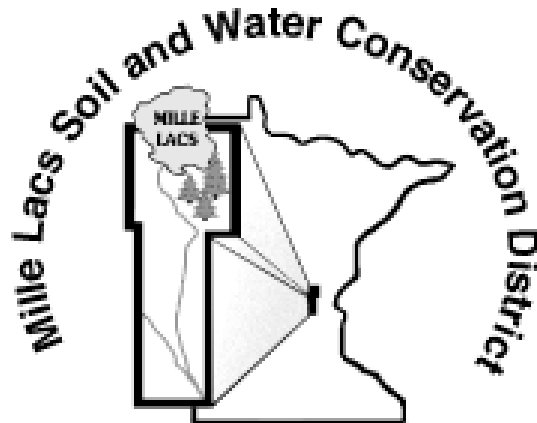


Mille Lacs Soil and Water Conservation District



2010 Annual Plan of Work

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

The Mille Lacs Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a local government unit organized in 1955, operating under a state charter issued in 1944 by the Minnesota Secretary of State and organized under the provisions of Chapter 103C of Minnesota Statutes as recodified in 1995. The Mille Lacs SWCD is governed by a Board of Supervisors composed of five members elected to four-year terms by the voters of Mille Lacs County. Representation on the Board is from five supervisor nominating districts. These supervisor nominating districts are based on similar geographic and property usages rather than by population to better serve the land use needs. Supervisors must live within their nominating district but are elected in a county wide election.

The 2010 Supervisors are:

District One: Linda Evans, appointed to fill term expiring at the end of 2012

District Two: Kurt Beckstrom, term expires at the end of 2012

District Three: Ray Schultz, term expires at the end of 2010

District Four: Barb Eller, term expires at the end of 2012

District Five: Bob Hoefert, appointed to fill term expiring end of 2010

MISSION:

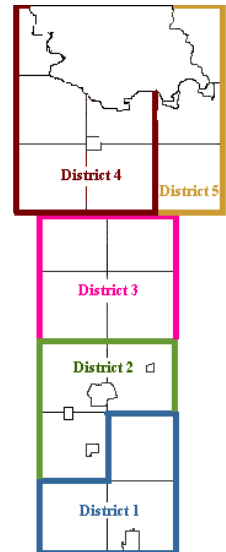
It is the mission of the Mille Lacs Soil and Water Conservation District to assist area people with soil and water resource management.

The district staff for 2010 includes a full-time District Manager/County Agricultural Inspector and a full-time Conservation Technician/Assistant County Agricultural Inspector.

The year 2010 regular SWCD staff are:

District Manager/Co Ag Inspector: Susan Shaw

Conservation Technician/Assistant Co Ag Inspector: Lynn Carter



The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides a full-time District Conservationist. The 2010 NRCS District Conservationist is Shannon Carpenter.

The District office is co-located with the NRCS office at the Ag Service Center in Milaca.

On February 10, 2009 the Mille Lacs SWCD Board of Supervisors adopted the Mille Lacs County Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan* as its Comprehensive Plan for 2009 through 2011. This Annual Plan provides a mechanism for implementing the District's Comprehensive Plan by identifying the actions that should be performed during the calendar year 2010 and provides guidelines for the SWCD/NRCS staff to follow in order to achieve the District's objectives. November 2009 the SWCD Board completed a Long Range Strategic Planning process identifying District strengths, weaknesses and activities that the Board and staff felt should have increased attention and investment to meet emerging trends and needs in Mille Lacs County.

The Six (6) broad-based categories for the 2010 Initiatives are:

INITIATIVE ONE: Land Use and Erosion Control

INITIATIVE TWO: Surface Water Quality and Protection: Wetlands, Lakes, and Streams

INITIATIVE THREE: Groundwater Quality and Supply

INITIATIVE FOUR: County Agricultural Inspector Program

INITIATIVE FIVE: Education and Information

INITIATIVE SIX: District Public Relations/Management

Following each initiative are specific actions planned by the SWCD/NRCS for the upcoming year, which must be taken to meet that initiative.

INITIATIVE ONE
LAND USE AND EROSION CONTROL

GOAL A* - ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS THAT PROTECT, ENHANCE, MAINTAIN OR RESTORE SURFACE AND GROUNDWATER QUALITY.

