

DOUGLAS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
PLAN OF WORK
JANUARY 1, 2012 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2012

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Plan of Work is to provide a short term approach to implementing wise land use in Douglas County. This plan has been developed from the Douglas County Local Water Management Plan. This plan will address the objectives and goals of the Douglas SWCD and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Alexandria Field Office.

II. OBJECTIVES

The following objectives and goals are the strategy to be followed by the Douglas Soil and Water Conservation District Board and Staff for the period January 1, through December 31, 2012.

OBJECTIVE I: To Reduce Wind and Water Erosion in Douglas County.

- A. Continue to promote conservation tillage as a high priority in Douglas County.
 - 1. Provide no-till drill to interested landowners for hands on experience.
 - 2. Distribute annual newsletter with feature article on no-till drill planting, conservation tillage, cost-share for no-till and drill rental program.
 - 3. Promote incentive payments available in EQIP for No-till through news articles, newsletter and radio.
- B. Provide technical assistance in planning, design, layout and conservation of:
 - 1. Field windbreaks
 - 2. Farmstead shelterbelts
 - 3. Living Snowfences
 - 4. Terraces and diversions
 - 5. Sediment control structures
 - 6. Grassed waterways
- C. Provide cost-share assistance through State Cost-Share for eligible practices and through the EQIP Program, Sauk River, Chippewa River, Pomme de Terre and Long Prairie Watershed Cost-share Programs and promote CSP Program enhancements.
- D. Assist County, City and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - Division of Waters with controlling erosion in urban areas, developing areas and lakeshore.
- E. Provide assistance to Douglas County landowners on tree planting to reduce erosion and improve wildlife.
 - 1. Protect farmsteads from winds and blowing snow by planting shelter belts.
 - 2. Promote the use of tree shelters and fabric mulch on farmstead shelterbelts to improve survival and to accelerate growth of trees.
 - 3. Work with MN DNR Forestry on tree planting.
- F. Promote CRP Enrollment on highly erodible lands of Douglas County.

OBJECTIVE II: Maintain and Improve the Quality and Quantity of our Water Resources for Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial and Recreational Uses.

- A. Keep one Supervisor on the Executive Board for the Douglas County Local Water Management Plan Task Force.
- B. Work with Area Lake Associations on Lake Assessment Programs and Lake Management Plans.
- C. Provide an Ex-Officio Member on the Alexandria Flood Control Board.

- D. Seek funds from the Clean Water Council for assisting landowners to install Best Management Practices, conservation practices and septic updates to protect and enhance water quality in Douglas County.
 - 1. Utilize Clean Water Funds to fence cattle out of 2 Douglas County Lakes.
- E. Promote the use of agricultural waste management systems within the county with emphasis on those feedlots that are within 1000 feet of a lake or 300 feet from a watercourse.
 - 1. Provide assistance in design and layout of systems for two landowners and assist in MPCA Permit applications as needed.
 - 2. Assist Douglas County Feedlot Specialist in Feedlot Permit Applications and Feedlot Ordinances.
 - 3. Utilize EQIP and MRBI Programs as a means of encouraging livestock owners into action.
- F. Monitor water table recharge in two test wells near two irrigation wells to determine irrigation draw down and off season recharge. Monitor four test wells to show seasonal flux and annual recharge of ground water.
 - 1. Monitor monthly and report quarterly to the Department of Natural Resources - Division of Water
- G. Work with landowners in Chippewa and Pomme De Terre Watersheds on sediment and water quality problems to improve MN River quality.
 - 1. Have Representative on Chippewa and Pomme De Terre Watershed Groups
- H. Provide input to Department of Natural Resources - Division of Waters on permit applications for permission to work in public water and appropriation of waters.
- I. Participate in State Rain Gauge Monitoring Program.
 - 1. Maintain ten rain gauges in county.
 - 2. Collect monthly data and report to State Climatologist.
- J. Assist the Sauk River Watershed District on monitoring sites along JD #2 and implement BMP's along JD #2 and the Sauk River Watershed and assist Todd SWCD on implementing BMP's on the Long Prairie River.
- K. Coordinate Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program Sign-up in the Crooked Lake Basin.
- L. Promote Buffers on watercourse and wetlands through Continuous CRP and through news articles and informational programs.
- M. Administer MN Department of Ag Loan Program for septic upgrades and other conservation measures.

