

2023

ANNUAL PLAN

OF

**MURRAY SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

Slayton, MN

January 1, 2023- December 31, 2023

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2023 ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK

MURRAY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Annual Plan is a guide to effectively provide maximum conservation to all land in the District. Murray SWCD is the local unit of government that Murray County landowners work directly with to get conservation practices on the land. This plan includes guidelines for employees and supervisors for the achievement of the district's objectives. It will be used as a tool for guiding and directing the decision making of the District programs as to what direction the District will take. High priority soil and water erosion problems are the chief concern.

II. OBJECTIVES

A. ANNUAL OBJECTIVES: PROVIDE FOR AN EFFICIENT DISTRICT OPERATION.

Plan of Action:

1. Regular meetings will be held the second Thursday of each month. County Commissioners are invited to each meeting.
2. The District staff will consist of a District Administrator, Program Manager, Resource Specialist and any seasonal personnel that may be needed to help carry out the District's program.
3. District staff will continue to utilize and develop their computer expertise including Arc Map & GPS.
4. Duties and performance evaluation of the District staff will be reviewed by the Board of Supervisors in December.
5. Training will be provided for all personnel in order to carry out the District programs.
6. Annual Plan, Comprehensive Plan and budgets will be reviewed semi-annually by the supervisors to determine if goals are being achieved.
7. The District Board will annually review the various Memorandums of Understanding they have with other Organizations.
8. Representatives will be present at all Area Five meetings and the annual MASWCD State Convention. All supervisors, District employees and NRCS employees will be encouraged to attend these meetings.
9. Membership and support will continue in the Area Five Association, MASWCD, NACD, SWMACDE, RCRCA, MACDE, and S.W. Prairie Technical Service Area.
10. The District Board and staff will maintain a working relationship with other political bodies and state and local

agencies in developing conservation programs for the District.

11. An Annual Report will be prepared and published in one of the county's local newspapers.
12. Maintain an efficient rain gauge monitoring network within the county.
13. Review and comment on all DNR water permits in identifying environmental problems.
14. An approved Comprehensive Plan is on file at the District office and amendments to this plan will be submitted by August 15 of every even-numbered year.
15. The District will assist the Lake Shetek Area Improvement Association, Heron Lake Watershed, Cottonwood Watershed, Des Moines River Watershed and Beaver Creek Watershed in implementation of Best Management Practices.
16. The District supervisors were appointed as the LGU to administer the Wetland Conservation Act of 1991 for the Murray County Commissioners.
17. The District will appoint a supervisor to the S.W. Prairie TSA board. The District will be represented on the local committee involving the State Revolving Fund Program.
18. The District is implementing e-Link, the computerized Local Government Annual Reporting System, to enter data and generate reports for BWSR's programs.
19. The District will develop an annual Newsletter.
20. Promote EQIP and WRP/RIM Programs.
21. Promote Special Projects
22. Meet with the County Commissioners every three months.
23. District will have a Supervisor attend the County Commissioner's budget meeting with the District Administrator.
24. The District will promote a tour for projects completed or other education programs

B. ACTIONS: CONSERVATION PLANNING AND APPLICATION

OBJECTIVE #1: ASSIST LANDOWNERS BY HELPING TO SOLVE SOIL AND WATER EROSION AND WATER QUALITY PROBLEMS.

Plan of Action:

1. Provide technical assistance for requests from landowners, Lake Association, private and governmental agencies who are in High Priority areas that are interested in protecting their natural resources.
2. Technical staff will assist in developing high quality conservation plans. Assistance will be directed toward helping landowners implement their conservation plans for CRP, CREP, and WLI contracts, Sodbuster and HEL fields and reviewing past state cost-share contracts to see that the practices are maintained for the effective life of the contract.