ACTION STEPS:

1. Educate residents on restoring and preserving natural shoreline areas. *
 - a. **Educate local residents about the protection and reclamation of wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas.**
2. Assist landowners with shoreland and riparian best management practices and provide cost-share assistance through existing programs.*
 - a. Promote tree planting and provide for the availability of large quantities of trees and shrubs for conservation plantings at an economical cost.
 - b. Provide technical assistance about planting trees and shrubs for wildlife, forest management and erosion control.
 - c. The District was awarded a Clean Water Fund Competitive Grant to restore approximately 110 linear feet x 30 vertical feet of eroded shoreline and install 25 foot native plant buffer along restored shoreline to reduce nutrient and sediment runoff. Project will include a workshop to educate the community on the value of shoreline restorations and shoreline buffers.

GOAL B – WORK WITH LAND MANAGERS, LAND OWNERS AND OPERATORS IN MILLE LACS COUNTY, REGARDLESS OF LAND USE TO ENCOURAGE BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES.*

ACTION STEPS:

1. Continue farm planning followed by implementation of recommended best management practices. *
 - a. Maintain availability of a no-till grass interseeder and promote the planting grasses using no-till methods when appropriate.
 - b. Promote and make available the AG Best Management Practices Loan program that provides low interest financing to farmers and rural landowners to encourage agricultural best management practices, and projects that reduce existing water quality problems caused by agricultural activities or failing septic systems
2. Educate feedlot owners about the importance of protecting surface waters from animal waste runoff.*
3. Provide information and technical assistance to operators regarding the appropriate management of animal waste.*
 - a. The District was awarded a Clean Water Fund Competitive Grant to complete nutrient and manure management plans with 9 farmers in the Rum River Watershed and 1 in the Groundhouse River Watershed on approximately 1,958 acres to reduce nutrient and bacteria runoff to surface water and groundwater.
4. Provide technical and financial assistance to feedlot owners wishing/desiring to comply with local and state requirements.*
 - a. Use the BWSR State Cost Share program funds and other potential programs to solve as many resource concerns as possible.
5. Support the efforts of the Snake River Watershed Management Board in encouraging best management practices to improve water quality and wise stewardship during forestry, grazing & agricultural crop activities. *
 - a. Coordinate with the Snake River Watershed Management Board to identify resource protection projects and accomplish water quality enhancements in the Watershed.
 - b. Assist the Snake River Watershed with their Clean Water Partnership grant by providing education and technical assistance with water sampling.

6. Work with cities and local government units or state agencies to improve riverside recreation areas that will meet both water quality and community recreation needs.*
7. Assist with education and implementation of the Groundhouse River TMDL Implementation Plan funded in 2010-2013 under a Federal 319 grant.
8. Assist the Mille Lacs County landowners by implementing the SWCD duties under the Rural Preserves Property Tax Program (RPPTP): The Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) serves as the approval authority of the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) program (MS 273.114). The SWCD shall develop the plan approval process, including, but not limited to:
 - Approval of RPPTP Planner Criteria
 - Establishing fees associated with plan approval
 - Identifying who will be authorized to approve plans. Board or staff may serve in this role. Consideration should be given to separation of duties if delegated to staff.
 - Establishing timeline required for approval.

INITIATIVE TWO

SURFACE WATER QUALITY & PROTECTION: WETLANDS, LAKES, AND STREAMS

GOAL A - PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO PROTECT AND RESTORE WETLANDS, SHORELANDS, & STREAMS; IMPROVE STORMWATER RUNOFF QUALITY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY*; ALL TO PREVENT AND REDUCE WATER POLLUTION AND CONSERVE WATER SUPPLIES.

ACTION STEPS:

- 1. Educate the public about the impacts of stormwater runoff on water resources through cooperative programs with communities, using public awareness tools such as storm drain stenciling. ***
- 2. Work with communities regarding management of stormwater inputs**, such as storage of highway salt & sand, or storage of snow in winter where melt can run directly to water resources like rivers or lakes. *
 - a. Provide input and review for wellhead protection plans, DNR Water permits, Zoning permits, or other environmental reviews developed by entities required to complete those permits/plans, and make recommendations for erosion control not limited to, but including practices such as mulching, seeding, diversions, and silt fences.
3. Administer the SWCD duties of the MN Wetland Conservation Act. Protecting wetlands according to the Minnesota Wetlands Conservation Act (WCA) of 1991. Work with the County Environmental Services, providing support and technical services for WCA program. Develop Wetland Restoration plans and review monitoring plans of created/restored wetlands as required. Serve on Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP). House reference materials, providing technical information and services.
- 4. Educate communities and homeowners about stormwater inputs they can control and improve.***
 - a. The District will partner with the Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Management Group and Aitkin SWCD on a Clean Water Fund Competitive Grant to implement raingarden and shoreland restoration projects for the Mille Lacs Lake Watershed.
- 5. Urban Best Management Practices (BMPs) and Stormwater management were identified by the SWCD Board during a strategic planning process as an area that the District should promote and grow as a program.**

GOAL B – ASSESS THE ABILITY OF WATER RESOURCES IN MILLE LACS COUNTY TO MEET THEIR DESIGNATED USES.

