



# Sherburne SWCD

Financial Assistance Policy

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Adopted January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026

## District Financial Assistance Policy Guidelines

The following guidelines are specific to Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District and should be considered as the 2026 Conservation Contracts Program Policy developed by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources. These guidelines will be reviewed and edited and/or amended on an annual basis.

### The following policies apply to all District Cost-Share Programs

- a) **Technical Expertise:** Staff skills, training, or credentials and/or a description of other means the District will use to ensure 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:** Applicant must submit supporting documentation detailing date, times, and activity. 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:
  - Residential/Volunteer labor rate of \$33.49 per hour
  - General Labor (101) Rate \$67.63
  - Equipment Rate (203) \$51.20
- c) **In-Kind Eligibility:** In general, in-kind expenses should 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) **Cost Share Rates:** See Appendix B
- e) **Prevailing Wage:** Projects utilizing state funds will adhere to current prevailing wage laws.
- 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:** District staff will review potential projects for criteria that is specified in comprehensive watershed management plans including priority areas (Appendix C), landscape stewardship plans or other planning documents. If necessary, a ranking tool will be used when funding is limited for project selection.
- 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:** The Board approved the District Manager as the authorized representative to sign contract requests and supporting program documents.
- j) **Landowner Assistance Agreement:** A document (Appendix D) that will provide clear steps and expectations to the landowner during the cost share process.

- k) **Board Authorization:** The Board has the authority to amend cost share rates for eligible projects.
- l) **Vegetation:** The SWCD strives to include native vegetation in all cost share projects with a vegetation component.: Non-native species or nursery-derived cultivars will be considered for cost share reimbursement on a case-by-case basis, vegetation practices must follow BWSR Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines. <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/native-vegetation-guidelines>
- m) **Hard-Armor:** Riprap shall 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, including permitting authorities, to be the best solution. Should riprap be approved, the site must be enhanced with a vegetative buffer.
- n) **Violation or Permit Requirement:** Projects to repair violations or projects that are required by permit are not eligible.
- o) **Contractor work:** The applicant will be required to seek three quotes for the proposed project if the total project cost exceeds \$25,000 prior to contract approval by the board. For projects exceeding \$175,000, the state bidding requirements will apply.
- p) **Project Maintenance:** If applicable, landowners must complete an operation and maintenance agreement. SWCD staff are available to provide a one-on-one maintenance session within three years of project installation.
- q) **Implementation Deadline:** Project implementation deadlines will be set by District staff and approved by the Board. Projects not completed by their deadline will face immediate expiration unless accompanied by an approved amendment.
- r) **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, agricultural, government or non-profit properties: \$100,000

The Board reserves the authority to exempt parcels exceeding these limits.

- s) **Project Repairs:** Repairs to previously installed projects may be eligible for financial assistance, if funding is available, on a **one-time basis only**. Approved repair work will be cost shared at a **50% rate**, regardless of the original cost share percentage. The project or practice is eligible only if the original project or practice was installed using approved standards and specifications, and the damage or failure was caused by reasons beyond the control of the land occupier and not due to design flaws, improper maintenance or removal of the practice within the project's effective life to the current design standards specified in this policy.  
Any project repair requires pre-approval from the SWCD Board.
- t) **Deed Restriction:** Under certain conditions and based upon the source of funding, a deed restriction will be recorded with the county before construction to ensure the practice is protected for its effective lifespan regardless of property ownership. The deed restriction will specify the expiration date in writing. Projects that qualify for a deed restriction are based on the source of funding as outlined below:

- Rum River Watershed Partnership Policy

A deed restriction is required for a project cost equal to or greater than \$5,000 and with a 10-year or longer anticipated lifespan as determined by NRCS and BWSR guidelines. Deed restrictions and easement agreements are not required for publicly or tribally owned land, permanently protected land, or fee to trust land. This applies to all projects funded with dollars from the RRWP.

- Mississippi River St. Cloud Watershed Entity Policy

No deed restriction is required by the Mississippi River St. Cloud Watershed Entity. Projects completed with this funding source are subject to the District Deed Restriction Policy.

- District Deed Restriction Policy

A deed restriction is required for a project with a cost-share dollar amount equal to or greater than \$30,000 and with a 10-year or longer anticipated lifespan as determined by NRCS and BWSR guidelines. Deed restrictions and easement agreements are not required for publicly or tribally owned land, permanently protected land, or fee to trust land. The board reserves the right to waive a deed restriction requirement on a case-by-case basis. This applies to all projects funded with dollars outside of the RRWP funds.

