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# SHERBURNE SWCD

2020 Annual Plan of Work  
Adopted 3/12/2020

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## Annual Objectives

The purpose of this Annual Plan is to set realistic goals that can be accomplished by the Sherburne Soil & Water Conservation District (SSWCD), and to specify those objectives that SSWCD will work towards annually.

- Objective 1: Protect and/or Improve Water Quality and Quantity
- Objective 2: Promote Healthy Soils - Reduce Soil Loss from Wind & Water Erosion
- Objective 3: Provide Forest Management Support to Landowners and Communities
- Objective 4: Protect, Enhance, and Establish Native Habitat
- Objective 5: Increase District Awareness and Promote Comprehensive Community Education

## Annual Actions

The actions presented here are consistent with those described in the 2018-2028 Sherburne County Local Water Management Plan. The actions within the plan are presented on a 10-year term; these actions will be pursued in 2020 in order to meet those broader goals identified in the 10-year plan.

- Assist 20+ landowners with technical and/or financial assistance for erosion and habitat projects
- Host an annual MS4 partners meeting and develop Stormwater Outreach program(s)
- Complete Eagle Lake nutrient budget, develop remediation strategy and funding plan
- Complete 1 lake or river shoreline development assessment
- Complete one sub-watershed assessment on 2020, pursue one more for 2020-2021
- Work with landowners to address five bacteria sources to Elk River and tributaries
- Develop conservation easement proposals for 2-3 landowners
- Achieve 100% compliance with the Buffer Law (Minn. Stat. 103F.48)
- Establish a baseline precision agricultural and soil health practices inventory
- Provide two soil health and groundwater nitrate education opportunities
- Pursue one new operation for MAWQCP accreditation
- Implement three field-based BMP's aiming at nitrate reduction
- Promote loan and grant programs as well as educational opportunities for SSTS
- Perform 50+ tree health consultations with landowners
- Investigate feasibility for high school water quality and/or AIS monitoring program
- Oversee the 2020 AIS grant program
- Target high-use and high-risk public access sites for AIS education
- Monitor 12+ lakes for AIS using early detection protocols
- Enroll one lake group into MPCA's Citizen's Lake Monitoring Program, assist with data interpretation

## District Programs

### Aquatic Invasive Species Program (AIS)

Sherburne County delegated the responsibility of developing and implementing an AIS Prevention Plan, utilizing the funds provided by the State of Minnesota through the DNR AIS Prevention Fund. In the first year of the program, the SSWCD (with assistance from a local AIS Task Force) developed a five year plan which will be updated annually and provided to the County Board for approval. Plan elements include initiatives to prevent AIS introduction to/from Sherburne County and limiting the spread within the county limits. Activities include efforts such as education and awareness, enforcement of AIS laws through watercraft inspections and partnerships with the Sherburne County Sheriff's Department, early detection and rapid response actions. The SSWCD will also empower local lake associations and districts through a county AIS grant program and collaborative Coalition of Lake Associations (COLA).

### Board of Adjustments Reviews

At the request of Sherburne County Planning and Zoning staff, in late 2017 SSWCD staff began reviewing Variance Requests that were submitted to County staff and the Board of Adjustments from local residents. Often, variance requests involve matters pertaining to impervious surfaces or shoreland setbacks which would influence stormwater quality/quantity and surface water runoff to lakes. SSWCD is able to provide commentary on the waterbodies these properties drain to, bring up concerns they have that may originate from the proposed developments, and most importantly offer an alternative plan or

pollution mitigation plan that the landowner may implement in their development design. SSWCD comments are sent to County staff, who integrate them within their comments to Board of Adjustments Directors.

## Forest Resource Services

The SSWCD offers tree inspections and develops management plans that provide landowners with the information they need to manage their forests for a variety of products and services. The SSWCD administers the citizen pruner program for the cities of Becker, Big Lake, Princeton, Elk River, Clear Lake, and Zimmerman. The SSWCD also administers the woodpecker activity Survey to promote early detection of EAB.

## Irrigation Water Management

The SSWCD implements the Irrigation Water Management Program using weather station information, weekly crop water use reports and evapotranspiration data, and provides technical assistance to operators. Staff assists operators using the checkbook method and innovative technology; the SSWCD has 6 AgSense units available for farmers to use.

## Lakes and River Stewardship

Assist Lake Associations and other groups to develop monitoring and management programs for lakes and streams, with emphasis on training volunteers and students to conduct monitoring; SSWCD will coordinate data management and assist landowners with shoreland and stream bank resource concerns.

## Local Water Management (LWM)

The Water Management Plan (LWMP) focuses on the quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater and related uses that effect water resources. The purpose of the Water Management Plan is:

- Identify existing and potential problems or opportunities for the protection, management, and development of water resources and related land resources in the county.
- Identify priority concerns to be addressed during the effective time frame of the plan.
- Develop and implement a plan of action to address priority concerns.

