



Erosion Control and Water Management Program Policy

Adopted January 10th, 2019

Erosion Control and Water Management Program Policy

From the Board of Water and Soil Resources, State of Minnesota

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Policy Statement

The Erosion Control and Water Management Program, commonly known as the State Cost Share Program, was created through Minnesota Statutes, §103C.501 to provide funds to Soil and Water Conservation Districts (Districts) to share the cost, with the land occupier, of conservation practices for high priority erosion, sedimentation, or water quality problems, or water quantity problems due to altered hydrology. The purpose of this policy is to provide specific requirements for the implementation of funds appropriated to BWSR associated with the Erosion Control and Water Management Program.

Funds are allocated by BWSR based on the following minimum criteria to districts that have fully complied with all program rules and policies:

- Extent of high priority erosion or water quality problems in the district, as indicated in the district comprehensive and annual plans or their equivalent.
- Priorities for the control of soil erosion or water quality problems as established by BWSR.
- Historic success of the district in applying conservation practices.
- Ability of the district to expend the funds in a timely manner.
- Legislative appropriation.

BWSR will allocate the cost-sharing funds available to districts in the form of grants for conservation practices addressing high priority erosion, sedimentation, or water quality problems.

Erosion Control and Water Management (State Cost Share Program)

District boards and staff are responsible for the administration and decisions concerning the local use of these funds in accordance with: Minnesota Statutes, section 103C.501; Minnesota Administrative Rules, part 8400.0060 through 8400.1900; BWSR policies; the grant agreement; and all other applicable laws. BWSR will use grant agreements as contracts for assurance of deliverables and compliance. Failure to comply with relevant statutes, rules, and policies may lead to imposition of financial penalties on the grant recipient.

The BWSR Grants Administration Manual provides the primary framework for local management of these funds.

1.0 Eligible and Ineligible Activities

The primary purpose of activities funded with Erosion Control and Water Management funds is to assist with structural, vegetative, or nonstructural land management practices to correct existing problems. Specific preventative practices may also be allowed through policy or appropriation. Vegetative practices include establishment of permanent vegetation through practices such as but not limited to: critical area planting and filter strips. Nonstructural land management practices include conservation management practices such as but not limited to: cover crops, residue management, and nutrient management that are incorporated into a farm management plan and have erosion control or water quality improvement benefits.

- 1.1 **Practice Standards.** All practices must be consistent with the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) or professionally accepted engineering or ecological practices. Design standards for all practices must include specifications for operation and maintenance for the life of the given practice, including an inspection schedule and procedure. Practices where runoff or sediment from the contributing watershed prevents the practice from achieving the intended purpose with normal operation and maintenance are ineligible. Unless otherwise directed by statute or rule, vegetative practices must follow the BWSR Board adopted Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines (http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/native_vegetation/seeding_guidelines.pdf).
- 1.2 **Effective Life.** All structural and vegetative practices must be designed and maintained for a minimum effective life of ten years. The beginning date for a practice's effective life is the same date final payment is approved and the project is considered complete. The effective life of non-structural land management practices will be based on the district's BWSR approved Implementation Plan, as per Section 3.2.2. Rehabilitation of structural and vegetative practices beyond their designed effective life are eligible for this program.
- 1.3 **Repair of Damaged Practices.** Using Erosion Control and Water Management funds to repair damage to a conservation practice is eligible if the practice was installed using approved standards, damage was caused by reasons beyond the control of the land occupier, and damage or failure of the practice was not due to improper maintenance or removal of the practice within the effective life.
- 1.4 **Practices that Address Water Quantity Problems Due to Altered Hydrology.** The primary purposes of these types of practices is to apply conservation practices on drainage or conveyance systems to

(a) improve water quality, and (b) reduce surface and/or subsurface peak flows and volumes that contribute to water quality problems. Practices that do not have water quality as a primary purpose are ineligible.

