

2009

ANNUAL

PLAN

OF

WORK

DRAFT

STEELE COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK - 2009

Introduction:

The purpose of this plan is to isolate those goals of the Comprehensive Plan that will be concentrated on during the time period, January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2009

Objectives:

- I. Maintain and improve surface and ground water quality through promotion and application of conservation practices which reduce soil erosion by water to tolerable levels on all land in the county.**

Actions Planned:

- A. Reduce erosion by water, by installing 1,000 feet of terraces, 10 water and sediment control basins and 15 acres of grassed waterways.**
- B. Control sedimentation to streams, ditches and lakes by installing 1 gully control structure and 4 side inlet drainage ditch structures.**
- C. Will promote the application of 20 acres of filter strips adjacent to drainage ditches, streams and wetlands through the Continuous CRP Sign-up.**
- D. Assist with the implementation of the Steele County Comprehensive Water Management Plan.**
 - 1. Assist landowners with manure storage and management plans to ensure that surface and groundwater will not be impacted by animal waste.
 - a. Will utilize available program funding to assist landowners with animal waste runoff from feedlots.
 - 2. Participate in the Cannon River Watershed Partnership.
 - 3. Continue the Observation Well Program in cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources.
 - 4. Continue coordination of the Precipitation Gauging Network by submitting monthly reports and soliciting new reporters as needed.

5. Will participate in the State Revolving Loan Fund – SE Technical Joint Powers Board.

a. Loan Applications for best management practices will be reviewed for certification.

E. Implement the following Board of Water and Soil Resources grants by the assigned deadlines.

1. Cooperative Weed Management Area Grant.
2. Buffer Grant.
3. Flood Control Grant.

F. Will assist landowners with maintenance of existing RIM Reserve easements.

1. Facilitate controlled burns on 250 acres of RIM Reserve easements in cooperation with the Minnesota Conservation Corp.

G. Assist landowners with all aspects of the current Federal Farm Program.

1. Promote the Continuous Conservation Reserve Farmed Wetland Program striving to enroll, 100 acres, throughout the county.
 - a. Will employ a part time farm bill employee in cooperation with the Waseca County SWCD to promote the Continuous CRP, and other Farm Bill programs.
2. Promote the Environmental Quality Incentive Program focusing on high priority practices including: no-till, strip-till, and animal waste control systems.
3. Promote the Wetland Reserve Program focusing on marginal wet farmland.

H. Administer the Wetland Conservation Act in cooperation with the County Environmental Services Department.

1. The SWCD will act as the clearinghouse for all wetland related activities.

I. Continue to sponsor the Straight River Marsh Wetland Restoration Project.

1. Promote enrollment of key parcels within the wetland basin.
2. Assist landowners with maintenance of existing easements.
 - a. Will offer a SWCD Spraying Program to address invasive species growing on easement lands.

J. Will make available to cooperators a no-till drill for seeding CRP, RIM, CREP, and WRP projects.

II. Reduce wind erosion to tolerable levels on all land.

Actions Planned:

- A. Will sponsor a Tree and Shrub Program, making available conservation grade planting stock for use in windbreaks, wildlife habitat, and erosion control plantings.
- B. Install 10 acres of farmstead and field windbreaks throughout the county.
 - 1. Will promote the CRP Continuous Sign-up for windbreaks on cropland and the EQIP Program for windbreaks on non-cropland areas.

III. To adequately drain wet cropland for efficient crop production and successful operation of all conservation practices.

Actions Planned:

- A. Assist 2 drainage groups with the planning and design of tile mains. Encourage the groups to establish legal recorded agreements.

IV. To inform all people of the County about soil and water resource programs.

Actions Planned:

- A. Will maintain the SWCD website including monthly updates.
- B. Will publish a Conservation News twice a year – February, and September. The newsletter will be distributed to all landowners, cooperating agencies and news media.
- C. Sponsor soil and water conservation awareness programs for students including:
 - 1. Will sponsor the Steele County Outstanding 4-H Conservation Trophy.
 - 2. Will promote the Southeast Minnesota Envirothon in schools throughout Steele County.
 - 3. Will make presentations about Conservation Programs to schools and groups as requested.
- D. Recognize an Outstanding Conservation Farmer, Wildlife Conservationist and Outstanding Windbreak.

- E. Maintain contact with legislators and inform them of soil and water conservation needs and priorities.
 - 1. Will attend the MASWCD Legislative Day at the Capitol.
- F. Promote Soil and Water Conservation by:
 - 1. Submitting monthly news articles to the county news papers.
 - 2. Sponsoring a booth in the Izaak Walton Building at the County Fair.
 - 3. Observing Soil Stewardship Week by furnishing material to county churches and schools.
 - 4. Publishing a 2010 Conservation Calendar in December.
- G. Will erect an informational sign about the Straight River Marsh adjacent to the County Road #45 south.
- H. Promote the use of the Land Use Model in schools and other educational events.

V. Improve wildlife habitat so that adequate wildlife populations exist for recreational enjoyment.

Actions Planned:

- A. Inform landowners about the wildlife programs available through the Department of Natural Resources, MN Pheasants Group, Steele County Spurs Wild Turkey Federation Group, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- B. Promote planting native grasses, trees and food plots on CRP, RIM Reserve and other land to improve the wildlife value of those lands.

VI. Cooperate with other agencies to promote soil and water conservation awareness, and to research solutions for related resource problems.

Actions Planned:

- A. Work closely with the County Commissioners, County Highway Department, and Environmental Health and Zoning Department to solve local resource problems.
 - 1. Will facilitate a joint meeting with FSA, Steele County Weed Inspector and NRCS to address noxious weed, tree and brush control on CRP lands.
- B. Work with the County Extension Office to promote information and education about soil and water conservation.
- C. Participate in the Steele County Zoning Ordinance revision process.
 - 1. Encourage the County to adopt a soil erosion ordinance.

2. Promote protection of prime farmland, natural areas and open space in the county.

VII. Increase efficiency of District office operations through utilizing the computer system.

Actions Planned:

- A. Will facilitate the transition to a new computer server for district computers.
 1. Will develop a digitized layer of all buffer strips, filter strips and drained wetland basins in the county.

VIII. Cost-Share Program. Funds Needed.

- A. Upland erosion is most severe on cropland in Medford, Clinton Falls, Berlin, Lemond and Blooming Prairie twps. Practices needed to control these problems include: terrace systems, waterways, sediment control basins and field windbreaks.

\$ 8,937.00
 - B. Sedimentation is occurring due to streambank erosion along the Straight River, McKenzie Creek, Medford Creek, Maple Creek and several private ditches. Grade stabilization and side-inlet structures are needed to control these problems.

\$ 8,937.00
- \$17,874.00