The Water Management Plan applies to the entire geographic area of Sherburne County including incorporated and unincorporated area.

## Monitoring

SSWCD began a partnership with City of Elk River staff to monitor Lake Orono tributaries during a subwatershed assessment and has continued this monitoring from 2015 through 2017. SSWCD staff also works closely with city staff and the Lake Orono Improvement Association to monitor Lake Orono for a variety of environmental parameters and determining potential management options to address several lake impairments. SSWCD also monitors the Elk River for bacteria impairment (outlined in a 2012 TMDL) and for nutrient loads through a partnership with the MPCA's WPLMN program. In 2017, additional monitoring was completed using DNA genetic markers in an effort to determine sources of impairment to the river. The SSWCD will assist the Mississippi River St. Cloud Watershed partnership in collaboration with MPCA staff to assess priority waterbodies during 2019-2020. This work is in preparation for WRAPS Cycle 2.

## Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan

The MDA is the state's lead agency for nitrogen fertilizer and management, the Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan (NFMP) outlines how MDA addressed elevated levels of nitrate in groundwater. The SSWCD has partnered with MDA as a pilot county to implement the NFMP in Sherburne County utilizing a Local Advisory Team (LAT) consisting of farmers and local agribusinesses. The partnership began in 2017.

## Nutrient Management

Nutrient Management Planning is a process that helps producers identify and manage the location, rate, timing, form, and method of all nutrient applications. The goal is to optimize crop yields while minimizing nutrient movement. SSWCD offers technical assistance to landowners who are developing nutrient management plans. SSWCD also offers assistance in manure composting and manure composting systems.

## Prairie Program

The Prairie Program is available to all county residents who are interested in establishing more than 0.5 acres of native prairie on their property. Technical assistance can be provided for site preparation, species selection and planting recommendations. Financial assistance can be provided for the cost of seed. Further technical assistance is also provided for stand quality and invasive species control.

## Pasture Management Program

The Pasture Management Improvement Program is available to all county residents who own or manage pastures. This program was developed to assist landowners in improving the quantity and quality their pastures. It includes soil testing, interpretation of the University of Minnesota soil test results, evaluation, and a pasture management plan and seed mix.

## Pollinator Program

The Pollinator Program is available to all county residents who are interested in establishing less than 0.5 acres of native habitat on their property, with an emphasis on species that benefit at risk pollinators. Technical assistance can be provided for site preparation, species selection and planting recommendations. Financial assistance can be provided for the cost of seed. Further technical assistance is also provided for stand quality and invasive species control.

## Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)

SSWCD partners with staff from County Public Works and County Planning and Zoning to collectively address and report stormwater issues. The SWPPP team plans occasional stormwater networking and education events, collaborates on state-required stormwater reporting documents, and strives to address the stormwater related goals in the Local Water Management Plan.

## Tree Planting

The SSWCD will assist landowners in establishing windbreaks and other tree plantings by providing tree planting services for a fee.

## Tree Program

The tree program will only sell bare root stock trees in multiples of 25; thereby promoting the SSWCD philosophy of selling trees for conservation (woodlots, windbreaks, shelterbelts, erosion control, soil and water conservation, or permanent food and cover for wildlife) and not ornamental uses.

## Vegetative Cover Incentive Programs

The SSWCD works with local landowners interested in planting cover crops or establishing native prairie and buffers to improve soil health and wildlife habitat.

## State Programs

### Agriculture Best Management Practices Loan Program (AgBMP)

This program loans money to farmers, agricultural supply businesses, and rural landowners for implementing practices that prevent or mitigate nonpoint source water pollution and are listed as priorities in locally developed water plans.

### BWSR Grant Programs

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is a state agency that assists local governments to manage and conserve their irreplaceable water and soil resources. BWSR accomplishes this mission by providing financial, technical and administrative help to local governments throughout the state. The SSWCD is currently administering the following grants:

- Lawns to Legumes – ENRTF2020

## Buffer Program

The Minnesota Buffer Law was passed in 2015 and requires landowners to install buffer strips along State Protected Waters and Public Drainage Ditches. It is the responsibility of the SSWCD to provide notification that a parcel may be deemed non-compliant and to help ensure that compliance is reached by the dates required. It is the responsibility of the SSWCD to track compliance in BuffCAT, the Board of Water and Soil Resources tracking tool, and provide technical assistance to landowners in an effort to meet compliance. The SSWCD is not a regulatory agency and does not provide enforcement of the Buffer Law.