- 1.5 **Ineligible Practices.** Incentive payments for ongoing maintenance, writing of conservation plans, payments to adopt land management practices such as tillage or residue management unless approved as per Section 3.2.2, payments for crop damage during construction, payments to repair or install septic systems, payments for easements, stormwater conveyances that collect and move runoff but do not provided water quality benefit, practices installed for energy conservation and snow protection, and/or feedlot expansions are not allowable practices with these funds. See also Section 1.4.
- 1.6 **Project and Practice Assurances.** The grantee has the responsibility to ensure that the installed conservation practices and projects meet the purposes of the grant program, will remain in place for the lifespan expected, and will provide the benefits for which they were designed as per the Project and Practice Assurance Section of the Grants Administration Manual.

2.0 Technical and Administrative Components

Erosion Control and Water Management funds may be used for technical and administrative expenses.

- 2.1 **Technical Quality Assurance.** The grantee has the responsibility to ensure that the designated technical staff have the appropriate technical expertise, skills and training for their assigned role(s) as per the Technical Quality Assurances section of the Grants Administration Manual.
- 2.2 **Technical and Administrative Expense.** Up to twenty percent (20%) of the total grant may be used for technical and administrative expenses. Amounts used must be documented as an actual expense. Remaining funds must be provided as cost share to achieve the purpose of these funds, unless otherwise indicated in specific appropriation language. Districts may use more than 20% of the grant for technical and administrative expenses if a request for such use is recommended by the Board Conservationist and approved by the BWSR Regional Manager, based on the following:
- a) Other non-state funds, will be leveraged and the district couldn't do the project otherwise; or
 - b) Funds are used on a project that is Erosion Control and Water Management Program or Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) eligible AND the district's most recent Financial Report indicates less than an 18-month fund balance; or
 - c) Funds were granted for the Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMA) Program, as approved in the CWMA work plan.
- 2.3 **Technical and Administrative Activities.** Activities eligible include the following: grant administration, staff training to maintain appropriate technical approval authorities or licenses, site investigations and assessments, design and cost estimates, construction supervision, and inspections.

3.0 Financial Assistance to Land Occupiers

Financial assistance can be calculated by either a) the percent of the installation cost of a practice that may be provided to a land occupier for materials and labor necessary to install the practice as per Section 3.1 or b) a flat rate, for buffers and non-structural land management practices. As per Section 3.2 flat rates serve as an alternative to actual costs documented by receipts or invoices.

3.1 Maximum percent based on receipts or invoices. The maximum cost share rate utilizing state funds for installation of a practice is seventy-five percent (75%) of the installation cost, except for unused well sealing which is established at fifty percent (50%). State and non-state funds combined may not exceed 100%.

3.1.1 Non-state contributions. A land occupier may provide the remainder of the local share of the implementation cost through in-kind services, or non-state funds. The district board shall determine whether charges for in-kind services and materials are practical and reasonable. Standard rates for in-kind services should be identified in the district's cost share program policy.

3.1.2 Local Rates. Prior to receiving any applications from land occupiers, district boards may set different cost share rates up to the maximum identified in BWSR policy. These rates should be identified in the District's cost share program policy.

OR

3.2 Flat Rates. Flat rates may be used as an alternative to actual costs documented by receipts or invoices. When using flat rates a land occupier cannot accept any other state or federal funds for that practice.

3.2.1 Buffers. For buffers based on water quality improvements with a maximum width of 120 feet, the flat rate may be up to \$300 per acre to establish the vegetation. A cropping history, defined as in agricultural crop production for at least two of the last five years, is required. Species selection and acceptable seed source requirements must follow BWSR's Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines. Native shrub plantings (amongst native grasses and flowers) for wildlife, fruit or nut production is allowed. Allowable activities after establishment include haying, seed propagation, bio-energy production, and prescribed burning; if these occur outside of the nesting season of May 15 to August 1 and are included in the operation and maintenance plan. Alternative dates can be approved by the SWCD on a case-by-case basis for weed control, tree and scrub management or emergency repairs. Grazing after successful establishment is allowed with an approved grazing management plan (e.g. Prescribed Grazing practice standard 528).

