

# Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District



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## 2014 ANNUAL PLAN

2/13/2013

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Mission of the Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District is to promote natural resource stewardship by providing educational, technical and financial assistance.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the Fillmore SWCD Annual Plan is to provide direction to and set goals for District staff and supervisors for the year. It serves as a tool to prioritize the workload of the district so those goals can be achieved.

The annual plan is used in conjunction with the Local Water Management Plan to help determine needs for staffing, funding and program priorities to best ensure that the district is able to implement the Local Water Management Plan, which is also the District's Comprehensive Plan.

Development of the annual plan is accomplished through an annual planning meeting conducted by staff, supervisors and other partners where all participants provide input so that the best plan with common goals can be developed.

All programs and activities are subject to funding.

	<b>SWCD Partners</b>	<b>Cooperative Projects and Programs</b>
<b>Federal</b>	<b>NRCS</b>	EQIP, CSP, MRBI, Local Work Group, Tillage transect survey
	<b>FSA</b>	CRP, CCRP
<b>State</b>	<b>BWSR</b>	Grant funds (General Services, Easement Services, Conservation Delivery, Farm Bill Assistance, Feedlot Water Quality, Clean Water Fund), WCA Technical Evaluation Panel, RIM/CREP
	<b>MPCA</b>	Root River Comprehensive Strategy (Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy – WRAPS), Watershed Pollutant Load Monitoring Network (WPLMN), SE MN WRAP Nitrogen Planning, Citizen Stream Monitoring Program (CSMP)
	<b>MDA</b>	Ag BMP Loan Program, Root River Field to Stream Partnership , MN Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan
	<b>DNR</b>	Springshed mapping, Observation Well Network, water permits, Root River Landscape Stewardship Plan, Minnesota State Climatology Office Precipitation Monitoring Program
	<b>MDH</b>	Wellhead Protection Area Plans
	<b>MASWCD</b>	Envirothon; poster, mural, video contests; Outstanding Conservationist awards; CRP contribution agreements
	<b>Grazing Lands Conservation Association</b>	Grazing field days; soil health
	<b>Winona State/Utah State</b>	Root River Sediment Budget
	<b>U of M Center for Changing Landscapes</b>	Root River Interpretive Sites Designs
	<b>U of M Extension</b>	Grazing Gazette, Ag in the Classroom, ag lease language workshops, Root River Civic Engagement, nutrient management
	<b>Conservation Corps MN</b>	Apprenticeship program, crew project
	<b>MN DOT</b>	Living Snow Fence Program
<b>Regional</b>	<b>SE MN Water Resources Board</b>	Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network, 319 Feedlot Grants, SE MN Wastewater Initiative
	<b>SE SWCD Technical JPB</b>	Nutrient Management Specialist grant, Area Soil Health Coordinator grant, engineering assistance
	<b>BALMM</b>	Network for sharing information and generating ideas
	<b>Hiawatha Valley RC&amp;D</b>	Cover crops, grazing, civic engagement support
<b>Local</b>	<b>Fillmore County</b>	Wetland Conservation Act delegation, Local Water Management delegation, Feedlot Program technical support, septic system inspections, Soil loss Ordinance, Sinkhole Ordinance, Decorah Shale Overlay District, Frac Sand Technical Evaluation Panel, Household Hazardous Waste collections, East Willow Creek flood control structure

		maintenance
	<b>Watershed projects</b>	Rush-Pine Farmer Led Council, The Nature Conservancy (TNC): Cover Crop Funding, Watson Creek nitrogen studies, Upper Iowa River Watershed: Water quality monitoring
	<b>Land Stewardship Project (LSP):</b>	Cover crop field days, women landowner workshops
	<b>National Wildlife Federation</b>	Cover Crop Champion Grants
	<b>National Trout Center</b>	Nitrate clinic, education
	<b>4-H</b>	Sponsor County Fair awards
	<b>Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center</b>	Earth Day celebration, Bush Foundation Grant partner
	<b>Bluff Country Hiking Club</b>	Lost Creek Hiking Trail interpretive signs and brochure
	<b>Winneshiek County Iowa SWCD</b>	No till field day partner

## 2014 Annual Plan Outline

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**Healthy Natural Communities** **12**

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**Goal #3: Promote land stewardship to preserve and improve natural areas.....12**

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- District Tree Program and Windbreak Program
- Permanent, diverse native species vegetation and invasive species control
- Annual Forestry Field Day
- Root River Landscape Stewardship Plan
- Living Snow Fence program
- Permaculture information

