



**2012 Report**  
*Narrative of the year's activities*

**1. Introduction**

The mission of the South St. Louis Soil & 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 2012.

**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**

<b>Dave Davis</b> <b>Chair</b> <b>Term of office</b> <b>2009 – 2012</b>	<b>Al Moline</b> <b>Secretary</b> <b>Term of office</b> <b>2011 - 2014</b>	<b>Hartley Sandstrom</b> <b>Treasurer</b> <b>Term of office</b> <b>2009 - 2012</b>
<b>Marcia Stromgren</b> <b>Member</b> <b>Term of office</b> <b>2011 - 2014</b>	<b>Debra Taylor</b> <b>Vice-Chair</b> <b>Term of office</b> <b>2011 - 2014</b>	

**4. Office personnel and cooperating agencies**

*Staff*

<b>Keith Anderson, P.E.</b> <b>Conservation Engineer</b> <b>(TSA – Shared Position)</b>	<b>Tim Beaster</b> <b>Conservation Specialist</b>	<b>R.C. Boheim</b> <b>District Manager</b>	<b>Tim Byrns</b> <b>Conservation Specialist</b> <b>(TSA – Shared Position)</b>
<b>Kate Kubiak</b> <b>Conservation Specialist</b>	<b>Lisa McKhann</b> <b>Project Assistant</b>	<b>Matias Valero</b> <b>Engineering Technician</b> <b>(TSA – Shared Position)</b>	

### *Cooperating Agencies*

Area 3 SWCD Technical Service Area

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

Lake Superior Coldwater Coalition

## **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 and encourage practices that correct situations that are causing, or could cause, these waters to be impaired.

#### B. Actions

- Provided technical, educational, and financial assistance for land occupiers to install and use best management practices.
- Provided assistance for Lake Superior shoreline erosion problems.
- Reviewed DNR water permits and provided input to help limit negative impacts.
- Implemented the St. Louis County Water Management Plan.
- Partnered with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to complete Major Watershed Restoration and Protection Project activities for the St. Louis River and Lake Superior South Watersheds. These activities included:
  - Water quality monitoring at 76 locations.
  - 28 geomorphic surveys.
  - 66 culvert/connectivity assessments.
  - GIS reconnaissance and analysis of 10 sub-watersheds.
  - 29 field reconnaissance reports
  - Completion of the Miller Creek TMDL Implementation Plan and Civic Engagement Activities.
- Provided assistance to Community Action Duluth's Duluth Stream Corps by serving on the Habitat Action Team (HAT).
- June 2012 Flood response activities
  - Developed a master list of private landowners with erosion damage caused by the June 2012 flood. Initial assessments were completed on 126 sites
  - Applied technical and financial assistance that led to the installation of erosion control best management practices.
    - ✓ Four sites were fixed in 2012 near Chester Creek, Perch Lake, and Sargent Creek.
  - Provided financial assistance to landowners with contaminated well systems through a \$20,000 grant obtained from the Minnesota Department of Health.
  - Worked to obtain funding from the Minnesota Recovers Task Force to continue to provide financial assistance to landowners with erosion damage. An application for \$4.4 million for flood recovery is pending.

- Worked on watershed protection and restoration projects in the three priority watersheds:

#### **Miller Creek**

- ✓ Partnered with local governments (MS4s) and the MPCA to finalize the Miller Creek TMDL Study and complete the TMDL Implementation Plan.
- ✓ Continued to work the Minnesota DNR and the City of Duluth to design and plan the restoration of Miller Creek in Outlot B, Miller Creek Division (behind Kohl's department store) as part of our Clean Water Fund grant.
- ✓ Met with four property owners interested in constructing a stormwater BMP in the Miller Creek Watershed as part of our Clean Water Fund grant.

#### **Knife River**

- ✓ Worked with partners to fulfill the *Knife River Implementation Plan for Turbidity Total Maximum Daily Load*
- ✓ Secured two-year grant from the Great Lakes Commission to do sediment reduction activities along the Knife in cooperation with Lake County SWCD.
- ✓ Together with Lake County SWCD, held a meeting with all of our agency partners working in the Knife River Watershed in an effort to coordinate sediment reduction efforts and priorities.
- ✓ Continued working with private landowners, the St. Louis County and Lake County SWCD in planning the restoration of two banks along the Knife under a Clean Water Fund grant held by Lake County.