3.2.2 Nonstructural Land Management Practices are allowed when they are part of 1) a planned erosion control or water quality improvement plan; 2) when the district has submitted an Implementation Plan to BWSR and after Board Conservationist approval of the Implementation Plan; and 3) the district has incorporated the approved Implementation Plan into their locally adopted cost share program policy for that fiscal year. Land occupiers who are already

incorporating the requested nonstructural land management practice in their farming operation are not eligible.

- 3.3 **Cooperative Weed Management Program.** A non-state local share equal to at least 25% of the amount of CWMA funds received is required. Local share can be provided by a landowner, land occupier, local government or other non-state source and can be in the form of cash or the cash value of services or materials contributed to the accomplishment of grant objectives.

4.0 Expenditure of Funds on Practices and Contracts

The District Board has the authority and responsibility to approve expenditure of funds within their own organization. The approval or denial of expenditures of funds must be documented in the District's meeting minutes prior to beginning the funded activity. The grantee may delegate this authority as long as delegation is supported by a documented local board or council action, such as a motion, resolution, or adoption of a policy.

- 4.1 **Cost Share Contract.** A contract between the District and land occupier(s) receiving state funds is required to provide a legal standing to insure practices are installed and maintained according to approved standards and specifications. The required contract and procedures for using this contract are located in the Implementing Practices section of the BWSR Grants Administration Manual. Modifications to the conservation practice contract template may be made prior to execution with a land occupier and with prior approval from the District legal counsel and BWSR.
- 4.1.1 **Service Charges.** District or Technical Service Area charges for services such as administration, field investigations, design, and monitoring to establish the practice shall not be included in calculating the project cost for purposes of determining cost-share payment amounts to the land occupier. Service charges such as tree planting or mechanical weed control are eligible to be included.
- 4.2 **Contract Timeframe.** District Boards have the authority to adopt timely starting and completion dates. Execution and completion of a contract with a land occupier must be within the grant period. Contracts not completed within the period of the grant agreement must be cancelled unless the grant agreement with the District has been extended and the contract has been extended such that the contract timeframe is within the amended grant. Under all circumstances, grant funds must be expended within the period of a valid grant agreement.
- 4.3 **Canceled Projects.** Funds from canceled projects or remaining from completed projects where the final cost was less than the estimated amount may be re-encumbered to a new contract as provided in the grant agreement. Funds that are unexpended after the end date of the grant agreement must be returned as provided in the grant agreement.
- 4.4 **Removal of Practices.** District Boards may authorize the removal of a practice installed under this program provided the land occupier can show good cause for removal of the practice and the purpose of the original practice has been achieved.

- 4.5 **Failure to Maintain Practices.** Funds re-paid to a district from a landowner who has failed to maintain a practice, must be reallocated to the local cost share program according to this policy and Minnesota Rules 8400.0050 to 8400.1900, less the administrative cost of the district.

5.0 BWSR Grant Reporting and Reconciliation Requirements

To ensure the continued success of the program, regular reporting of accomplishments and benefits is required. BWSR staff is authorized to develop grant agreements, including requirements and processes for project outcomes reporting, closeouts, fiscal reconciliations, and grant verifications. All grantees must follow the grant agreement and Grants Administration Manual. See specifically the Reporting Requirements and Grant Closeout Process sections of the Grants Administration Manual.

In the event there is a violation of the terms of the grant agreement, BWSR will enforce the grant agreement and evaluate appropriate actions, up to and including repayment of grant funds at a rate up to 150% of the grant agreement.

Contact

For additional information, contact the local Board Conservationist.