## Clean Water Funds Grants (CWF)

On November 4, 2008, Minnesota voters approved the Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment to the constitution to: protect drinking water sources; protect, enhance, and restore wetlands, prairies, forests, and fish, game, and wildlife habitat; preserve arts and cultural heritage; support parks and trails; and protect, enhance, and restore lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater. The SSWCD is currently administering the following grants:

- FY18 Local Capacity Grant
- FY19 Local Capacity Grant
- FY20 Local Capacity Grant
- FY19 Buffer Initiative Grant
- FY20 Buffer initiative Grant
- Lower Elk River Watershed Phase II Bacteria Reduction Grant – CWF2018
- Sherburne County Targets Nitrate Reduction BMP Implementation – CWF2019
- Rum River 1W1P – FY2019

## DNR Observation Well Monitoring

SSWCD staff monitor wells for depth and ground water trends. 18 wells are monitored, and data is used by the DNR.

## Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC)

The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council was established by the legislature with the responsibility of providing annual funding recommendations to the legislature from the Outdoor Heritage Fund (LSOHF). The Outdoor Heritage Fund, one of four funds created by the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, receives one-third of the money raised by the tax increase. The SSWCD is currently administering the following grants:

- Anoka Sand Plain Habitat Conservation Phase VI – LSOHF2019

## MN Agriculture Water Quality Certainty Program (MAWQCP)

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification is a voluntary program that provides the opportunity for farmers and landowners to take the lead in implementing conservation practices that protect our surface and ground water. Certified farmers are deemed to be compliant with any new water quality rules or regulations during their period (up to 10 years) of certification. Certification is a three-step process; application, assessment, and verification. The SSWCD assists the farmer with the application and assessment, a licensed certifier completes the verification, and the farm is then eligible for certification.

## MN State Cost Share

The state cost-share program was established in 1977 to share the cost of practices for erosion or sedimentation control or water quality improvement that are designed to protect and improve soil and water resources. These funds are generally used for projects such as: shoreline restoration, stormwater runoff control, and erosion control. Refer to District Cost Share Program Guidelines.

## Re-invest in Minnesota Resource Program (RIM/WRE)

The RIM conservation easement program retires marginal, highly erodible agricultural land to protect soil and water quality and support fish and wildlife habitat.



## **TMDL / WRAPP/ 1W1P**

Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) is mandatory for impaired waters under the Federal Clean Water Act. The SSWCD provides consulting services, equipment, and monitoring activities. Watershed Restoration and Protection Project (WRAPP) is a watershed wide assessment and monitoring effort that will result in an implementation plan that will prescribe restoration and protection strategies for the surface water resources within the watershed. The One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) was developed to align water planning on major watershed boundaries with state strategies towards prioritized, targeted and measurable implementation plans. SSWCD staff continues to hold discussions with our watershed partners on these initiatives and pursues opportunities as they arise.

## **Wetland Conservation Act (WCA)**

The SSWCD assists landowners with project applications and wetland determinations. The SSWCD is a member of the Technical Evaluation Panel that reviews all projects that may impact a wetland. The Wetland Conservation Act is administered by several local governmental units in Sherburne County.

## **Watershed Pollutant Load Monitoring Network (WPLMN)**

State wide monitoring program administered by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). The SSWCD is responsible for 3 sites, 2 of which are in Sherburne County (Clearwater River, Elk River, St. Francis).

## **Federal Programs**

### **Federal Programs**

Assist with activities of the 2018 Farm Bill, Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). The SSWCD will conduct local work group meetings for EQIP

## **Education / Outreach Activities**

### **Educational & Community Outreach**

- Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner
- Bi-Weekly Newspaper Articles, Quarterly E-Newsletter, Environmental Educator Newsletter
- Conservation Tour of Practices
- Educational, Community, & Professional Presentations
- Elk River Watershed Cleanup Day
- Minnesota Envirothon
- Sherburne County Parade
- Social media
- Soil Health Activities
- Well Nitrate Testing and Clinics

### **Contest/Awards**

- Long Lake Conservation Camp Essay Contest
- MASWCD Conservation Cooperator Annual Award Contest
- Sherburne County Poster Contest

## **Partnerships/ Committees / Associations**

### **AIS Task Force**

The AIS was formed to assist with the development and implementation of the county Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan.

## Metropolitan Conservation District JPB - Technical Service Area (MCD)

The purpose of the MCD is to share ideas, identify issues, opportunities and solutions among Conservation Districts that have common metropolitan concerns regarding the protection and conservation of natural resources. In addition, the MCD works together to develop and implement joint activities for resource conservation. The Board consists of members of the eleven county Metropolitan Areas.

## Metropolitan Area Conservation Districts (MACD)

The purpose of the Metropolitan Area Conservation District association is to provide opportunities for education, communication, cooperation, and coordination between and among its member Districts and affiliated partners.

