



2020 Annual Plan

I. Introduction

The purpose of this annual plan is to detail work items that will be completed in 2020. 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

Lake and Stream Protection

A. Annual Objectives

- To protect, preserve, and enhance streams, inland lakes, and Lake Superior.
- To continue to provide technical assistance to complete projects that restore impaired and unhealthy streams and lakes in such a way that they are more resilient and can better-handle future increased rain and snowmelt events.
- To work to implement projects and encourage practices that correct situations that are causing, or could cause, these waters to remain impaired or that could protect these waters from becoming impaired.

B. Actions

- Provide technical, educational, and financial assistance for land occupiers to install and use best management practices for water quality, including forestry Best Management Practices.
- Continue to work on the tasks set forth in our grant contracts with the MN DNR to restore targeted reaches of Mission Creek and Miller Creek. These are multi-year projects with myriad partners including St. Louis County, the City of Duluth, the Fond du Lac neighborhood, local businesses and MNDOT. These projects are funded through the Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment – Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund.
- Review DNR water permits and provide input to help limit negative impacts.
- Together with St. Louis County, Carlton County, the Fond du Lac Tribe, BWSR, and other partners, begin the One Watershed, One Plan Planning Process for the St. Louis River Watershed Planning area including executing the Planning grant for \$320,000; setting up Policy and Advisory Committees; hiring a consultant and engaging the public. Provide Fiscal management and complete reporting. This is a multi-year effort with a completed plan expected in the fall of 2022.
- Work with local agency and non-profit partners to plan restoration work on a small, sub-watershed scale in Amity Creek. Utilize current data to plan for the best restoration and protection projects for the watershed. Continue working with partners and seeking funding for the development of a Master Plan at this sub-watershed level.
- Complete Lake Superior Basin protection projects.
- Complete Lake Superior Basin nonpoint source pollution control projects.
- Continue implementing the Conservation Partners Legacy Grant to restore the Tischer Creek tributary in Hartley Park.
- In cooperation with St. Louis County, and with funding from Conservation Partners Legacy, work to replace a culvert under Morris Thomas Road to allow for fish passage to be restored in Keene Creek.
- Study stream restoration projects implemented in the past to learn from past activities and to improve projects for the future. Survey and analyze five stream restoration projects using MN Coastal Program funds.

- Work to meet the State’s framework for water quality assessment and improvement by monitoring, assessing, setting goals, and implementing projects within target watersheds.
- Continue to partner with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to complete Major Watershed Restoration and Protection Project activities in three Major Watersheds: the St. Louis River, Cloquet River, and Lake Superior South. Activities will include: civic engagement, report writing, water quality monitoring, biological 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 six identified priority watersheds for 2020:

Miller Creek

- Increase and maintain riparian vegetation.
- Lead best management practice installation efforts along with project partners.
- Assist with trout habitat improvement work as funding allows.
- Complete low-impact development stormwater demonstrations as funding allows.
- Support local governments’ implementation efforts and activities to meet their respective WLAs for the Miller Creek TMDL for temperature.
- Seek and 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.
- Continue to seek opportunities with the Miller Hill Mall to implement stormwater BMPs on their property, as set forth in the Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan.
- Continue planning and design for the restoration project behind Kohl’s, which has been funded by the MNDNR - LSOH.

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.
- Work with local partners to create a detailed plan outlining prioritized restoration and protection activities (Amity Creek Master Planning).

Sucker River

- Pursue funding to complete prioritized restoration projects presented in the Sucker River Stressor Identification report (SSL SWCD, 2018).

Kingsbury Creek

- Pursue funding sources such as Lessard-Sams OHC, Clean Water Fund, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and other sources to complete the prioritized restoration project near the Proctor golf course.
- Pursue DNR funding to complete projects identified in the completed geomorphic assessment of the Kingsbury Creek watershed (MN DNR).

Keene Creek

- Pursue funding from Minnesota Trout Unlimited to complete prioritized restoration projects near Keene Creek Park. Partner with the City of Hermantown and St. Louis County to complete this work.
- Partner with St. Louis County to replace the Keene Creek crossing at Morris Thomas Road.

Talmadge River

- Pursue funding sources such as Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to complete the Duluth Retrievers Club restoration project.
- Pursue funding for other restoration projects presented in the Lake Superior South Stressor Identification report

C. Staffing Needs

- Approximately 450 staff days

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.
- 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.
- Implement the Buffer Law, including presentations to lake associations on maintaining vegetated shoreland buffers as appropriate for our District and compliance monitoring in accordance with the approved policy.
- Complete Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act responsibilities:
 - Complete administrative-type aspects of WCA through an agreement with Rice Lake, St. Louis County, Proctor and Duluth.
 - 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 200 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.
- Continue to develop and maintain the website; continue using social networking sites and continue 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, Harvest Fest and Lake Superior Zoo's Earth Tracks.
- Continue to communicate with other agencies to discuss district programs and services available.

- Support Area 3's annual Envirothon.
- 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, local elementary field days and the Northeast Minnesota Regional Science Fair.
- In cooperation with the MPCA, Lake County and North St. Louis County SWCDs, develop and implement Civic Engagement events in the Cloquet 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.
- Provide a student internship opportunity during the summer of 2020 to provide experience in water quality and geomorphology work to a college student pursuing a career in the natural resource field.

C. Staffing Needs

- Approximately 100 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

- Continue to include a District Forester on staff in cooperation with North St. Louis SWCD, as funding allows.
- Continue as partner for the Arrowhead Forestry Partnership (NRCS Grant coordinated by North SWCD).
- Apply technical, education, and financial assistance to install forestry best management practices that limit or correct nonpoint source pollution or improve forested land.
- Hold annual native tree and shrub sale in order to provide native trees to private landowners for conservation and education uses and programs.
- Look for opportunities to initiate increased implementation of completed forest stewardship plans.
- Continue to be a member of the Minnesota SWCD Forestry Association.
- Continue cooperating with NRCS to increase private landowner participation in the Environmental Quality Incentive/ Conservation Assistance Programs.
- Continue writing stewardship plans that promote sustainable forest management, and assist landowners with enrolling in SFIA or 2c programs to protect forestland.
- Host three workshops to provide information to private landowners on forestry-related topics.

C. Staffing Needs

- Approximately 150 staff days

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 including providing cost-share funding to seal wells according to MDH requirements as available.
- Participate in the development of local GRAPS (Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies) as requested.

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.
- Continue to consult the City Parks Department on stormwater Best Management Practices in the Miller Creek watershed under the existing Clean Water Fund Grant.

C. Staffing Needs

- Approximately 5 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.
- Implement the Minnesota Ag. Water Quality Certificate Program as appropriate for our District.
- Implement the State Buffer Program as appropriate for our District.

C. Staffing Needs

- Approximately 3 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 day

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 200 staff days