**Objective #2: Enhance the benefits of wetlands, floodplains and shoreland.....13**

- MN Wetland Conservation Act and associated activities
- Voluntary compliance with the ag buffer requirement in the Shoreland District
- Request legislators to restore funding for Wetland Preservation Areas

**Objective #3: Conduct education and outreach activities that promote land and water stewardship.....13**

- Utilize media: newspaper ads, news releases, newspaper insert, Board commentaries, newsletters, radio ads, PSA's, website
- Outstanding Conservationist and volunteer recognition
- Two annual Scholarships
- Annual events: 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Conservation Field Day, Envirothon, Ag in the Classroom, Earth Day, County Fair
- Communication with schools and home school students re: MASWCD contests, careers, etc.
- Coordination of activities with other organizations (Bluff Country Hiking Club, LSP, 4-H, FFA, rain gauge monitors, CSMP, etc.)
- Canoe trip/streambank tour for Board and staff; conservation practice site visits with Board
- Communication with Federal and State legislators

**SWCD Capacity** **15**

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**Goal #4: Maintain the efficient use of district resources and staff.....15**

**Objective #1: Support staff and Board activities that increase the District's capacity.....15**

- Staff and board training and development
- Support of and partnership with regional and local organizations
- Annual reviews: By-Laws, Annual Plan, staff performance evaluations
- Long term programs: Ag BMP, Observation Well Network, Water Plan Administration, summer interns, Local Work Group)
- Regular communication with the County Board and neighboring SWCDs

# Fillmore County Soil and Water Conservation District: 2014 Annual Plan

## Section #1: Soil Resources

### Goal: Control Soil Erosion and Sustain Soil Productivity

#### Objective #1: Provide funding and technical resources for soil erosion BMPs

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Assist landowners and operators with USDA Conservation Plan updates, focusing on MRBI and MDA watersheds and expiring CRP <a href="#">2013 Results: Anne began doing plans in January; 12,405 acres completed in 2013</a>	Ongoing	AK, JR / NRCS, MDA
2. Assist landowners with enrollment into CRP or to re-enroll expiring CRP contracts <a href="#">2013 Results: 45 plans completed under Contribution Agreement with MASWCD</a>	Ongoing	JR / NRCS, FSA
3. Assist landowners with establishment of practices through the State Cost Program and NRCS EQIP <a href="#">2013 Results: State Programs- Rick's time 37%, Doug's time 11% Federal Programs- Rick's time 24%, Doug's time 55%</a>	Ongoing	RG, DK, DT, AK
4. Assist Fillmore County with enforcement of the county's Soil Loss Control Ordinance <a href="#">2013 Results: Complaints received went to the USDA for investigation.</a>	Ongoing	DK, RG / Fillmore County
5. Use LiDAR and Stream Power Index to assist with prioritizing and implementing programs and practices <a href="#">2013 Results: NA</a>	Ongoing	JR, JM, AK, RG, DK
6. Assist landowners with implementing cover crops, managed grazing and other soil health practices <a href="#">2013 Results: 3499 acres in regular EQIP and 1068 acres in EQIP Soil Health Practice plus advice on prevented planting acres</a>	Ongoing	DT / NRCS, Extension
7. Provide SWCD funds for set aside acres for summer construction of grassed waterways and other practices <a href="#">2013 Results: No requests</a>	Annually	RG, DK
8. Assist with establishing and maintaining vegetative buffers in sensitive areas such as shoreland, sinkholes and HEL, utilizing existing conservation programs including RIM <a href="#">2013 Results: 28 RIM spot checks completed</a>	Ongoing	RG, DK, JR
9. Assist NRCS or other partners with tillage transects surveys <a href="#">2013 Results: NA</a>	As needed	Staff