3. Technical staff will provide assistance in application of Best Management Practices (BMP's) and follow-up on applied practices to meet standards and specifications of the USDA Field Office Technical Guide.
4. A goal to install the following conservation practices: 5 waterways, 10 water and sediment control basins, and 1 ag waste system. Control wind and water erosion on 2,500 acres of land by using BMP's and promoting the districts native grass drill program
5. Encourage landowners to participate in CRP, RIM/PWP, CREP, WLI, Ag Certification, and Buffer programs in order to establish long-term cover on highly erodible land and critical areas.
6. Promote and encourage landowners to use the District's no-till native grass drill service on their Highly Erodible Land.
7. Promote Agricultural Best Management loan program practices.
8. Provide input for BMPs for Heron Lake, Cottonwood and Beaver Creek, Des Moines River, and Lake Shetek Watersheds.
9. Evaluate 2 to 3 feedlots for the Agricultural BMP's loan program and make requests to the S.W. Prairie TSA engineering team for engineering assistance
10. Continue a District-funded cost-share program for field wind-breaks and Living Snow Fence tree plantings.
11. Initiate a program to encourage landowners to construct needed erosion control structures in the summer months when crops are growing, by paying partial crop losses with county and/or District funds.
12. Be proactive in creating special projects within the District.
13. The District will provide the FSA Office with a form to be handed out to Landowners informing them of the need to check with the SWCD for potential WCA violation before they do any tiling.

OBJECTIVE #2: CONTROL EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION FROM AGRICULTURAL LAND, TO IMPROVE OUR WATER QUALITY.

Plan of Action:

1. Increase public awareness by developing news articles and radio ads on water quality and best management practices.
2. Work with Water Plan advisory committee on the implementation of the county's Comprehensive Local Water Plan according to its Annual Work Plan.
3. Goal to provide technical assistance by establishing permanent cover on 100 acres to protect and improve water quality through RIM, PWP, CRP, CREP, WLI, Buffer, or any available program.
4. Encourage landowners in Murray County to implement and install Best Management Practices to reduce sedimentation and hillside erosion along the lakes and streams in the county.

OBJECTIVE #3: CONTROL POLLUTION FROM ANIMAL WASTE THAT ARE TRANSPORTED OR DISCHARGES INTO LAKES, RIVERS AND STREAMS THAT MAY CAUSE DETERIORATION OF OUR GROUND AND SURFACE WATER QUALITY.

Plan of Action:

1. Provide technical assistance to install at least one animal waste control system per year within the county.
2. Encourage landowners to enter into Long Term Agreements that address feedlot pollution abatement and waste utilization under the EQIP program administered by NRCS.

OBJECTIVE #4: ADMINISTER FOR THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS THE PERMANENT RULES OF THE WETLAND CONSERVATION ACT OF 1991

Plan of Action:

1. The District will be the local government unit (LGU) in administering the Wetland Conservation Act of 1991 in achieving no net loss of wetlands, restore or enhance diminishing or lost wetland, avoid direct or indirect impacts to wetlands and replace wetland values where avoidance of activity is not feasible and prudent.
2. The District will be responsible for making exemptions and no-loss determinations and approving replacement plans according to the WCA 1991 rules.
3. The District will assist landowners with wetland replacement plans if the filling, draining, or excavating of the existing wetland cannot be avoided.
4. The District will assist with technical determination of non-exempt wetlands as defined according to the Federal manual.
5. Review net loss or net gain of wetlands within the County.

TREE PROGRAM

OBJECTIVE: ENCOURAGE INDIVIDUALS TO PLANT TREES FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT, EROSION CONTROL. ENERGY CONSERVATION AND SNOW DEPOSITION.

Plan of Action:

1. Provide information to the public on the value of trees through the use of news items and other forms of media.
2. Insure that all plantings are established with good quality nursery stock and a follow-up contact made for needed replacements.
3. Plant 3 acres of six or eight row farmstead windbreaks.
4. Plant 2 acres wildlife planting.
5. Plant 1 mile field windbreaks or living snow fence.
6. Provide assistance in renovating existing groves.
7. Encourage better weed control in tree programs.

- a. Tree mats

NATIVE GRASS DRILL PROGRAM

OBJECTIVE: THE DISTRICT WILL OFFER
A NO-TILL NATIVE GRASS DRILL PROGRAM TO LANDOWNERS.