6.0 District Cost Share Program Guidelines

The following guidelines are specific to Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District and should be considered as section 11.1 of the 2019 Erosion Control and Water Management Program Policy as developed by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources. Letters **a-j** are suggested by BWSR per 2016 policy. Letters **k-t** were developed to meet local concerns/needs. These guidelines will be reviewed and edited and/or amended on an annual basis.

- a) Technical Expertise:** Staff skills, training, or credentials and/or a description of other means the District will use to insure projects meet the requirements of the guidelines and are installed and maintained according to standards and specifications are included and will be updated yearly in this policy (Appendix A)
- b) Value of Applicant In-Kind Services:** Unless specified by Minnesota prevailing wage statutes, the value of labor, equipment, materials and/or services that are proposed to be provided by the applicant (i.e. labor and services provided by the landowner) to complete the project shall be estimated at:
 - General labor rate of \$24.69 per hour (date, times, and activity must be documented)
 - Labor rate of \$50 per cubic yard for concrete work.
 - Heavy equipment operation such as skid steers, tractors, backhoes, and scrapers (including labor) at \$50 per hour. (Date, times, and activity must be documented)
 - Materials: \$8 per ton for gravel, \$5 per yard for sand
 - Professional or semi-professional services such as construction administration or engineering labor rate at \$70 per hour. (Date, times, and activity must be documented)
- c) In-Kind Eligibility:** In general, in-kind expenses should be able to be valued, should be pertinent to the conservation practice, and may be used to replace the cost of paid installation or activity. In-kind activities should be identified during the planning of a project, estimated, and included within the overall project cost calculation. All in-kind activities should be approved by the Sherburne SWCD Board along with the rest of the project budget and scope.
- d) Structural Cost Share Rates:** Current cost share amounts are based on a priority location ranking procedure (Appendix B). There will be several categories based on total project cost which will determine reimbursement rate:
 - Project cost of \$0-\$1,000: Priority location % share.
 - Project cost of \$1,000 +: Priority location % share, capped at \$2,000.
 - The rate for unused well sealing is established at 50%, with a cap of \$1,000.
- e) Non-Structural Cost Share Rates:** Incentive planting program
 - Cover Crops: 3 species mix or higher, subject to change based on current EQIP rates. Capped at \$2,000 per landowner.
 - Native Pollinator Program:
 - i. Prairie Seed - 75% of seed cost, not to exceed \$600/acre. Not to exceed \$300/acre for enhancements. Minimum of ½ acre, maximum of 10 acres.
 - ii. Native Shrubs – 75% of shrub cost, not to exceed \$0.95/shrub. Minimum of 100 stems, maximum of 500 stems.

- f) **Practice Standards:** District Technical Standards include but are not limited to: MPCA Stormwater Manual, MPCA Protecting Water Quality in Urban Area, NPDES General Stormwater Permit for Construction Activity, Minnesota Urban Small Sites BMP Manual, NRCS Field Office Technical Guide, and applicable local, state and federal regulations.
- g) **Criteria for Project Selection:** Cost share applications will be reviewed, ranked, and selected utilizing a ranking tool developed by District staff and approved by the District Board.
- h) **Contract Noncompliance:** At its discretion, the board may consider compliance to the terms of the previous Cost-Share Contract as a prerequisite to enter into a subsequent Cost Share contract with an applicant.
- i) **Contract Signing Delegation:** At the April, 2014 District board meeting, the board approved the District Manager as the authorized representative to sign contract requests and supporting program documents.
- j) **Procedure Checklist:** A procedure checklist (Appendix C) will be distributed to landowners upon contract approval, all items on the checklist must be completed to receive reimbursement.