ACTION STEPS:

1. **Apply for funding through PCA to create monitoring plans of waters for a more comprehensive assessment of waters in Mille Lacs County. ***
 - a. **Develop water quality monitoring programs to obtain water quality data on Wetlands, Lakes and Streams for a more comprehensive assessment of waters in Mille Lacs County. Partner with volunteers and students in monitoring as an educational activity.**

The District has applied for PCA Surface Water Assessment Funding for 2010-2011 to continue assessing the health of the Rum River watershed. If this funding is not approved application may be made for Clean Water Partnership funding.

2. Assist the Snake River Watershed Management Board by monitoring water quality on the Groundhouse and Knife Rivers (Snake River Watershed) within Mille Lacs County.*
3. Participate in Conservation St. Croix meetings to address the St Croix Basin TMDL.

INITIATIVE THREE
GROUNDWATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY

GOAL - PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE GROUNDWATER QUALITY AND SOURCES TO ENSURE THE SAFETY AND AVAILABILITY OF WATER FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION AND AGRICULTURAL USES.*

ACTION STEPS:

1. Assist the County with addressing and correcting failing septic systems.*
 - a. Promote the AG Best Management Practices Loan Program to correct failing septic systems
2. Continue to make available well water testing opportunities to individuals in Mille Lacs County and provide free well water testing clinics for Nitrates annually in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.*
3. **Educate landowners through news articles, news letters, brochures, website, workshops, radio spots, etc. on the importance of properly sealing abandoned wells.***
4. Assist landowners with the sealing of abandoned wells and provide cost-share assistance through existing programs.*
 - a. Promote the need to seal unused wells and provide or direct them to cost share assistance if available.
5. Monitor groundwater levels of Department of Natural Resources non-irrigation observation wells.
6. Continue to support a network of volunteer rain gauge monitors keeping daily precipitation records for the State Climatologic Office.
7. Fund conservation practices by supplying landowners with cost share funds and technical assistance through the BWSR State Cost Share program.

INITIATIVE FOUR
COUNTY AGRICULTURAL INSPECTOR PROGRAM

GOAL - PROVIDE COUNTY ENFORCEMENT FOR THE MINNESOTA NOXIOUS WEED LAW SO THAT PUBLIC HEALTH, PUBLIC ROADS, CROPS, LIVESTOCK, AND OTHER PROPERTY ARE PROTECTED FROM THE INJURIOUS EFFECTS OF NOXIOUS WEEDS

ACTION STEPS: THE SWCD IS APPOINTED BY MILLE LACS COUNTY TO FULFILL THE DUTIES OF COUNTY AG INSPECTOR.

1. Carry out Agricultural Inspector Duties as required by state law by providing regulation as per Minnesota Statute 18.81. The regulatory effort by this position provides protective and educational service to the public and regulated industries with the end result of protecting the public health, the environment, and the consumer. Duties include but are not limited to:
 1. Noxious weed control & management
 - a. Continue Mille Lacs County GIS noxious weed mapping
 - b. Implement biological control methods when appropriate
 - c. Coordinate noxious weed control on County Road Right of Ways and Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management Plan (IRVM)
 2. Seed sampling services according to MN Dept. of Ag guidelines (consumer protection services)
 3. Administer pesticide applicator tests
 4. Provide education on noxious weed control needs to landowners and local weed management officials.

INITIATIVE FIVE
EDUCATION & INFORMATION

GOAL - PROVIDE INFORMATION AND EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES TO THE PUBLIC AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ABOUT OUR SOIL AND WATER RESOURCES AND HOW THEY CAN BE PRESERVED OR RESTORED.*

ACTION STEPS: EDUCATION HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED BY THE SWCD AS CRUCIAL TO THE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING ITS ROLE AS A STAKEHOLDER IN WATERSHED PROTECTION.

