SHERBURNE SWCD

2022 Annual Plan of Work Adopted 03/17/2022

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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 2022 in order to meet those broader goals identified in the 10-year plan.

Obj 1 – Protect and/or Improve Water Quality and Quantity

- Assist 20+ landowners with technical and/or financial assistance for lake/stream erosion
- Maintain and assist lake associations with volunteer water quality monitoring programs
- Complete 8 projects targeting impaired waterbodies (1 in Rum River, 7 in MRSC watersheds)
- Work with landowners to address 3 bacteria sources to Elk River and tributaries
- Certify 1 new operation for MAWQCP accreditation
- Oversee the 2022 AIS grant program
- Monitor 12+ lakes for AIS using early detection protocols
- Partner with Sherburne County COLA on 1 AIS activity
- Participate in the completion of the Rum River 1W1P Planning Process
- Participate in the MRSC 1W1P Planning Process
- Work with Mississippi River St. Cloud Watershed partners on WRAPS monitoring and strategic plan
- Expand use of advanced scheduling tools for irrigation management, work with 5 irrigators

Obj 2 – Promote Healthy Soils - Reduce Soil Loss from Wind & Water Erosion

- Complete 2 lake or river shoreline development or erosion inventory
- Maintain compliance with the Buffer Law (Minn. Stat. 103F.48)
- Establish a baseline precision agricultural and soil health practices inventory
- Implement 3 field-based BMP's aiming at nitrate reduction
- Infield nitrate monitoring at 3 sites

Obj 3 – Provide Forest Management Support to Landowners and Communities

- Perform 50+ tree health consultations with landowners
- Assist the County Parks Department with 100 hours of habitat restoration work
- Re-visit City EAB Preparedness plans
- Continue EAB early detection monitoring program
- Establish Gravel Tree Bed to promote tree diversity

Obj 4 – Protect, Enhance, and Establish Native Habitat

- Pursue 2-3 landowners for easements near sensitive or high priority areas
- Work with 5 landowners to install prairie on their property
- Assist 20+ landowners with technical and/or financial assistance with habitat projects in urban settings
- Perform 10+ Forest habitat improvement with landowners
- Complete County Wetland Delineations

Obj 5 - Increase District Awareness and Promote Comprehensive Community Education

Host 10+ educational events targeting students and general public on conservation related topics.

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- Host an annual MS4 partners meeting
- Host a stormwater educational workshop for elected officials (NEMO)

- Provide resources to contractors for stormwater BMPs (1 event, or 1 new publication)
- Promote loan and grant programs as well as educational opportunities for SSTS/AgBMP
- Publicize education on well sealings, promote well sealing
- Target high-use and high-risk public access sites for AIS education

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 assists landowners with the development of 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.

Gravel Bed Tree Program

The SSWCD will re-establish a 100 sapling capacity gravel bed nursery for tree distribution. Conditioned trees are used to increase climate change resilient species in communities to increase sustainability if tree services including stormwater mitigation, energy savings and moderation of urban heat island effect.

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. The SSWCD can also assist with uniformity testing on pivots.

Lakes and River Stewardship

Assist Lake Associations, Lake Improvement Districts, Municipalities 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:

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- 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.

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), Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4)

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. The team also works collaboratively to complete educational programs and pollution reduction documentation as required by the State of Minnesota MS4 permitting.

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 - ENRTF- FY2020

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:

- FY20 Local Capacity Grant
- FY21 Local Capacity Grant
- FY22 Local Capacity Grant
- FY21 Buffer Initiative Grant
- FY22 Buffer Initiative Grant
- Lower Elk River Watershed Phase II Bacteria Reduction Grant CWF2018
- Sherburne County Targets Nitrate Reduction BMP Implementation CWF2019

Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program (CPL)

The Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) Grant Program funds conservation projects that restore, enhance, or protect forests, wetlands, prairies, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife in MN. Funding for the CPL grant program is from the Outdoor Heritage Fund. The SSWCD is currently administering the following grants:

Houlton Conservation Area Streambank Protection – CPL FY22

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:

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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 Land Trust

The MN Land Trust works with conservation easements in the Anoka Sand Plain Protection Program, a conservation initiative to permanently protect high quality wildlife habitat in the Anoka Sand Plain. The SSWCD will work with MN Land Trust to identify and provide outreach services to prospective landowners for the conservation easement program.

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.