## Objective #2: Conduct education and outreach activities about soil resources

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Publish the Grazing Gazette with NRCS and Extension <a href="#">2013 Results: 6 issues plus special mailing for cover crop field day</a>	Every 2 months	DT / NRCS, Extension
2. Complete Cover Crop Champion Grant activities: field day, meeting w/agronomists, newsletter and newspaper articles <a href="#">2013 Results: Sept 28 field day, meetings w/agronomists, Grazing Gazette articles</a>	Jan-Nov 2014	DT, DR / National Wildlife Federation, Farmer Champion
3. Provide Soil Stewardship information to area churches <a href="#">2013 Results: information emailed to about 60 churches</a>	April 2014	DK, DR
4. Co-sponsor a workshop for adding conservation language into lease agreements for absentee landowners <a href="#">2013 Results: Extension held workshops in Nov; information provided for LSP women's meetings in June and October</a>	Summer 2014	DR, / NRCS
5. Maintain and update the no-till web page <a href="#">2013 Results: No updates in 2014</a>	Summer 2014	DR, intern / NRCS
6. Conduct a minimum till field day (preferably in cooperation with Winneshiek County SWCD) <a href="#">2013 Results: Winneshiek SWCD did not have a field day in 2013</a>	Summer 2014	DR / NRCS, Winneshiek SWCD
7. Assist with grazing field days, workshops, studies and soil health information programs with NRCS and Extension <a href="#">2013 Results: Helped with 2 soil health webinars plus several field days</a>	Summer/Fall 2014	DT / NRCS, GLCA
8. Investigate funding sources for researching methods for seeding cover crops on commodity crop acres. <a href="#">2013 Results: NA</a>	Fall/Winter 2014	DT, DR
9. Pursue funding to do side-by-side comparisons of various tillage practices <a href="#">2013 Results: Kevin K did a vertical till vs. mulch till comparison with O'Connors</a>	Fall/Winter 2014	DR
10. Partner with Tour de Forage event with Midwest Forage Association.	Summer 2014	DT, J Simon, Board



## Section #2: Water Resources

### Goal: Maintain and Improve Surface and Ground Water Quality

#### Objective #1: Reduce agricultural sources of water pollution

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Provide financial and technical assistance to feedlot operators for feedlot run-off control and ag waste storage facilities. <a href="#">2013 Results: 3 county c/s projects completed</a>	Ongoing	AK, CFO
2. Provide technical assistance to develop new and update existing nutrient and manure management plans. <a href="#">2013 Results: 167 contacts to date; over 66,000 acres with plans</a>	Ongoing	DB
3. Provide support (community readiness survey, data gathering, etc.) for implementation of the MN Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan in Watson Creek and Rush-Pine Creek watersheds using results from the lysimeter network, soil N and basal stalk nitrate tests. <a href="#">2013 Results: Spring soil N and fall basal stalk nitrate test results shared with producers.</a>	Ongoing	DB, DT / MDA, Extension
4. Promote no fall application of nitrogen fertilizer. <a href="#">2013 Results: September Board commentary</a>	Fall 2014	DB, DR, Board
5. Promote practices, such as those that improve soil health, that reduce the need for pesticides. <a href="#">2013 Results: 2 soil health webinars</a>	Ongoing	DT
6. Provide information on the SWCD website about waste pesticide disposal. <a href="#">2013 Results: Information on SWCD website</a>	Ongoing	JS
7. Provide technical assistance for upland treatment and water retention practices to reduce runoff volumes. <a href="#">2013 Results: EQIP and State Cost Share practices</a>	Ongoing	DK, RG, AK

#### Objective #2: Reduce urban sources of water pollution

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Administer the Community Partners Stormwater Mini-Grant Program. <a href="#">2013 Results: 1 project funded, 1 application in progress</a>	Ongoing	JR, DR
2. Administer the SWCD rain barrel program. <a href="#">2013 Results: 13 sold</a>	Ongoing	JR
3. Assist with outreach and demonstrations for reducing volume of and contaminants in urban stormwater, including the designs developed by the Center for Changing Landscapes. <a href="#">2013 Results: NA</a>	Ongoing	JR, JM

### Objective #3: Reduce risk of water pollution from sewage and hazardous materials

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Support the SE MN Wastewater Initiative in Greenleaf to assist homeowners with upgrading their wastewater treatment. <a href="#">2013 Results: Project in progress</a>	Summer 2014	JM, DR
2. Assist with the semi-annual Fillmore County Household Hazardous Waste Collections. <a href="#">2013 Results: Staff helped at both events</a>	May, Oct 2014	Staff
3. Promote the use of farm fuel tank spill containment and automatic shutoff nozzles including setbacks from wells. <a href="#">2013 Results: No activity</a>	July 2014	Staff / Public Health
4. Provide assistance to the county for inspections of new septic systems as needed. <a href="#">2013 Results: No requests</a>	As needed	DR

### Objective #4: Reduce ground water contamination risks due to karst topography

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Assist Fillmore County with enforcement of the county's sinkhole ordinance. <a href="#">2013 Results: Yes</a>	Ongoing	DK, RG
2. Assist Fillmore County with investigating sites for development in the Decorah Shale Overlay District. <a href="#">2013 Results: no requests</a>	Ongoing	JR, DR
3. Provide cost share for sealing abandoned wells. <a href="#">2013 Results: One well sealing contract</a>	Ongoing	DR, RG, DK
4. Assist with dye trace studies and ground water research. <a href="#">2013 Results: Crystal Creek and Bridge Creek traces; staff deploy and retrieve charcoal bugs</a>	Ongoing	JM, JR, intern, DNR
5. Participate in the Technical Evaluation Panel for frac sand mining permit application reviews. <a href="#">2013 Results: Rein Quarry vegetation survey with consultant</a>	As needed	DR, JR / DNR, BWSR

