



Mille Lacs SWCD- Agricultural Non-Structural Practices
Policy # 2024-03

Agricultural Non-Structural Practices

Incentives to install or adopt non-structural best management practices that improve or protect water quality are eligible for use of funds. The goal of these practices is ongoing landowner adoption unless otherwise approved by BWSR.

Non-structural BMPs will be planned and implemented according to the Natural Resource Conservation Service standards and specifications found on the Electronic Field Office Technical Guide (EFOTG). However, seeding dates for cover crops may follow Midwest Cover Crop Council seeding guide recommendations.

For all non-structural BMP practices, cost share funding will be comprised of a flat per acre rate incentive based on the Minnesota NRCS Practice Average Annual Cost Information Spreadsheet FY2018 (or more recent as it becomes available) and the Practice Cost Information Workbook Tool 2019 (or more recent) found in the EFOTG.

Contract length

Practices will be planned for 1- or 3-years of implementation.

1-year contracts are available to allow landowners to start small by trying a practice with little commitment. 1-year contracts apply to cover crops only.

For practices with 3 years of implementation, practices may be implemented on the same acres for the 3-year duration (required for nutrient management and prescribed grazing), practices may move with the rotation but must implement the same amount or greater acres in years 2 and 3, or two or more practices may be implemented on the same acres for the 3-year period alternating years (ex. Plant cover crops after corn harvest, no-till soybeans the following year).

Contract Payments

A one-time payment shall be made upon the first season's certification by the District for both one- and three-year contracts. Certification includes verification of seeding, seed mix, and rate. The practice must be certified and inspected by the District annually for three-year contracts to ensure implementation. If the practice is not continued in years 2 & 3 as required, the Partner shall recover funds for those years.

Eligibility

1-year Contracts (applies to cover crops only): Eligibility requirements include that planned practices are newly adopted; not previously implemented on the acres by the current owner/operator and did not previously meet NRCS standards and specifications. Up to three consecutive contracts may be applied for on the same land.

3-Year Contracts: Eligibility requirements include that planned practices are newly adopted; not previously implemented on the acres by the current owner/operator and did not previously meet NRCS standards and specifications. For cover crops, a second application is eligible if cover crops species or acreage is enhanced.

Incentive Rates:

- **Cover Crops** - Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 340
 - 1-2 species \$50/acre/year
 - 3+ species \$60/acre/year
 - Implementation can occur on different acres within the three-year contract or on the same acres consecutively
- **Nutrient Management** - Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 590
 - \$20/acre/year
 - Implemented on the same acres annually
- **Prescribed Grazing** - Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 528
 - \$40/acre/year
 - Implemented on the same acres annually
- **Residue and Tillage Management – No-Till & Strip Till** - Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 329 for No-Till/Strip-Till
 - \$20/acre/year
 - Implementation can occur on different acres within the three-year contract or on the same acres consecutively
- **Residue and Tillage Management - Conservation Tillage** - Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 345 for Conservation Till
 - \$10/acre/year
 - Residue cover following a corn crop at the time of planting the subsequent crop must be 60% or greater.
 - Residue cover following a soybean crop at the time of planting the subsequent crop must be 30% or greater.
 - Residue cover following a small grain crop at the time of planting the subsequent crop must be 60% or greater.
 - Implementation can occur on different acres within the three-year contract or on the same acres consecutively.
- **Labor Provided by Owners**

Unless specified otherwise by Minnesota prevailing wage statutes, the value of labor, equipment, materials and/or services that are proposed to be provided by the landowner to complete the project shall be estimated at:

 - General Labor rate of \$32/hour; date, times, and activity must be documented
 - Heavy equipment operation such as skid steers, tractors, backhoes and scrapers, including labor, at \$75/hour; date, times, and activity must be documented
 - Other equipment rates as listed on the most recent Iowa State University Iowa Farm Custom Rate Survey, at the average price for the activity or machine.
 - Professional or semiprofessional services, such as engineering, estimated at a labor rate of \$100/hour. Date, times, and activity must be documented.
 - Other times: fair market value with prior approval by the SWCD Board.

In-kind labor is non-reimbursable; this is to be used only as match for the grant

Adopted 9/11/24 (date)

Attested  (signature)
Jake Janski, SWCD Board Chair