## 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 ensure 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 job approval authority (JAA) 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 JAA 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:

### **Senior Water Resource Specialist, Dan Cibulka**

#### Watershed Management:

- Coordinates watershed-based planning programs for Sherburne County and connecting watersheds
- 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 urban and agricultural watersheds
- Technical Training and Certification Program – Basic ArcGIS Pro Training

#### 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 and evaluation projects
- Has completed dozens of lake diagnostic/feasibility studies and management plans.
- Member - North American Lake Managers Society and Minnesota Lake Managers Society.
- 120 years' experience in aquatic invasive species monitoring and management
- Experience in native aquatic plant restoration

- PADI Certified Advanced SCUBA diver

### **Agricultural Conservationist, 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
- U of M Minnesota Irrigator Program Certified

#### 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

#### Wetland

- Wetland Delineation Certification - Professional

### **Urban Conservationist, Frances Gerde**

#### Stormwater

- 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 several raingardens in Sherburne County
- Uses Vectorworks Design software to create restoration plans for landowners

#### Shoreline

- Has designed over 30 shoreline buffers, has helped to install 10 shoreline buffers. Has conducted status reviews for 62 buffers that have been installed by the SWCD.
- Regularly assist landowners with advice on their shorelines as needed.
- NRCS Technical approval authority for: Critical Area Planting 342, Filter Strip 393, Riparian Herbaceous Cover 390, Conservation Cover 327, Mulching 484

#### Other

- 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.
- Attended NRCS Conservation Boot Camp in 2017

## **Resource Conservationist, David Wick**

### Agriculture

- Has completed CRP and RIM compliance monitoring
- Has assisted with agricultural soil testing

### Lake and Stream

- Proficient in aquatic vegetation identification

### Forestry

- MNDNR Certified Tree Inspector
- U of M Forest Pest First Detector
- NRCS Technical approval authority for: Tree-Shrub Establishment 612, Windbreak Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation 380
- Regularly assists landowners with tree pest and disease concerns
- Assists landowners with forest management related questions
- ISA Certified Arborist

### Wetland

- Certified Minnesota Wetland Professional In-Training

### Other

- Commercial Driver's License

## **Agricultural Technician, Matt Preis**

- Certified Level 2 Conservation Planner

### Agriculture

- Regularly assists landowners with multiple programs. Working towards receiving JAA for ecological & structural practices.

## **Wetland Restoration Technical Expert, Grayson Smith**

### Wetland Restoration:

- Conducts survey, design, compliance, funding acquisition, coordination, contractor hiring, job site management for project implementation and construction, and post-restoration monitoring for USFWS Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program (PFW) wetland restorations in Sherburne, Isanti, Chisago, Anoka, Washington, and Ramsey Counties.
- Experience partnering with MLT, TNC, SWCD, Sportsman's Clubs, private landowners, local units of Government, other NGOs, and other organizations to complete wetland restoration projects.
- 3 years' experience designing and restoring a variety of wetlands with the USFWS PFW Program
- Wetland Restoration Training:
  - 4-month wetland restoration field training with PFW Biologists in Iowa 2021
  - 9-month wetland restoration field training with PFW Biologist in East Central MN 2022
  - 2-week wetland restoration field training with PFW Biologists in Western MN 2022
  - USFWS Wetland Assessment, Restoration and Management Training 2023
  - USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife 101 Training 2023
  - Stearns County Shoreland Workshop 2023

- Heavy Equipment Operator Training 2023
  - Ongoing wetland survey and GIS training
- Wetland Restorations
  - Over 60 wetland restoration designs completed to date.

