



2015 Annual Plan

I. Introduction

The purpose of this annual plan is to detail work items that will be completed in 2015. The annual plan will provide a tool for SWCD staff and supervisors to evaluate program effectiveness. The Annual Plan is no longer required by BWSR; annual planning requirements are met by completing the Biennial Budget Request.

II. Annual Objectives – Soil and Water Conservation Problems

June 2012 Flood Recovery

A. Annual Objectives

- To provide financial and technical assistance to land occupiers to assist with the recovery from the June 2012 Flood Disaster. The first priority will be to assist private landowners.

B. Actions

- Apply technical and financial assistance that leads to the installation of best management practices that repair erosion damage caused by the June 2012 Flood.

C. Staffing Needs

Approximately 200 staff days

TSA #3 staff time will also be utilized

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

- Provide technical, educational, and financial assistance for land occupiers to install and use best management practices.
- Provide assistance for Lake Superior shoreline erosion problems.
- Review DNR water permits and provide input to help limit negative impacts.
- Implement the St. Louis County Water Management Plan.
- Complete Lake Superior Basin protection projects.
- Complete Lake Superior Basin nonpoint source pollution control projects.
- Work to meet the State's framework for water quality assessment and improvement by monitoring, assessing, setting goals, and implementing projects within target watersheds. This includes Total Maximum Daily Load projects when appropriate.
- Continue to partner with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to complete Major Watershed Restoration and Protection Project activities for five Major Watersheds: the St. Louis River, Urban Duluth, Cloquet River, Lake Superior North and Lake Superior South. Activities will include: civic engagement, report writing, water quality monitoring, geomorphic studies, watershed characterization, and other technical and public involvement work as requested.
- Support the MPCA and other partners' efforts towards restoring the St. Louis River Estuary and removing its AOC status (target year is 2025).

- Work on watershed protection and restoration projects in the three identified priority watersheds for 2015:

Miller Creek

- Increase and maintain riparian vegetation.
- Lead best management practice installation efforts along with project partners.
- Assist with trout habitat improvement work.
- Complete Low-Impact Development Storm Water demonstrations
- Assist the MPCA with finalizing the TMDL Study and support local governments' implementation efforts and activities.
- Utilize funding sources such as the Clean Water Fund, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and other sources to complete projects to improve, protect, and evaluate water quality and habitat in Miller Creek.
- Complete the tasks under our Miller Creek Clean Water Fund project (channel restoration, riparian restoration and Stormwater BMP implementation).

Knife River

- Initiate best management practice installation efforts with project partners.
- Utilize funding sources such as the Clean Water Fund, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and other sources to complete projects to improve, protect, and evaluate water quality and habitat in Knife River.
- Work with partners to fulfill the *Knife River Implementation Plan for Turbidity Total Maximum Daily Load*.
- Cooperate with Lake SWCD to make progress toward completing bank stabilization projects.

Amity Creek/Lester River

- Utilize funding sources such as the Clean Water Fund, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and other sources to complete projects to improve, protect, and evaluate water quality and habitat in Amity Creek.

C. Staffing Needs

Approximately 400 staff days

An apprentice from Conservation Corps of Minnesota & Iowa might be utilized.

Reducing Environmental Impacts

A. Annual Objectives

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

B. Actions

- Apply technical, educational, and financial assistance that leads to the installation of best management practices that minimize the impacts of development.
- Provide technical assistance to other units of government.
- Assist other agencies with stormwater and erosion and sediment control policy development and training when appropriate.
- Contract with the City of Duluth to complete Erosion and Sediment Control inspections.
- Remain a member of the Regional Stormwater Protection Team (RSPT) and provide technical assistance for implementing their educational programs. Continue to serve as their fiscal agent.
- Review construction erosion control and stormwater plans as requested.
- Explore opportunities to assist communities with erosion and sedimentation issues, including local ordinance support.
- Complete Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act responsibilities:

- Complete administrative-type aspects of WCA through an agreement with St. Louis County, Proctor and Duluth.
- Offer to provide administrative and other services for WCA for LGUs.
- Serve on all required Technical Evaluation Panels.
- Provide technical and educational assistance to further wetland conservation.
- Serve as an information center for WCA.