The following policies apply to all District Cost-Share Programs

- k) **Vegetation:** For certain practices including but not limited to shoreline buffers, riparian buffers and various stormwater infiltration practices where native vegetation is recommended: No exotic species or nursery-derived cultivars will be eligible for cost-share reimbursement, vegetation practices must follow BWSR Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines. www.bwsr.state.mn.us/native_vegetation/seeding_guidelines.pdf
- l) **Hard-Armor:** Riprap should only be used where necessary and never to replace a stable, naturally vegetated shoreline. The district will consider funding hard armoring such as rock riprap if it is determined by all applicable parties to be the best solution. Should riprap be approved, the site must be enhanced with a vegetative buffer.
- m) **Violation or Permit Requirement:** Projects to repair violations or projects that are required by permit are not eligible.
- n) **Contractor work:** the applicant will be required to obtain three quotes for the proposed project if the total project cost exceeds \$25,000 prior to contract approval by the board.
- o) **Project Maintenance:** Applicants must complete a project maintenance workshop OR request a one-on-one maintenance session with the SWCD within three years of contract installation.
- p) **Application Due Dates:**
 - **Structural:** Applications will be due to District staff by April 1st and August 1st of each year. Applications will be pooled and ranked following these deadline dates.
 - **Non-Structural:** Cover crops will follow the structural application dates of April 1st and August 1st. Native Pollinator applications will be due to District staff by March 1st. Applications will be pooled and ranked following these deadlines dates.
- q) **Ranking:** SWCD will rank projects based upon numerous pre-determined criteria including level of environmental benefit, pollution reduction, proximity to water or sensitive resources, and others. SWCD staff and Board of Supervisors reserve the right to promote specific projects

beyond the pre-determined ranking criteria if they fit within priorities identified within the Local Water Management Plan or other strategic guidance document.

- r) **Implementation Deadline:** A project awarded during one application deadline must have a contract signed by the following application deadline, or they face immediate expiration. Funds from expired contracts will be carried over to the next application deadline date, and expired projects must be resubmitted if cost-share opportunities are desired.
- s) **Funding Limits:** A parcel may receive one cost-share grant per 12 month period. The maximum lifetime cumulative grant funds that may be received through this program include:
 - Residential (private) parcels: \$10,000
 - Townhome, lake or condominium association: \$40,000
 - Commercial, government or non-profit properties: \$100,000
- t) Applicants must incorporate a public education component into the project. Possible options include installation of permanent project signage or hosting a public tour of the project – other ideas are welcome. Note: projects receiving funding through the State of Minnesota’s Clean Water Fund program would still require signage following completion.

Appendix A. Technical Expertise

The following is a documentation of staff skills, training, credentials along with description of other means the District will use to insure projects meet the requirements of local guidelines and are installed and maintained according to standards and specifications. This document should be reviewed and updated annually.

Ecological Practices: In most cases, all district technical staff have the skills, experience and/or existing technical approval authority (TAA) to design, install and sign off on ecological practices relating to stabilizing shoreland and streambanks, establishing and maintaining vegetative cover (herbaceous and forested), and managing nutrients, manure and grazing. In a case where staff does not have existing TAA or does not have adequate experience as detailed and approved below, they should consult with other Sherburne SWCD staff to determine if another person has adequate experience to do so. In the case that the project requires engineering, the SWCD will oversee the plans to make sure they meet local requirements and the engineer will sign off on the completed project.

Engineering Practices: For all practices requiring engineering, the SWCD will oversee the plans to make sure they meet local requirements and the engineer will sign off on the completed project.

Below is a listing of the credentials of Sherburne SWCD staff which qualify them to make recommendations, design and install and sign off on Ecological Practices as described above:

Water Resource Specialist, Dan Cibulka

Watershed Management:

- Has a Professional Certificate in Watershed Management (Michigan State University, 2015).
- Has assisted numerous lake associations, improvement districts and watershed associations with strategic watershed level planning initiatives.
- Has completed targeting and prioritization studies for agricultural watersheds

Stormwater:

- Has overseen projects directing the citing of stormwater BMPs.
- Designed monitoring protocols for BMP effectiveness.

Shoreline:

- Has developed shoreline integrity rating systems to prioritize shoreland restoration/protection.
- Has advised property owners on shoreland practices and restoration solutions.