OBJECTIVE III: Administer the Douglas County Local Water Management Plan (LWMP)

- A. Conduct semi-annual Water Plan Task Force Meetings.
- B. Work with Douglas County Lakes Association as a liaison for planning and zoning issues with Douglas County Land and Resource Management Office.
- C. Administer Long Prairie Major Watershed Projects
- D. Work with Chippewa, Sauk River, Pomme De Terre and Long Prairie Watershed Groups.
- E. Coordinate Water Wisdom Education Project with Douglas County Schools.
- F. Work with Douglas County Lakes Associations on water testing of area lakes.
- G. Work with 14 new lakes on water testing though the MPCA Surface Water Assessment Grant.
- H. Work with 3 Lake Associations on monitoring streams through MPCA Surface Water Assessment Grant.
- I. Promote Shoreland Restoration and Rain Gardens through Community Outreach Education Courses.
- J. Provide information or supply resources for any water related questions or concerns.
- K. Coordinate workshops on Rain Barrels and Rain Gardens.

L. Apply for and administer Water Quality Improvement Grants.

OBJECTIVE IV: Promote Landowner participation in the Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI) Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP) in the Crooked Lake area of the Lake Osakis Watershed.

- A. Employee technician to prepare proposals for eligible landowners.
- B. Hold information meeting for eligible landowners.
- C. Work with the Sauk River Watershed District, Ducks Unlimited, NRCS, and MN DNR on promotion of the MRBI Program.
- D. Keep Douglas County Ditch authority informed on progress of the MRBI Program.
- E. Provide technical assistance in developing conservation plans for the WREP easements.
- F. Process Easements and work with landowners on title issues.

OBJECTIVE V: Administer the Wetland Conservation Act for Douglas County.

- A. Have one employee on the County Technical Evaluation Panel.
 1. Provide input concerning the value, location, size or type of wetlands.
- B. Provide Technical Assistance to Landowners on Delineation, Replacement and Exemptions.
 1. Assisting the Commissioner of DNR, Conservation or other peace officers in the enforcement of the Wetland Conservation Act.
 2. Provide input to Douglas County Zoning for preliminary plats.
- C. Work with BWSR to secure more Wetland Banking sites.
- D. Work with the City of Alexandria and Douglas County in updating Ordinances to further protect wetlands from being filled or drained.

OBJECTIVE VI: Promote Landowners Participation in and Implement the Farmable Wetland Program (FWP), RIM/WRP, Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Continuous CRP Program and General CRP.

- A. Continue to employ Farm Bill Technician to promote Federal and State Conservation Programs.
- B. Contact local legislators for increased funding for the RIM, PWP and WRP Programs.
- C. Distribute newsletters and newspaper articles publicizing the program and sign-up dates.
- D. Work with RIM Reserve Screening Committee as set up for the 1986 RIM Reserve Program in developing priority contracts.
- E. Provide technical assistance in developing conservation plans for RIM Reserve and PWP easements.

OBJECTIVE VII: Assist the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Implementing the Farm Bill.

- A. NRCS has the responsibility to carry out all technical aspects of Highly Erodible Land planning, Swampbuster provisions, Environmental Quality Incentive Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, Wetland Reserve Program, Conservation Reserve Program, Forestry Incentive Program, Mississippi River Basin Initiative, Conservation Security Program, and other federal conservation programs. These programs will be promoted and implemented in the county for continued emphasis on resource conservation. The Douglas SWCD will provide assistance to NRCS on these programs as time permits.
- B. Carry out activities identified in any contribution agreement with NRCS.

OBJECTIVE VIII: Create Public Awareness of the Douglas Soil and Water Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the services they offer.

- A. Send out annual newsletter to cooperators.
- B. Submit five articles to local news media.
- C. Update County Commissioners monthly on conservation activities.
- D. Participate in a radio and/or television program.
- E. Promote District Tree Program, Tree Shelters Program, Tree Fabric Program and No-Till Program.
- F. Set up and man a booth at the Douglas County Fair.