Plan of Action:

1. Provide information to the public on the value of using the no-till drill in maintaining residue cover, through the use of news articles and demonstration projects.
2. Encourage the use of the drill on Highly Erodible Lands
3. Plant 1,500 acres of new grass seeding through privately owned and District owned drills.
4. Promote and advertise the District's Vicon native grass spreader, packer, and great plains drill that is available for landowners to rent for seeding their CRP, RIM, CREP, WLI, and BUFFER acres.

EDUCATION AND INFORMATION PROGRAM

OBJECTIVE: TO INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE SOIL
AND WATER CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES IN MURRAY
COUNTY.

Plan of Action:

1. The District plans to expand and improve the present educational and informational programs.
 - a. The District plans to publish their Annual Report in the local newspaper.
 - b. Maintain a booth at the County Fair and other farm shows and use displays to promote and explain water quality and conservation tillage.
 - c. Continue to sponsor rain gauge program.
 - d. Promote the state programs throughout the year by use of local news media and radio spots.
 - e. Sponsor youths to Long Lake Conservation Camp
 - f. Elementary age children in the schools, 4-H clubs and other youth groups will be given materials and presentations on various topics such as water quality, wildlife and other subjects pertaining to the District objectives.
 - g. Promote Soil Stewardship week
 - h. Give presentations of conservation programs upon request to local groups.
 - i. Serve on the Environmental Fair Committee.
 - j. Expand publicity and education to include articles for the local newspapers.
 - k. Do demonstration of District-owned equipment.
 - l. Develop annual Newsletter and send out to county

- producers to keep them informed as to what programs the District can offer them and changes in laws that affect them.
- m. Assist with promoting District activities and programs at the annual Farmfest.
 - n. Assist with One Watershed One Plan
 - o. Fiscal agent for the Des Moines River 1W1P
2. District plans to assist local units of government and organizations in making sound land use decisions.
 - a. Assist in S. W. Prairie TSA, RCRC and Area II River Basin Project, Inc.
 - b. Assist County Commissioners and other agencies in the implementation of the Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan
 - c. Assist in input as required by the Heron Lake Watershed District.
 - d. Assist in the Heron Lake Watershed Project.
 - e. Assist Lake Shetek Improvement Association.
 - f. Assist in Ag. Best Management Practice loan program.
 - g. Assist in input on Cottonwood River Clean Water Partnership
 - h. Assist the County with road retention.
 3. Provide equal service to all cooperators in county, which includes minority groups within Murray County.
 - a. Special efforts will be made to encourage women land-owners and operators to use the District services.
 - b. Expand this to include age, handicapped and religious beliefs.
 - c. Maintain handicap access.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and 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, audiotape, 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, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 800-795-3272 (Voice) or 202-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal employment provider and employer.

C. STAFFING NEEDS

Our staffing needs to achieve an effective program are based on one full-time District Administrator, one Program Manager, and one Resource Specialist.

Staff Years		
Objectives	Administrative	Technical
District Operation To provide an overall efficient district operation.	1.25	.30
Conservation Planning and applications To provide assistance to land users in the high priority areas of the County by reducing soil and water erosion on 2500 acres.	.60	2.00
Tree Program Provide trees to individuals for erosion Control, energy conservation and wildlife habitat.	.15	.75
Drill Program To provide a Vicon grass spreader and a No-Till native grass drill to land users for seeding down 1,500 acres of highly erodible land in the high priority areas of the county.	.10	.25
Education & Information To increase public awareness of Soil & water conservation activities in Murray County	.50	.25
Total Staff Time needed Equals 6.15 Staff years for 2023	2.60	3.55

STAFFING AVAILABILITY WORKSHEET

<u>PERSONNEL AVAILABLE</u>	<u>Administrative</u>	<u>Technical</u>
DISTRICT STAFF		
DISTRICT Administrator	.90	.10
PROGRAM MANAGER	.40	.60
RESOURCE SPECIALIST	.10	.90
AVAILABLE	1.4	1.6

III. COST-SHARE PROGRAM REQUIREMENT

A. HIGH PRIORITY EROSION AND WATER QUALITY PROBLEMS

High priority erosion problems means areas where erosion from wind or water is occurring equal to, or

1. In excess of 2 X T tons per acre per year
2. Is occurring on any area that exhibits active gully erosion
3. Is identified as high priority in the comprehensive local water plan or the conservation district's comprehensive plan.

