



2011 Report

Narrative of the year's activities

1. Introduction

The mission of the South St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District is to provide technical, educational, and financial resources to land occupiers in order to implement practices and projects that preserve, protect, and enhance water quality and other natural resources.

The purpose of this report is to briefly discuss items that were completed in 2011.

2. Description of services provided by the district

All SWCD services are designed to achieve our mission. Services provided by the SWCD include the following: Technical & Financial Assistance, Conservation Education, Tree & Shrub Sale, Watershed Projects, Private Forest Stewardship, Wetland Conservation, and Conservation Engineering.

3. Listing of supervisors and their offices

Dave Davis
Chair
Term of office
2009 – 2012

Debra Taylor
Vice-Chair
Term of office
2011 - 2014

Al Moline
Secretary
Term of office
2011 - 2014

Hartley Sandstrom
Treasurer
Term of office
2009 - 2012

Marcia Stromgren
Member
Term of office
2011 - 2014

4. Office personnel and cooperating agencies

Staff

Keith Anderson, P.E.
Conservation Engineer
Keith.Anderson@southstlouisswcd.org

R.C. Boheim
District Manager

Tim Byrns
Conservation Specialist

Kate Kubiak
Conservation Specialist

Lisa McKhann
Project Assistant

Cooperating Agencies

Saint Louis County
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
National Association of Conservation Districts
North Central Region of National Association of Conservation Districts
Laurentian Resource Conservation and Development Council
Regional Stormwater Protection Team

5. Accomplishments - Annual Objectives – Soil and Water Conservation Problems Lake and Stream Protection

A. Annual Objectives

- To protect, preserve, and enhance streams, inland lakes, and Lake Superior.
- To work to implement projects or practices that correct situations that are causing, or could cause, these waters to be impaired.

B. Actions taken

- Provided technical, educational, and financial assistance for land occupiers to install best management practices.
- Reviewed DNR water permits and provided input to help limit negative impacts.
- Implemented the St. Louis County Water Plan.
- Worked to meet the State’s framework for water quality assessment and improvement by monitoring, assessing, setting goals, and implementing projects within target watersheds – Miller Creek TMDL Completion.
- Worked on watershed protection and restoration projects in the three identified priority watersheds for 2011:

Miller Creek

- Assisted with projects to increase and maintain riparian vegetation with the MCC.
- Partnered with MPCA through a funding agreement to complete the TMDL project.
- Completed the “Jumbo Gully” stabilization project at Lake Superior College with Clean Water Legacy Act funding.
- Surveyed and began site design and planning for the Clean Water Fund channel restoration of Miller Creek behind Kohls.

Knife River

- Completed the TMDL Implementation Plan in cooperation with the MN Environmental partnership and the MPCA.
- Completed a bank stabilization project with Clean Water Funding in cooperation with Lake SWCD, the DNR and two private landowners. This project utilized unconventional restoration techniques and can be used as a demonstration project that will be available for public viewing for the next 10 years.

- Collaborated with St. Louis County to stabilize an eroding ditch near the confluence of the Little Knife and the Knife and to install ditch checks to slow peak flows (Clean Water Funding).
- Provided trees and labor (MN Conservation Corps) to nine private and one public (St. Louis County) landowner to enhance riparian corridors along the river (Clean Water Funding).

Amity Creek/Lester River

- Began work on our GLRI-funded grant to improve water quality in Amity together with our grant partners.

Reducing Environmental Impacts

A. Annual Objectives

- To reduce, mitigate, or eliminate environmental impacts caused by development-related activities.

B. Actions taken

- Provided technical, educational, and financial assistance that led to the installation of best management practices to minimize the impacts of development.
- Provided technical assistance to other units of government.
- Remained a member of the Regional Stormwater Protection Team (RSPT) and served as its fiscal agent.
- Cooperated with RSPT on education programs.
- Reviewed construction erosion control and stormwater plans as requested for the city of Duluth.
- Completed Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act responsibilities:
 - Served on the St. Louis County Technical Advisory Committee / Technical Evaluation Panel.
 - Completed administrative-type aspects of WCA through an agreement with St. Louis County, Proctor and Duluth.
 - 246 landowner contacts
 - 32 applications processed
 - Served on all required Technical Evaluation Panels.
 - Served as an information center for WCA.

Outreach and Education

A. Annual Objectives

- To educate youth and adult audiences about high priority SWCD soil and water conservation topics.

B. Actions taken

- Worked with the media to publicize SWCD programs and policies.
- Developed and maintained website and social networking to increase public awareness of SWCD Programs.
- Gave presentations to schools and community groups about topics that are SWCD priorities including the Fredenberg and Eagle lake Lakeshore Owners Associations and the Clean Water Council.
- Set up displays or booths at public events to publicize SWCD programs at events such as the South St. Louis County Fair, Earth Trax and the Duluth Harvest Festival.
- Coordinated the Area III Envirothon Program.
- Assisted with the 2011 RSPT Watershed Festival and other youth and family educational programs.
- Continued to support and participate in the Northeast Minnesota Regional Science Fair.
- Participated in the annual DNR Forestry Field Days and Stowe School Environmental Day

Forestry

A. SWCD Objectives

- To provide assistance to private landowners to enable healthy forests on private lands.
- To provide technical assistance to limit negative environmental impacts from forest harvesting and management activities.
- To provide a source of conservation-grade trees and shrubs.

B. Actions taken

- Held tree and shrub sale geared toward supplying native trees for conservation and education uses and programs. Forty thousand trees and shrubs sold in 2011.
- Continued to be a member of the Minnesota SWCD Forestry Association.
- Continued to look for funding opportunities to expand an assistance program for small acreage woodland owners.

Protection of Natural and Community Resources

A. Annual Objectives

- To protect and preserve critical lands and maintain existing ecological integrity.
- To enable the continued enjoyment and use of public resources and minimize negative impacts.

B. Actions taken

- Utilized the tree and shrub sale and related technical assistance to support community resource restoration and protection projects.
- Worked with North St. Louis SWCD to develop a Cooperative Weed Management Area.

Agricultural

A. SWCD Objectives

- To provide financial and technical assistance to agricultural operations to minimize negative environmental impacts.
- To support sustainable agricultural initiatives and operations that protect the environment, preserve family farming, and conserve energy.

B. Actions taken

- Maintained agricultural best management practice revolving loan funds for animal waste practices and equipment. Three loans issued for manure handling equipment.
- Led the USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program Local Work Group process to establish local priorities.

Wildlife Management

A. Annual Objectives

- To protect and enhance wildlife habitat.

B. Actions taken

- Continued to offer selections of trees and shrubs through the annual sale that will benefit wildlife.

III. Annual Objectives – Administration

A. Objective

- Ensure efficient administration and fiscal management of SWCD.
- Effectively utilize SWCD technical resources.
- Provide administrative support for multi-district organizations, partners, and grant projects.

B. Actions taken

- Maintained financial, personnel, and management policies and procedures that ensure efficient and effective SWCD operation.
- Carried out all administrative functions for TSA #3.
- Acted as fiscal agent for the Regional Stormwater Protection Team
- Acted as fiscal agent for Laurentian RC&D
- Performed administrative, fiscal, and management functions for current watershed and other special projects.
- Completed plans and reports