## MN Forestry Association (MFA)

The MFA works on behalf of family forest owners, through education and advocacy, to promote stewardship of woodlands. The Board meets monthly – every quarter is an in person meeting at the DNR Forestry Office in Cambridge from 10:00 – 3:00, with conference calls on the off months on the second Tuesday of the month from 8:00-9:00am.

## MN SWCD Forestry Association

The MN SWCD Forestry Association exists to assist member districts in meeting the forestry and woodland management needs of their clientele. The organization creates a network of forestry professionals from not only SWCDs, but also MN BWSR, USDA NRCS and U of M Extension who meet every other month on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday to provide one another with updates on programs, educational opportunities and legislative efforts. The meetings are held at the McGregor Community Center on Hwy 65 and run from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.

## Plant Materials Learning Center Board (PMLCB)

The SSWCD will conduct studies and determine performance and area of adaptation; development and release of improved plant materials; and transfer of technical information. The SSWCD will take part in the Plant Materials Center Learning Center Board. The PMLC Board works cooperatively with NRCS on selecting plant materials to be evaluated at the Plant Materials site in Becker. The PMLC Board is responsible for annual in-row maintenance. The PMLC Board is comprised of one Supervisor and staff member from Sherburne, Stearns, Wright and Benton SWCDs. The PMLC Board meets annually or as needed. The PMLCB has decided to suspend all activity until further notice. With the re-location of the U of M Sand Plain Research Farm, the PMLCB will work cooperatively with the NRCS Plant Material Specialist and the U of M to determine if a new plant materials evaluation site can be established at the new location.

## Sherburne County Coalition of Lake Associations (COLA)

The SC COLA was established in 2017, due to the efforts of numerous representatives from the county's 11 active lake associations as well as SSWCD staff. A SSWCD staff member serves on the SC COLA Board of Directors as an ex-officio (non-voting) member. The SC COLA strives to protect the waterways of Sherburne County through education, partnerships, leveraging resources as a larger group, information sharing, and advocacy.

## Water Plan Advisory Committee

The Sherburne County Water Plan Advisory Committee advises the County on the development, implementation and revision of the Sherburne County Comprehensive Water Management Plan (the Water Plan) pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103B. The Committee is an advisory committee and has no taxing, hiring or contracting authority.

## Other

The SSWCD works with numerous partners every day to carry out our objectives. We partner with groups and organizations at the local, county, and state levels and actively seek out new partnerships to further our impact in Sherburne County.

## Annual Budget – 2020

<b><u>REVENUES</u></b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Budget</b>
Intergovernmental Revenue			
County Levy			
County Allocation	\$ 263,226.00	\$ 282,112.93	\$ 289,166.00
Other Levy Funds			
Local Water Management	\$ 21,674.00	\$ 21,674.00	\$ 21,674.00
Subtotal	<b>\$ 284,900.00</b>	<b>\$ 303,786.93</b>	<b>\$ 310,840.00</b>
Other Revenue			
Local Water Management (State)	\$ 8,094.00	\$ 8,094.00	\$ 8,094.00
Natural Resource Block Grant - WCA (State)	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Aquatic Invasive Species (State)	\$ 78,060.13	\$ 68,859.00	\$ 68,643.00
Enhanced Capacity - Parks Match	\$ 11,600.00	\$ 11,600.00	\$ 11,600.00
State Agencies - Agreements & Grants	\$ 290,584.10	\$ 429,084.00	\$ 1,131,914.75
Federal Agencies - Agreements & Grants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Charges for Services	\$ 50,194.05	\$ 33,900.00	\$ 40,875.00
Miscellaneous & Other Income	\$ 6,121.23	\$ 1,484.00	\$ 2,600.00
Subtotal	<b>\$ 449,653.51</b>	<b>\$ 558,021.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,268,726.75</b>
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$ 734,553.51</b>	<b>\$ 861,807.93</b>	<b>\$ 1,579,566.75</b>
<b><u>EXPENDITURES</u></b>			
District Operations			
Personnel Expenses	\$ 443,737.43	\$ 472,746.74	\$ 446,003.64
Operating Expenses	\$ 79,932.29	\$ 108,062.91	\$ 114,414.03
Total District Operations	<b>\$ 523,669.72</b>	<b>\$ 580,809.65</b>	<b>\$ 560,417.66</b>
District Expenditures			
District Projects Expense	\$ 96,816.17	\$ 86,720.29	\$ 89,729.00
State Agencies - Agreements & Grants	\$ 118,883.81	\$ 143,750.60	\$ 792,063.20
Federal Agencies - Agreements & Grants	\$ 1,425.00	\$ -	\$ -
Total District Expenditures	<b>\$ 217,124.98</b>	<b>\$ 230,470.89</b>	<b>\$ 881,792.20</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$ 740,794.70</b>	<b>\$ 811,280.54</b>	<b>\$ 1,442,209.86</b>