One Watershed One Plan (1W1P)

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. The SSWCD is currently involved in the following watersheds:

- Mississippi River St Cloud planning grant (pending approval in spring 2022)
- Rum River 1W1P FY2019 Fiscal Agent (complete in summer of 2022)

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is awarding the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and project partners \$3.5 million to implement conservation measures on irrigated lands. The money is being awarded through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and will fund a 5-year project that is focused on 20 counties across the state of Minnesota. SSWCD will act as co-fiscal agent and be responsible to report TA activities for 10 SWCD partners.

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. Currently funding is available for river corridor areas in the Rum River Watershed.

Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)

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. SSWCD staff continues to hold discussions with our watershed partners on these initiatives and pursues opportunities as they arise. TMDL's will be completed for six streams and three lakes in 2022-2023 in coordination with the MRSC WRAPS Cycle 2, Phase 2 project.

Watershed Restoration and Protection Project (WRAPP)

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 SSWCD is currently administering the following grant(s):

MRSC Wraps Cycle 2, Phase 2 – FY2022

Walk in Access Program (WIA)

Walk in Access provides public hunting opportunities on private land and rewards landowners for keeping their land in high quality habitat. The SSWCD will work directly with landowners for program enrollment.

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

- Adopt A Storm Drain
- Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner
- Bi-Weekly Newspaper Articles, Quarterly E-Newsletter, Environmental Educator Newsletter
- Annual Highlights Booklet
- 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
- Sherburne County Poster Contest

<u>Partnerships/ Committees / Associations</u>

AIS Task Force

The AIS was formed to assist with the development and implementation of the county Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan. The Task Force will meet twice a year to review AIS programs, and every five years to update the AIS 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.

MN Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts Area IV (MASWCD Area IV)

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 3rd 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. With the re-location of the U of M Sand Plain Research Farm, the PMLC Board 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. The PMLC Board has decided to suspend all activity until further notice. Consideration is being made to develop a local PMES.

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.

The Nature Conservancy

The SSWCD has partnered with The Nature Conservancy, with generous financial support from Cargill, to implement a cover crop program in Sherburne County. This program supports operators who are planting three consecutive years of cover crops on the same acres aimed at finding new and successful planting methods and species. SSWCD and TNC's partnership will grow further as the groups explore opportunities for water protection, wildlife corridor habitat, and climate change resiliency in 2022.

Water Plan Advisory Committee (WPAC)

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.

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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.

Revised: 2/3/2022

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Annual Budget – 2022

REVENUES		2021		2022		2022
	Adopted		Proposed		Adopted	
		2/11/2021		6/10/2021		2/10/2022
Intergovernmental Revenue						
County Levy						
County Allocation	\$	289,166.00	\$	303,624.00	\$	303,624.00
Other Levy Funds						
Local Water Management	\$	21,674.00	\$	21,674.00	\$	21,674.00
Subtotal	\$	310,840.00	\$	325,298.00	\$	325,298.00
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)	\$	71,902.00	\$	71,902.00	\$	71,902.00
State Agencies - Agreements & Grants						
State General	\$	564,750.03	\$	387,029.26	\$	484,214.51
State Passthrough	\$	85,163.66	\$	-	\$	521,944.00
Federal Agencies - Agreements & Grants	\$	1,313.88	\$	1,313.88	\$	1,313.88
Charges for Services	\$	48,025.00	\$	50,525.00	\$	50,500.00
Miscellaneous & Other Income	\$	1,300.00	\$	600.00	\$	600.00
Subtotal	\$	785,548.57	\$	524,464.14	\$	1,143,568.39
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TOTAL REVENUES	\$	1,096,388.57	\$	849,762.14	\$	1,468,866.39
EXPENDITURES						
District Operations						
Personnel Expenses	\$	458,382.80	\$	481,011.27	\$	481,011.27
Operating Expenses	\$	97,917.88	\$	141,327.42	\$	92,213.64
Total District Operations	\$	556,300.68	\$	622,338.68	\$	573,224.90
District Expenditures						
District Projects Expense	\$	78,727.00	\$	80,727.00	\$	80,727.00
State Agencies - Agreements & Grants	\$	313,186.59	\$	146,696.45	\$	260,886.78
State - Passthrough	\$	43,095.23	\$	-	\$	521,944.00
Federal Agencies - Agreements & Grants	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-
Total District Expenditures	\$	435,008.82	\$	227,423.45	\$	863,557.78
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$	991,309.51	\$	849,762.14	\$	1,436,782.69