Lake and Stream

- Designed and managed dozens of lake and stream monitoring projects
- Has completed dozens of Lake diagnostic/feasibility studies and management plans.
- Member of the North American Lake Managers Society, Wisconsin Lakes and Minnesota Lakes and Rivers organizations.
- 10 years' experience in aquatic invasive species monitoring and management
- Experience in native aquatic plant restoration

Forest Resource Specialist, Gina Hugo

Stormwater:

- Has designed raingarden practices, led volunteer plantings.
- Compiled “Common Lake Shore Weeds – 1st and 2nd Edition”

Shoreline:

- Has taught maintenance workshops for shoreline owners assisted with workshops for design and installation.
- Has worked with volunteers to install erosion control blanket and plant materials for shoreline revegetation workshops

River and Stream:

- Has worked with engineer during design and installation process of streambank stabilization practices that included point barbs, cedar revetments, livestakes and riprap.

Pasture and Manure Management:

- 14 years of experience assessing pasture health, pulling soil samples, making seed recommendations, planting new pasture, over seeding and writing rotational grazing plans. Received training through NRCS on rotational grazing. Has written plans for EQIP for cattle, horses and goats.

Forestry:

- Certified Forest Pest First Detector through the MDA
- Certified Tree Inspector through the MN DNR
- Certified Forest Stewardship Plan Writer
- Member of ISA, and MNSTAC
- Attends Shade Tree Short Course Annually – 2 days of tree related learning sessions
- ISA Certified Arborist

Habitat Restoration and Management:

- 17 years of experience providing landowners with technical guidance for establishing native prairie, designing seed mixes and operating planting equipment
- Advises landowners on maintenance needs
- 8 years of experience planning and implementing invasive species management
- 8 years of experience managing the restoration of acre oak savanna
- Provides technical guidance on management of County Park Natural Resources
- NRCS Technical approval authority for: critical area planting 342

District Technician, Bill Bronder

Stormwater:

- Designed and/or oversaw construction of 4 rain gardens
- NRCS Technical approval authority for as-built certification for Water and sediment control basins, grassed waterways, diversions, and wetland restorations

Shoreline:

- Assisted with installation of Lake Fremont shoreline protection practices
- Assisted with installation of Schreder’s and Warzecha’s streambarbs on the Rum River
- NRCS Technical approval for Filter Strips, Riparian Herbaceous Cover, Critical Area Planting

Pasture and Manure Management:

- In the last 15 years have assisted 40+ large animal owners with pasture renovations and manure management recommendations.
- NRCS Technical approval for Pasture and Hayland Planting (Forage and Biomass Planting)

Other Practices:

- NRCS approval authority for designing and approving Cover Crop planting, Tree Planting, Field and Farmstead Windbreaks, and Conservation Cover. Additionally, have planted in excess of 120 prairie restorations on over 1000 acres.

District Technician, Miranda Wagner

Agriculture

- Certified Conservation Planner
- Attended NRCS Conservation Boot Camp 2011
- Completed numerous seeding designs for introduced and native cover and cover crops
- NRCS Technical approval authority for: Conservation Cover 327, Conservation Crop Rotation 328, Cover Crop 340, Early Successional Habitat Dev. & Mgmt. 647, Field Border 386, Mulching 484, Residue Management 345 329 346, Restoration & Management of Rare and Declining Habitats 643, Tree/Shrub Establishment 612, Upland Wildlife Habitat Management 645, Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment 380, Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation 650, Grass Waterway (Ecological) 412, Irrigation Water Management 449, Obstruction Removal 500, Well Decommissioning 351

Shoreline

- NRCS Technical approval for: Filter Strip 393, Critical Area Planting 342

Pasture and Manure Management

- NRCS Technical approval for: Forage and Biomass Planting 512, Watering Facility 614