9. Educate the public by developing and distributing materials that explain conservation issues in a manner that is clear and non-threatening.
10. Incorporate workshops when appropriate into Rain garden, shoreline restoration or other conservation projects when appropriate.
11. Host 5th Grade Conservation Education Day in Mille Lacs County.
12. Promote and participate in the Area III and State Envirothon, High School competitions.
13. Offer educational opportunities and presentations to schools, organizations, and the public.
14. Provide information about natural resource protection to local papers, radio stations or other media.
15. Utilize membership in the Milaca Area Chamber of Commerce to identify private sector business owners that will be long term stakeholders in watershed protection. Generate civic engagement.
16. Host well water testing clinics for nitrates.
17. Assist with education and implementation of the Groundhouse River Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Plan funded in 2010-2013 under a Federal 319 grant.
18. Assist with education and awareness of water quality impairments in the Snake River Watershed.
19. Maintain the SWCD website with current resource protection and assistance information.

INITIATIVE SIX
DISTRICT PUBLIC RELATIONS/MANAGEMENT

GOAL - CONTINUE TO IMPROVE DISTRICT PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MANAGEMENT SO AS TO INCREASE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMS AND INSURE ADEQUATE FUNDING AND STAFFING LEVELS.

ACTION STEPS:

1. Maintain a professional and efficient working relationship with cooperating agencies in order to address as many resource concerns as possible.
2. Promote a positive public image and excellent customer service. Cultivate communication with County Commissioners and local legislators.
3. Encourage inter-agency cooperation and utilize existing groups whenever possible to promote and implement programs. Continue to coordinate the Mille Lacs County Water Plan, and the county noxious/invasive weed management initiatives through the County Agricultural Inspector program. Continue to participate in the Snake River Watershed Management Board, Technical Engineering Service Area 3 Joint Power Board, the Onanegozie Resource Conservation and Development Council, Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Group, and the Minnesota SWCD's Forestry Association.
4. Implement and utilize BWSR's annual reporting system, *elink*.
5. Convene locally led conservation work group meetings to address local conservation needs assessment and identify priorities and priority areas.
6. Improve staff performance and coordination by holding regular staff meetings, updating position descriptions as necessary, and arranging training opportunities as appropriate.
7. The SWCD and NRCS prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status.
8. Review and discuss the Civil Rights policy as contained in MOU with SWCD Board.

COST SHARE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

High Priority Erosion Problems:

High Priority Erosion Problems means areas where erosion from wind or water is occurring on Class I-IV soils equal to or in excess of 2XT per acre per year/or any area within 300 feet of a water course or within 1,000 feet of a water basin or wetland eroding by water in excess of T tons per acre per year. The water basin, wetland, or watercourse must be classified by the Department of Natural Resources as a protected water. Erosion problems occurring on non-shoreland areas in excess of T but less than 2XT tons per acre per year are classified as secondary priority.

High Priority Water Quality Problems:

High Priority Water Quality Problems means areas where sediment, nutrients, chemicals, or other pollutants discharge to protected waters or to a sinkhole or ground water so as to impair their quality or usefulness. These include high priority feedlots and sedimentation problems.

High Priority Feedlot Problems:

High Priority Feedlots means feedlots where the pollution potential rating from the feedlot model is greater than or equal to one and which are discharging pollutants to DNR protected waters or to a sinkhole or shallow soils overlying fractured or cavernous bedrock or within 100 feet of a water well.

High Priority Sedimentation Problems:

High Priority Sedimentation Problems means areas within 300 feet of a water course or 1000 feet of a water basin or wetland where the water erosion rate exceeds 3 tons per acre per year or areas where the District can show that sediment delivery occurs from a watershed or direct conveyance structure such as a storm sewer or paved outlet channel discharging to these waters.

MILLE LACS SWCD WORKLOAD ANALYSIS
JANUARY 1, 2010 TO DECEMBER 31, 2010

Initiative	Activity	DM/CAI	CT/CAI	Total
Implement the Mille Lacs County Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan				
1	Land Use and Erosion Control	50	500	550
2	Surface Water Quality & Protection: Wetlands, Lakes, & Streams	400	220	620
Administer SWCD Duties of the Wetland Conservation Act				
3	Groundwater Quality and Supply	0	50	50
5	Education & Information	100	400	500
4	County Agricultural Inspector Program	50	250	300
6	District Public Relations/Management	856	288	1144
Meetings and Training's				
Annual, Holiday, Sick Leave				
Total Staff Hours Needed		2080	2080	4160