Appendix B. Cost Share Rates

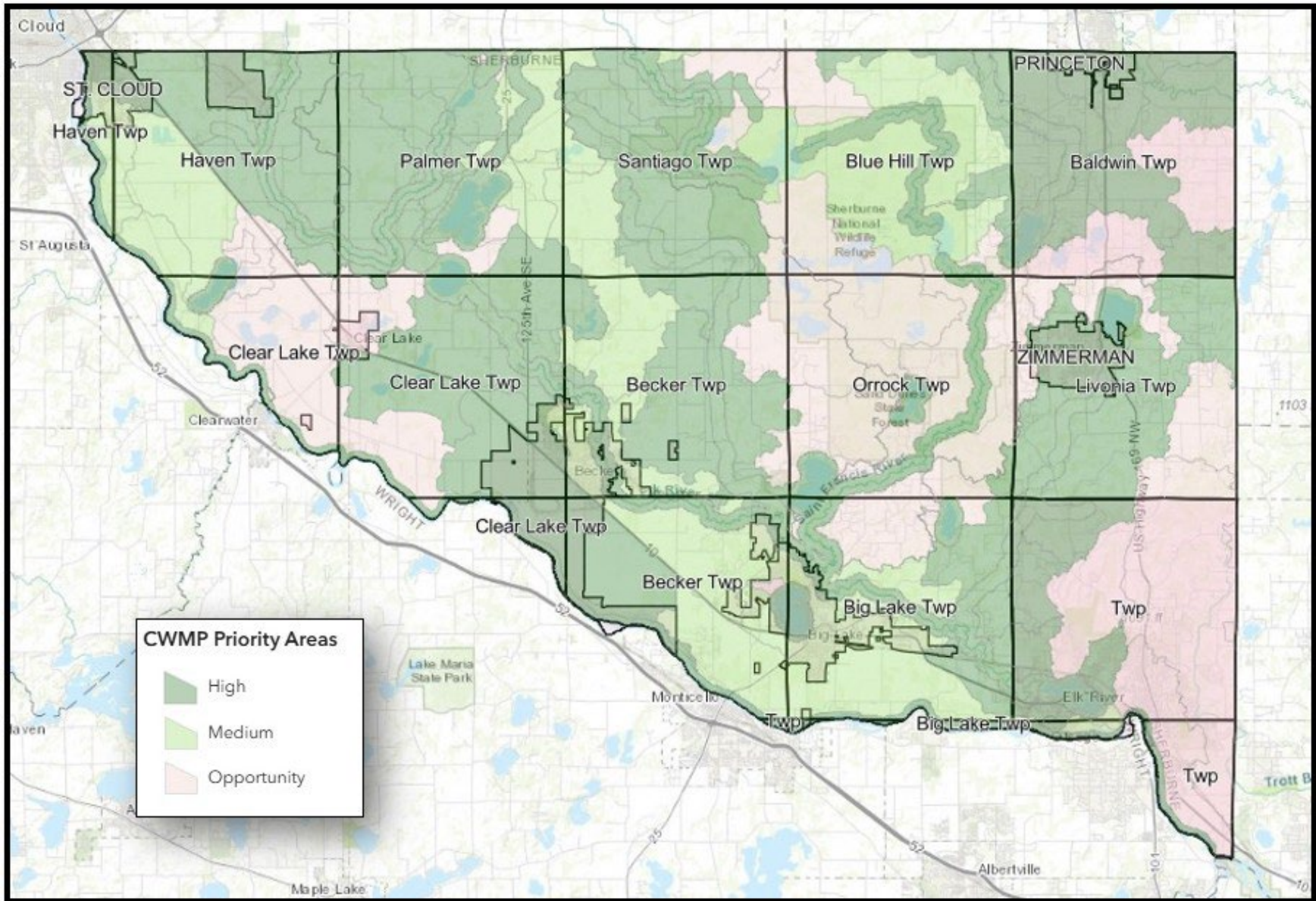
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\*MRSC qualifying NRCS code practices and eligibility requirements will follow those specified in RRWP policy. Projects must produce water quality benefits. Determination of site preparation as an eligible component, and if a project produces water quality benefits, are subject to professional judgement.

\*\*Rum River Watershed rates and eligibility are defined by RRWP board policies.

Appendix C. Priority Areas





### LANDOWNER CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROCESS

The landowner(s) agree to the following guidelines in order to receive financial assistance from the SWCD to assess, design and install a natural resource conservation project:

- 1) The landowner(s) agree to allow SWCD staff and (if applicable) engineering staff access to the project site for the purpose of project assessment, design, installation/construction, and inspections throughout the contract period. The contract period for this project is \_\_\_\_\_ years.
- 2) The owner agrees to follow a prescribed Operation and Maintenance Agreement (O&M) for the contract period of the project as applicable.
- 3) If title to this property is transferred or sold to another party before the expiration of the contract period, it shall be the responsibility of the landowner(s) who signs the contract to advise the new owner that a contract is in force and to notify other parties to the contract of the transfer.
- 4) Depending on the project type, a deed restriction may apply. Such deed restrictions shall expire at the completion of the anticipated project life as specified in the landowner agreement. Deed restrictions are not required for publicly or tribally owned land, permanently protected land, or fee to trust land.
- 5) Should the landowner fail to maintain the project during the effective life, the owner is liable to the SWCD for up to 150% of the amount of any financial assistance received to establish the project.
- 6) The owner agrees to obtain any permits required in conjunction with the installation and establishment of the project prior to starting construction of the project.
- 7) If design or engineering services are requested and approved, the landowner(s) will receive a project assessment and cost estimate to install a BMP. The initial cost estimate is used to develop a contract to present to the SWCD Board for consideration.
- 8) If the Board approves the encumbrance of public funds for the project, then the SWCD will complete or contract a qualified professional engineer for a full project design. Landowner(s) will use the project design to obtain bids from a qualified and licensed (if applicable) contractor or contractors.
- 9) If the project requires an engineered design but SWCD contracted services are not used, the landowner(s) agree to hire a qualified private engineer that will design and construct the project to the standards of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).
- 10) If cost share assistance utilizing public funds is requested, no work or expenses can occur before a contract is executed between the landowner(s) and the SWCD Board.