District Technician, Frances Gerde

Stormwater

- Stormwater Site Assessment & BMP Selection Workshop, 2012. U of M Extension Services: details about selecting a site and specific BMP, mostly residential areas.
- Has assisted engineer during the site assessment, design, and construction process of 13 raingardens in the City of St. Cloud
- Has designed and helped install 3 raingardens in Sherburne County
- Attended the International Low Impact Development Symposium in 2013, where stormwater management issues was a key topic
- Use DynaSCAPE Design and Color to create restoration plans for landowners

Shoreline

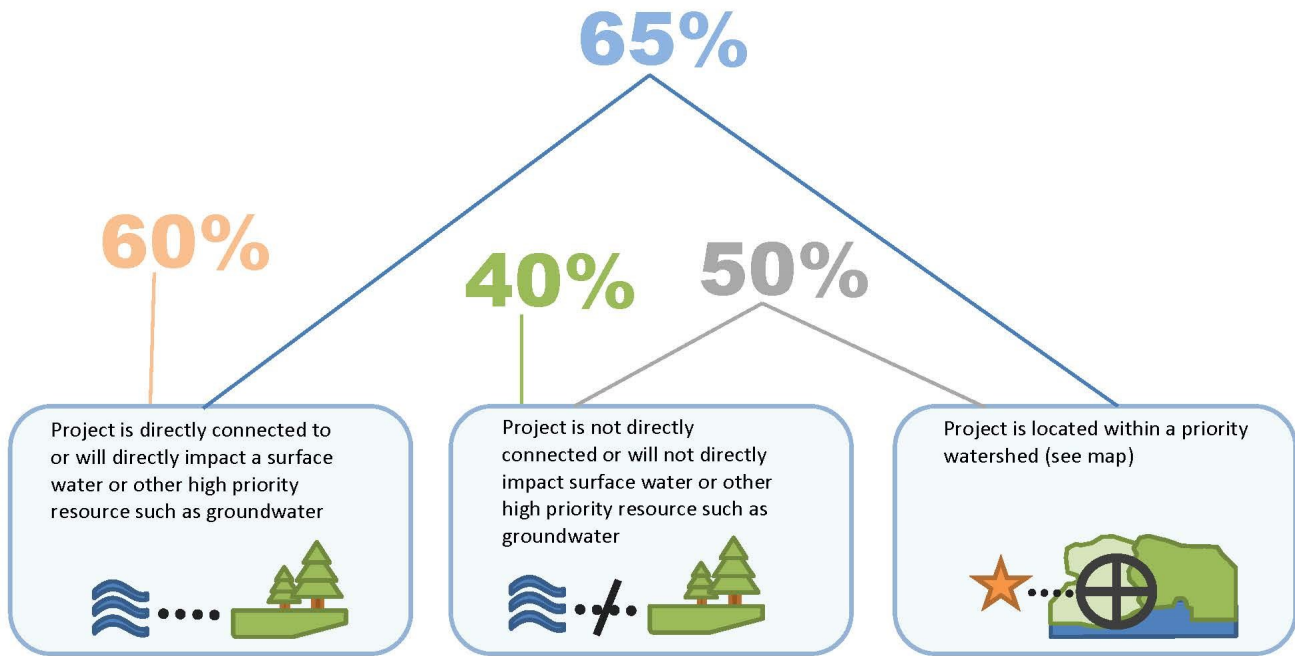
- Has designed 10 shoreline buffers, has helped to install 9 shoreline buffers. Has conducted status reviews for 52 buffers that have been installed by the SWCD. Regularly assist landowners with advice on their shorelines as needed.
- Has attended the Shoreland Users Group annual meeting for the last two years

- Ecological Restoration, 2014. U of M College of Continuing Education: a 5 course class with topics ranging from site assessment to management of ecological restoration projects.
- NRCS Technical approval authority for: critical area planting 342