DM – District Manager/Co Ag Inspector
CT – Conservation Technician/Asst Co Ag Inspector

Initiative	Activity (funding source breakdown)	DM/CAI	CT/CAI	Total
Implement the Mille Lacs County Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan				
1	Land Use and Erosion Control (NRBG-LWM)	50	63	113
(County Allotment)			337	337
(BWSR-General Services)			100	100
2	Surface Water Quality & Protection: Wetlands, Lakes, & Streams (NRBG-LWM)	150		150
(County Allotment)		250		250
(BWSR-General Services)			220	220
Administer SWCD Duties of the Wetland Conservation Act (NRBG - WCA)				
		100		100
(County Allotment - match)		100		100
3	Groundwater Quality and Supply (NRBG-LWM)		50	50
(BWSR-General Services)				0
5	Education & Information (County Allotment - levy)	100	14	114
Website (BWSR-General Services)			386	386
4	County Agricultural Inspector Program (County Allotment)	50	250	300
6	District Public Relations/Management (BWSR-General Services)	31	288	319
(County Allotment)		825		825
Meetings and Training's (BWSR-General Services)		50	50	100
Annual, Holiday, Sick Leave (County Allotment)		374	322	696
Total Staff Hours Needed		2080	2080	4160

Mille Lacs Soil & Water Conservation District ~ 2010 Budget

REVENUES

Intergovernmental Revenue	
County Allocation	<u><u>\$61,275.00</u></u>
Water Management Plan - match	5717.00
Wetland Conservation Act - match	5000.00
District Operations	50558.00
State NRBG	
Water Management Plan Funding	<u><u>\$15,664.00</u></u>
Wetland Conservation Act Funding	5000.00
State General Services Grant Funding:	<u><u>\$23,219.00</u></u>
Reinvest in MN (RIM) Administrative	886.00
Technical & Administrative Assistance	22333.00
State Cost Share Funding:	<u><u>\$6,656.00</u></u>
State Cost Share:	6656.00
Clean Water Fund Grants (2 year projects):	<u><u>\$68,950.00</u></u>
Nutrient Management Planning	15717.00
Shoreline Restoration	53233.00
Charges for Services/Project Revenue	<u><u>\$34,894.00</u></u>
Tree Sales Program	25000.00
Interseeder/Tree Planter Program	500.00
DNR groundwater monitoring	960.00
Co Ag Inspector charge for pesticide app testing	125.00
Mille Lacs Lake Shoreline Protection/Enhancement (Assistance to Aitkin SWCD/MLWMG)	3309.00
Snake River Watershed Assistance	<u>5,000.00</u>
Clean Water Partnership (CWP) grant	3000.00
Groundhouse TMDL Implementation Plan	2000.00
Miscellaneous Revenue	<u><u>\$800.00</u></u>
Interest	800.00
Misc.	
TOTAL REVENUE:	\$216,458.00

EXPENDITURES

District Operations	
Personnel Expenses	<u><u>\$105,459.00</u></u>
Employee Wages (2 full time employees)	67207.00
Benefits/PERA (sup & emp)	25620.00
Supervisor Meeting Compensation	7800.00
Employee Mileage & Training Expenses	2700.00
Member at Large Compensation	1500.00
MCIT Workers' Comp	632.00
Other Services & Charges	<u><u>\$19,746.00</u></u>
Phone	800.00
Postage	600.00
Fees&Dues	2937.00
Office Rent	4750.00
Office Insurance	3159.00
Vehicle Operation/Maintenance	300.00
Computer IT	2000.00
Audit (every 3 yrs)	200.00
Supplies	500.00
Capital Outlay/Equipment	0
Project Expenditures (non wage)	<u><u>\$83,403.80</u></u>
District Program Expenditures:	
Tree Program:	20000.00
Interseeder/Tree Planter:	400.00
AgBMP revolving loan program administration	200.00
Co Ag Inspector annual training	300.00
County Local Water Management Plan:	
Education Activities	400.00
Envirothon, 5th Grade Conservation	200.00
Website (legal requirement)	
Wetland Conservation Act	<u>2000.00</u>
Clean Water Fund Grants:	<u>54779.00</u>
Nutrient Management Planning	9729.00
Shoreline Restoration	45050.00
State Cost Share to Landowners	<u>5324.80</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURES:	\$208,608.80
Over (Under) Expenditures	7,849.20