*By signing this agreement, the landowner(s) are not committing themselves to expenses or installation with a conservation project. This agreement ensures that landowner(s) are aware of potential project requirements and allows the SWCD staff to move forward with next steps of a potential project.*

**I understand the above and agree to follow the above guidelines.**

Print Owner(s) Name:

Signature Owner(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date

Print Owner(s) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Owner(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date

Print Sherburne SWCD Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date

Sherburne SWCD

425 Jackson Ave NW, Elk River, MN 55330

(763) 220-3434



## LANDOWNER CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROCESS

**PURPOSE:** To provide clear steps and expectations for the Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) natural resource assistance process before the investment of time and public funds occurs. This document establishes baseline information about a natural resource concern and outlines future steps that might be taken when the SWCD provides technical and/or financial assistance to a landowner's conservation project.

Parcel #

Property Owner(s)

Address

Phone #

E-mail

Watershed, priority area or any targeting info:

Project goal and resource issue to be addressed:

Technical assistance requested for the following project (describe project):

### Standard conservation assistance process:

1. Landowner(s) and SWCD staff agree to a site visit or consultation on a natural resource topic.
2. SWCD staff provides an initial site visit or desktop examination of the parcel of interest, an assessment of the natural resource need, and possible solutions in discussion with the landowner(s) **at no charge**. Solutions range from projects landowner(s) can do themselves with minimal effort, to more complex or costly solutions that may necessitate additional SWCD time, public funds, constructed BMPs and/or engineered designs if applicable.
3. If additional technical engineering assistance or detailed design is requested by the owner(s), the Financial Assistance Agreement (page 2 of this document) is signed.
4. If preliminary design or engineering services are requested and approved, the landowner(s) will receive a project assessment and cost estimate for a project.
5. The initial cost estimate is used to develop a contract to present to the Board for consideration.
6. If the Board approves the encumbrance of public funds for the project, then full design or engineering specs can be completed.
7. Landowner(s) use the project design to get bids to engage a contractor.
8. If the bids are greater than the contracted cost share amount the SWCD and landowner(s) will consider further options.

Sherburne SWCD

425 Jackson Ave NW, Elk River, MN 55330

(763) 220-3434



## LANDOWNER CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROCESS

### Tennesen Warning

A Tennesen Warning is given to an individual if the government is requesting private or confidential data about yourself or a member of your family. If you elect to participate in the Cost Share Program, Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District ("SWCD") requires information from the landowner(s) for the enrollment process (which includes entering into a contract defining our respective responsibilities for your participation.) This Tennesen will cover what is asked of you, why it is asked, who is able to see the information and what will happen when you decline to give the information

The information sought: your name and the names of all landowners, your address and property's legal description/number of acres, contact information (phone and email address) and other information regarding the proposed project. SWCD may require either a social security number or E.I.N. of the legal entity that has title to the land if you are to be paid a sum equal to or in excess of \$600.00 for a Flat Rate Contract.

The purpose of gathering this information is to be able to enter into an agreement regarding the cost share. Your information will be used by SWCD staff to process the cost share agreement, its board for approval process, and for any audit that is required by state law or federal law. The need for the E.I.N. or social security number is for the IRS. SWCD is legally required to report Flat Rate payments of \$600 or more to the IRS. EIN numbers and Social Security numbers are not disclosed to the public.

If you decline to provide some or any of this information, SWCD will be unable to complete the agreement and you will not be entered into the Cost Share program.

I have read this document. I agree \_\_\_\_\_ OR do not agree \_\_\_\_\_ to provide the information necessary to enter the Cost Share Program.

This must be signed by all landowners.

Print Owner(s) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Owner(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date

Print Owner(s) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature Owner(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date