- G. Hold a Conservation Tour.
- H. Invite Legislators and County Commissioners to take part in a tour of the conservation projects in Douglas County.
- I. Conduct conservation presentations with county fifth and sixth grade classes and boy and girl scout troops.
- J. Recognize an Outstanding Conservationist.
- K. Update and maintain the Douglas SWCD website @ www.DouglasSWCD.com, as required by the Board of Water and Soil Resources.
- L. Prepare a conservation slide presentation to show to school groups, civic organizations, sportsmen groups, etc.
- M. Publish and distribute Annual Report.
- N. Promote Soil Stewardship Week and the use of available NACD Soil Stewardship materials.
- O. Promote Conservation Poster and Mural Contest.
- P. Recognize an Outstanding Conservation Teacher-of-the-Year.
- Q. Promote Essay Scholarship Program with the Douglas County Lakes Association.
- R. Assist in organizing the Douglas County Kid's Ground Water Festival.
- S. Promote and Assist with Area II Envirothon and State Envirothon.
- T. Participate in Youth Habitat Day.
- U. Work on one or more Outreach Activities targeting Minority, Limited Resource, or Underserved Groups.

OBJECTIVE IX: Organization and Management of District Affairs Involving Other Organizations and Encouraging Ongoing Educational Programs for Board Members and Staff

- A. Review Memorandum of Understanding with cooperating agencies.
- B. Invite cooperating agencies, organizations and/or individuals to attend and provide input into Board Meetings and District programs.
- C. Post notice of District Board Meetings.
- D. Review Annual Plan of Work and Comprehensive Plan of Work at least once annually to monitor progress of objectives and goals.
- E. Staff continues to participate in ongoing training programs.
- F. Budget and pay State, National and Area Association dues.
- G. Board members and Staff are encouraged to regularly attend State, Area and Regional Meetings.

OBJECTIVE X: Keep Abreast of State and Federal Legislation Concerning Soil and Water Conservation Programs.

- A. Correspond with legislators on vital issues pertaining to soil and water conservation.
- B. Invite State Representative to meeting.
- C. Attend SWCD Legislative Day at the State Capitol.

OBJECTIVE XI: Maintain, Improve and Expand County Wildlife.

- A. Plan wildlife habitat on 350 acres.
- B. Provide planning, surveying, design and restore 200 acres of Wetland Restoration.
- C. Work with local sportsmen groups and private individuals to promote wildlife.
- D. Promote wildlife improvement on CRP, RIM, and FWP acres with wetland restoration and food plots.
- E. Utilize new CCRP Practices CP-37, Duck Nesting Habitat and CP-38, Pheasant Habitat Practices to encourage landowners to establish cover habitat.

- F. Seek Funding through the Lessard Sam's Outdoor Heritage Council for Wildlife and Habitat Improvement
Projects within Douglas County.

OBJECTIVE XII: EEO and Civil Rights

- A. Affirmative Action Policy as stated in Douglas SWCD Employment Policy, Article XXIII, will be implemented by all office employees and SWCD Supervisors.
- B. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Douglas SWCD prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audio tape, etc.) should contact the USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA and SWCD are equal opportunity providers and employers.

III. STATE COST-SHARE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

State Cost-Share Funds allocated to Douglas Soil and Water Conservation District for Fiscal Year 2012, totaled \$21,333.00. Of that, \$4,267.00 will be used for technical and administrative tasks. The remaining \$17,066.00 will be used on high priority erosion problems.

The Douglas Soil and Water Conservation District receives funds from the Board of Water and Soil Resources to be used for the District Cost-Share Program. The cost-share funds received from the State Board are spent in Douglas County on high priority erosion problems as listed in the Douglas County Water Plan and annual plan. For the year of 2012, the Douglas SWCD anticipates to spend the State Cost-Share Funds on the following practices. Approximately \$6,566.00 will be spent on sediment control structures which include pipe and tile outlets, sediment control blocks, terraces and diversions. Approximately \$10,500.00 will be spent on habitat.

The map on the following page indicates the high priority areas for both erosion and sedimentation to be addressed in Douglas County. The largest portion is in the western part of the county where the terrain is quite hilly and conservation practices are needed throughout this area. High priority feedlots are any feedlots located within 1000 feet of a lake or 300 feet from a watercourse or any feedlot runoff that is entering a wetland directly.