSIFICATIONS

- A. Classifications can be found on the following pages.
- B. Must satisfy all requirements to become eligible for the next Grade.

	Soil Health Conservationist I	Soil Health Conservationist II	Soil Health Conservationist III
Pay Grade	4 (\$24.82-\$36.06)	5 (\$26.81-\$38.94)	6 (\$28.95-\$42.06)
<u>Education and Previous Work Experience</u>			
High School Diploma or Equivalent	Required	Required	Required
Related Work + Education Experience	0-5 Years	5-10 Years	10+ Years
<u>SWCD Programs and Planning</u>			
Knowledge of conservation practices	Familiar with a few conservation practices and where and how they apply.	Familiar with many conservation practices and where and how they apply.	Familiar with several conservation practices and where and how they apply.
NRCS Conservation Planner Status	No status	Level 1	Level 3
Landowner interactions specific to conservation	No previous experience working with landowners on conservation projects/programs.	Able to provide general recommendations to landowners on conservation projects/programs that are relevant to their needs.	Able to provide specific recommendations to landowners on conservation projects/programs that are relevant to their needs and speak knowledgeably about how to go about implementation.
Local, State, and Federal Programs	General awareness of available local, state, and federal programs.	Knowledgeable of the sign-up process for some local, state, and federal programs.	Knowledgeable of the sign-up process for many local, state, and federal programs.
Project Implementation	No experience with conservation cost share project implementation.	Able to assist with conservation cost share project implementation.	Independently able to lead conservation cost share project implementation.
Collaboration	Minimal existing contacts and interactions.	Working ability to develop and maintain effective working relationships and collaborations with colleagues, partners, and stakeholders, including those that may have diverse missions, goals, and backgrounds.	Proven ability to develop and maintain effective working relationships and collaborations with colleagues, partners, and stakeholders, including those that may have diverse missions, goals, and backgrounds.

SWCD Planning	Provides minimal meaningful feedback and contributions towards the growth of the SWCD.	Provides meaningful feedback and contributions towards the growth of the SWCD as requested.	Provides unprompted, meaningful feedback and contributions towards the growth of the SWCD.
Contracting	Unable to develop a cost share contract folder from start to finish, or complete necessary paperwork as a part of the process (including permits and checklists).	With assistance, able to develop a cost share contract folder from start to finish, and complete necessary paperwork as a part of the process (including permits and checklists).	Independently able to develop a cost share contract folder from start to finish, and complete necessary paperwork as a part of the process (including permits and checklists).

Education, Outreach, and Promotion

Workshops and Field Days	Able to plan workshops and field days with assistance.	Able to plan workshops and field days with assistance.	Able to plan workshops and field days independently, including all facets of the event.
Ag Retailers	Able to meet regularly with ag retailers with assistance.	Able to meet regularly with ag retailers with assistance.	Able to meet regularly with ag retailers independently.

Knowledge

Job Approval Authority	None.	Obtain JAA for the following Conservation Practices at the associated job class (JC) levels. Conservation Crop Rotation (328 JC I), Residue and Tillage Mgmt., No-Till (329 JC I), Residue and Tillage Mgmt., Reduced Till (345 JC I), Cover Crops (340 JC II).	Obtain JAA for the following Conservation Practices at the associated job class (JC) levels. Conservation Crop Rotation (328 JC I), Residue and Tillage Mgmt., No-Till (329 JC I), Residue and Tillage Mgmt., Reduced Till (345 JC I), Cover Crops (340 JC IV). Plus obtain JAA for at least two of the following or related practices: Irrigation Water Mgmt. (449), Nutrient Mgmt. (590), Pest Mgmt. (595), or Prescribed Grazing (528).
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Agriculture Equipment	Able to identify some common agriculture equipment.	Able to identify several different pieces of agriculture equipment common in Swift County and understand it's purpose or function.	Able to identify almost any piece of agriculture equipment common in Swift County and understand it's purpose and function.
Farming Operations	Minimal knowledge of common farming practices in Swift County.	Basic knowledge of common farming practices in Swift County.	Advanced knowledge of common farming practices in Swift County.
Environment Knowledge	Working knowledge of the Minnesota landscape and associated environmental concerns.	Working knowledge of the west central/southwest Minnesota landscape and associated environmental concerns.	Working knowledge of the Swift County landscape and associated environmental concerns.
State and Local Laws	Basic understanding and awareness of state and local laws and ordinances that pertain to SWCD related activities, such as the Wetland Conservation Act, Buffer Law, Shoreland Rules, County Setbacks, seed laws, etc.	Basic understanding and awareness of state and local laws and ordinances that pertain to SWCD related activities, such as the Wetland Conservation Act, Buffer Law, Shoreland Rules, County Setbacks, seed laws, etc.	Detailed understanding and awareness of state and local laws and ordinances that pertain to SWCD related activities, such as the Wetland Conservation Act, Buffer Law, Shoreland Rules, County Setbacks, seed laws, etc.
Core Competencies from BWSR TTCP	None completed.	All three core competencies and associated modules have been viewed and completed.	All three core competencies and associated modules have been viewed and completed.
BWSR Training Series	None completed.	Completion of Cover Crop (340) and Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (329) Technical Training series available on BWSR Website.	Completion of Cover Crop (340) and Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (329), and at least one of Hydrology and Hydraulics, Integrated Pest Mgmt. (595), Livestock Pipeline and Watering Facility (516 & 614), Nutrient Mgmt. (590), or Prescribed Grazing (528) Technical Training series available on BWSR Website.

Soil Health	Can list the five soil health practices, able to describe 1-2 in detail.	Can list the five soil health practices, able to describe 3-4 in detail and how a Swift County farmer could incorporate them.	Can list the five soil health practices, able to describe all five in detail and how a Swift County farmer could incorporate them.
Cover Crops	Able to identify up to three cover crop species, describe their growth form, and how they could be implemented into a Swift County farmers' rotation.	Able to identify 4-6 cover crop species, describe their growth form, and how they could be implemented into a Swift County farmers' rotation.	Able to identify at least seven cover crop species, describe their growth form, and how they could be implemented into a Swift County farmers' rotation.