C. Staffing Needs

Approximately 100 staff days

Outreach and Education

A. Annual Objectives

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

B. Actions

- Work with the media to publicize SWCD programs and policies.
- Develop and maintain our website, social networking sites and displays to increase public awareness of SWCD Programs.
- Give presentations to schools and community groups about topics that are SWCD priorities as requested.
- Attend and provide information to the public about SWCD programs at annual regional events including the South St. Louis County Fair, Lake Superior Zoo's Earth Tracks and the Duluth Harvest Festival.
- Continue to communicate with other agencies to discuss district programs and services available.
- Support Area 3's annual Envirothon.
- Continue to support and participate in the Northeast Minnesota Regional Science Fair.
- Provide assistance for public demonstration projects, such as rain gardens, that prevent erosion and protect water quality.
- Continue participating in annual regional education events such as DNR's Forestry Field Days.
- Use strategies and skills gleaned from the 2013-2014 Northeast Civic Engagement Cohort program to provide a strategic public engagement opportunities for residents and citizens interested in the health and restoration of the St. Louis River, Urban Duluth and Lake Superior South Major Watersheds. The focus of this effort will be on encouraging the public to help the State and its cooperating agencies meet the objectives of the MPCA's Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) for these watersheds.

C. Staffing Needs

Approximately 130 staff days

Forestry

A. Annual 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

- Apply technical, education, and financial assistance to install forestry best management practices that limit or correct nonpoint source pollution or improve forested land.
- Hold tree and shrub sale geared toward supplying native trees for conservation and education uses and programs.

- Look for opportunities to initiate increased implementation of completed forest stewardship plans.
- Continue to be available as First Detectors for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Emerald Ash Borer monitoring program and assist our partners with managing and preventing the spread of EAB in St. Louis County as requested.
- Continue to be a member of the Minnesota SWCD Forestry Association.
- Continue to seek funding and opportunities for expanding our White Pine Watershed Small Acreage Landowner Assistance Program to other parts of our service area.
- Continue cooperating with NRCS to increase participation in the Environmental Quality Incentive/ Conservation Assistance Programs directed at owners of forested land.

C. Staffing Needs

Approximately 20 staff days

TSA #3 staff time will also be utilized

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

- Provide technical, educational, and financial assistance to install best management practices that protect ground water quality.

C. Staffing Needs

Approximately 4 staff days

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

- Apply technical, educational, and financial assistance to install best management practices that protect natural and community resources.
- Utilize the tree and shrub sale and related technical assistance to support community resource restoration and protection projects.
- Work with North St. Louis SWCD to implement projects to support the St. Louis County Cooperative Weed Management Area.

C. Staffing Needs

Approximately 1 staff days

Agricultural

A. Annual 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

- Apply technical, educational, and financial assistance to install best management practices that minimize nonpoint source pollution from agricultural operations. This includes utilizing TSA #3 and NRCS engineering assistance. State cost-share and USDA cost-share programs will be utilized.
- Maintain agricultural best management practice revolving loan funds for animal waste practices and equipment.
- Lead the USDA NRCS Local Work Group process to establish local priorities.
- Enter into Contribution Agreements with NRCS to complete technical work for the EQIP program when appropriate.

C. Staffing Needs

Approximately 1 staff days

TSA #3 staff time will also be utilized

Wildlife Management

A. Annual Objectives

- To protect and enhance wildlife habitat.

B. Actions

- Continue to offer selections of trees and shrubs through the annual sale that will benefit wildlife. Apply technical, educational, and financial assistance for wildlife habitat creation. The SWCD will depend primarily on NRCS technical assistance and cost-share programs.

C. Staffing Needs

Approximately 1 staff days

III. Administration

A. Annual 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

- Maintain financial, personnel, and management policies and procedures that ensure efficient and effective SWCD operation.
- Carry out all administrative functions for TSA #3.
- Act as fiscal agent for the Regional Stormwater Protection Team.
- Perform administrative, fiscal, and management functions for current watershed and other special projects.
- Complete plans and reports.
- Provide appropriate resources and time for staff and Supervisors to attend applicable training.

C. Staffing Needs

Approximately 100 staff days