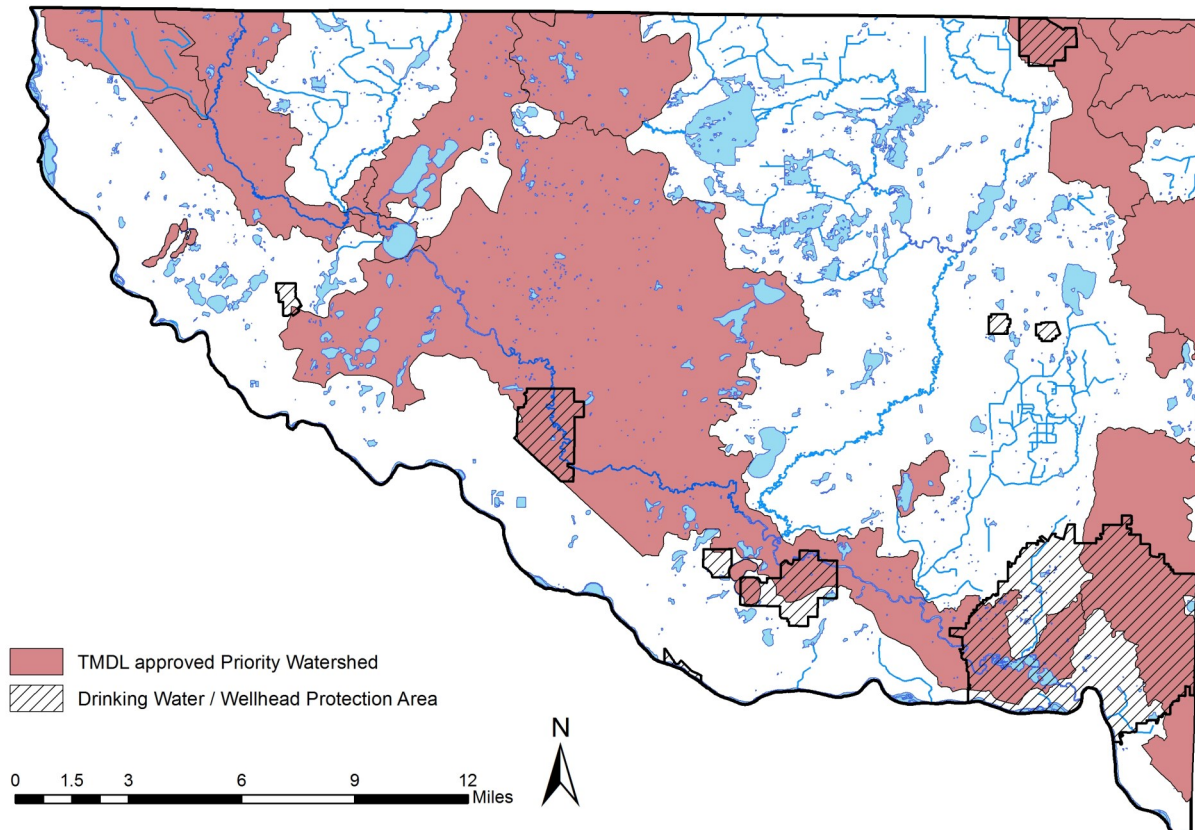
Other

- Attended NRCS Conservation Boot Camp in 2017

Cost-Share Level Determination



Sherburne County Priority Watersheds & Protection Areas



Appendix C. Cost Share Check List

√	Date completed	
		Submit cost share contract to SWCD board for approval
		Obtain necessary permit from the DNR or Sherburne County Planning and Zoning
		Gopher 1 call: for construction projects to mark any possible utilities
		Pre-construction meeting with contractor, landowner and SWCD
		Notify SWCD of anticipated construction start date
		Notify SWCD of project completion
		Landowner signs Operations and Maintenance agreement
		Landowner submits receipts and records of costs
		Landowner signs voucher
		Technician inspects installation, if needed completes "As Built"
		Certification of completion by authorized staff
		District Board approves payment – signs voucher
		Check issued