#### **Amity Creek/Lester River**

- ✓ Completed two out of the four tasks under our GLRI-funded grant to improve water quality in Amity Creek. In the spring, we cooperated with UMD and the Duluth Stream Corps to plant 300 red and white pine along a central stretch of Amity Creek. Then in the fall, we cooperated with the City of Duluth to fix or replace 12 failing or inadequate culverts along Amity Creek (Snively Trail).

### ***Reducing Environmental Impacts***

#### A. Annual Objectives

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

#### B. Actions

- Remained a member of the Regional Stormwater Protection Team (RSPT) and provided technical assistance for implementing their educational programs. Continued to serve as their fiscal agent.
- Completed Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act responsibilities:
  - Completed administrative-type aspects of WCA through an agreement with St. Louis County, Proctor and Duluth.
  - 202 WCA technical assistance contacts with landowners or consultants were completed. 26 WCA applications were processed.
  - Served on all required Technical Evaluation Panels.

### ***Outreach and Education***

#### A. Annual Objectives

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

#### B. Actions

- Worked with the media to publicize SWCD programs and policies.
  - *Conservation News* was distributed as a newspaper insert to 48,000 subscribers.
  - Local papers published two news stories on our erosion control site visits after June Floods.

- Developed and maintained website and social networking to increase public awareness of SWCD Programs.
  - Five issues of the SWCD *eNews* were sent to 800 people, including special flood edition.
  - Shared with our growing Facebook network local conservation workshops, events, and news stories.
- Developed and held a photo contest called *Forests in Focus*.
- Gave presentations to schools, and to community and professional groups and about topics that are SWCD priorities including (in 2012):
  - Three Lakes Association lakeshore-owners meeting
  - Stowe Elementary's Environmental Professionals Day
  - DNR Forestry Field Day
  - NEMO U8 and Great Lakes Sea Grant conference
  - Freshwater Folk November meeting, where we provided a presentation on our office's response and role in the 2012 Flood recovery efforts.
- Attended and provided information to the public about SWCD programs at annual regional events including:
  - South St. Louis County Fair.
  - Lake Superior Zoo's Earth Tracks.
  - Duluth Harvest Festival.
- Promoted, supported and helped coordinate Area 3's Envirothon Program.
- Supported and participated in the Northeast Minnesota Regional Science Fair.

## ***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

- Held tree and shrub sale geared toward supplying native trees for conservation and education uses and programs. Sold approximately 29,000 native plants to 530 landowners.
- Continued to be available as First Detectors for the Dept. of Ag's Emerald Ash Borer monitoring program and assisted our partners with managing and preventing the spread of EAB in St. Louis County.
- Continued to be a member of the Minnesota SWCD Forestry Association.

## ***Ground Water***

### A. Annual Objectives

- To protect and improve ground water quality.
- To protect ground water quality in areas where land occupiers rely on private wells for water supply, particularly in developing suburban and rural areas.
- To protect ground water that contributes critical base flows for streams, especially streams that support cold-water fish species.

### B. Actions

- Provided technical, educational, and financial assistance to install best management practices that protect ground water quality.
  - Provided financial assistance to landowners with contaminated well systems due to the June 2012 flood. Provided funding for one well cleaning project.

- Provided cost share assistance for two well sealing projects.

## ***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

- Maintained agricultural best management practice revolving loan funds for animal waste management practices and equipment. Three loans were issued for manure handling equipment purchases.
- Participated in the USDA NRCS Local Work Group process to establish local priorities.

## **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

- Maintained financial, personnel, and management policies and procedures and ensured efficient and effective SWCD operation.
- Carried out all administrative functions for TSA #3.
- Acted as fiscal agent for the Regional Stormwater Protection Team.
- Performed administrative, fiscal, and management functions for current watershed and other special projects.