High priority water quality problems means areas where sediment, nutrients, chemicals, or other pollutants discharge to Department of Natural Resources designated protected waters or to any high priority waters as identified in a comprehensive local water plan or the conservation district's comprehensive plan, or discharge to a sinkhole or groundwater. The pollutant delivery rate to the water source is in amounts that will impair the quality or usefulness of the water resource

B. SPECIAL PROJECTS

The District will assist Lake Shetek, Beaver Creek, and Des Moines River watersheds with technical assistance in implementing their Clean Water Partnership grant. In cooperation with RCRCA, begin Cottonwood River projects and Heron Lake Restoration projects.

IV. COST-SHARE NEEDS

A. SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION NEEDS

1. Soil erosion due to wind and water
 - a. 55% of the cropland has potential water erosion problems that affect the area's water quality.
2. Sedimentation
 - a. The District's critical sedimentation problem exists through-out the county.
 - b. There are approximately 8,400 potential acres in the District that exceed the 3T soil loss limit.
3. Ag waste
 - a. Within the county there are approximately 400 farmsteads that operates some kind of livestock operation.

B. BUDGET PRACTICES

Murray SWCD received \$10,884.00 for cost-share work in 2023. Of this amount, 20% (\$2,176.80) will be used for Technical/administration and remaining (\$8,707.20) for high priority cost-share practices.

a.	Cost-Share T/A	\$ 2,176.80
b.	High Priority Erosion and Sedimentation	<u>8,707.20</u>
		\$10,884.00

Additional programs for potential funding opportunities:

EQIP:

Conservation Reserve Program

RIM/WRP

RIM Buffer Easements

Working Land Initiative (WLI)

Clean Water Funding

Feedlot Water Quality Cost-Share

V. IMPLEMENTATION

The District hopes to achieve all goals and objectives listed by 12/31/23.

1. Hold additional meetings on water quality, state cost-sharing, wetland regulations and other programs when necessary.

Murray Soil and Water Conservation District-2023

VI. BUDGET FORECAST

CALENDAR FOR 2023

JANUARY	Election of officers for SWCD Oath of Office (if election year) Review State Convention Pay National, State and Area dues Complete Annual Report and Annual Plan Designate bank depository in board minutes Murray SWCD pays local share which is equal to \$3,400.00 for SWPJPO Budget TSA pays office rent and office storage shed rent January 12- SWCD Board Meeting
FEBRUARY	NACD Convention Area Five Meeting February 9-SWCD Board Meeting
MARCH	Publish Annual Report in newspaper March 9-SWCD Board Meeting Legislative Days March 09
APRIL	Tree Day Observe Soil Stewardship Week TSA pays office rent, lan/wan, and office storage shed rent April 13-SWCD Board Meeting
MAY	Promote Long Lake Conservation Camp Tree planting time Envirothon May 11-SWCD Board Meeting
JUNE	Area Five Meeting Submit resolutions for State Convention Review State Cost-Share Program Review Comprehensive Plan June 8-SWCD Board Meeting
JULY	Plan for Fair Booth Review Annual Plan Prepare budget for year 2023 for County Commissioners Supervisors file for election TSA pays office rent and office storage rent

July 13-SWCD Board Meeting

AUGUST

Murray County Fair Booth
Tree and Drill Reports
Farmfest booth
August 10-SWCD Board Meeting

SEPTEMBER

Review Memorandums of Understanding at Board
Area Five Meeting
1st quarter TSA office rent & lan/wan
Environmental Fair
Review Conflict of Interest rules
Seeder/Packer Report
September 14-SWCD Board Meeting

OCTOBER

Deadline for tree replacement
TSA pays office rent and office storage rent
October 12- SWCD Board Meeting

NOVEMBER

Election of Supervisors (if election year)
Area Five Annual Meeting
Purchase Rain Gauge monitor's Christmas gifts
November 9-SWCD Board Meeting

DECEMBER

State Convention
Develop Annual Plan
December 14-SWCD Board Meeting

EVERY MONTH

District Conservationist's Report, approve payment of employees salaries and supervisors vouchers, committee reports