### Objective #5: Participate in watershed management planning and implementation

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Continue partnership with MDA in the Field to Stream Partnership and begin BMP identification and implementation phase in Bridge and Crystal Creek watersheds. <a href="#">2013 Results: Monitoring season from Hell</a>	Ongoing	JM, JR, DR, RG, DK, AK / MDA

2. Continue partnership with MPCA to monitor WPLMN and Continuous Nitrate monitoring sites. <a href="#">2013 Results: WPLMN sites activated in 2013; maintain Cont. N at Lanesboro Hatchery</a>	Ongoing	JM, JR , intern / MPCA
3. Support civic engagement efforts in the Root River watershed (Root River Citizen's Group, Rush-Pine Farmer Led Council, Watson Creek nutrient management study, MDA FSP, etc.) <a href="#">2013 Results: Root River Citizen Conversations in spring 2013; R-P FLC cover crop program; Watson nitrate sampling</a>	March 2014 - ongoing	JM, DR / MPCA, Extension, Winona County & SWCD, MDA
4. Assist with water quality monitoring in the Upper Iowa Watershed <a href="#">2013 Results: First Tuesday of every month; monitor 3 sites</a>	April -Oct 2014	JM, JR
5. Continue to oversee maintenance of the East Willow Creek flood control structures with Fillmore County and NRCS. <a href="#">2013 Results: July tour with County Board and STS crew leader; have prioritized list for maintenance</a>	Spring 2014	RG, DR / Fillmore Co, NRCS
6. Continue to lead the completion of the Root River Comprehensive Strategy. <a href="#">2013 Results: Work in progress, completing MPCA template</a>	June 2014	JM, DR

### Objective #6: Protect drinking water supplies

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Maintain operation of the SWCD Bacteria Testing Lab and provide nitrate testing as requested. <a href="#">2013 Results: &gt;100 Samples analyzed; LWM grant subsidizing lab costs</a>	Ongoing	JM, JR, DR, JS
2. Provide information about resources that assist in making good land use decisions (ex: Geologic Atlas, Root River Landscape Plan, Root River Comprehensive Strategy, etc.) to local officials, homeowners, realtors, lenders, etc. <a href="#">2013 Results: Ongoing</a>	Ongoing	DR, JM
3. Continue to coordinate Fillmore County's participation in the SE MN Domestic Well Network. <a href="#">2013 Results: August sampling round, request to test for additional parameters</a>	Spring, August 2014	JM / SE MN WRB
4. Conduct outreach and education to the Amish population regarding BMPs for petroleum products near wellheads. Tie in with Public Health contacts with the Amish for water testing. <a href="#">2013 Results: No activity</a>	Spring 2014	DR / Public Health
5. Conduct at least two nitrate testing clinics <a href="#">2013 Results: Chatfield in March; Mabel Farmer's Market in May; County Fair in July</a>	Summer 2014	JM / Public Health
6. Provide information on water treatment systems as requested. <a href="#">2013 Results: As needed</a>	As needed	JM
7. Review Canton and Harmony Wellhead Protection Plans and provide assistance as needed. <a href="#">2013 Results: Notice of plans received; Chatfield septic systems class March 19</a>	As needed	JM, DR / Public Water Suppliers

## Section #3: Healthy Natural Communities

### Goal: Promote land stewardship to preserve and improve natural areas

#### Objective #1: Promote practices that enhance high quality permanent vegetative cover

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Administer the District Tree Program. <a href="#">2013 Results: Successful year</a>	Ongoing	JS, RG, AK
2. Administer District Windbreak Program. <a href="#">2013 Results: NA</a>	Ongoing	RG
3. Oversee development of Comprehensive Stewardship Plans in Conservation Opportunity Areas identified in the Root River Landscape Stewardship Plan. <a href="#">2013 Results: Root River Landscape Plan completed; 3 Comprehensive Stewardship Plans completed; 2 field days held</a>	March 2014	DR
4. Sponsor annual Forestry Field Day. <a href="#">2013 Results: Field day held in July</a>	July 2014	DR, RG, Intern, Forestry Committee
5. Promote the use of a seed mixture for rain gardens and CSP/EQIP pollinator species habitat plantings. Post a list of available vendors on the SWCD website along with pictures of successful plantings. Investigate use of native plants on mound systems. <a href="#">2013 Results: none</a>	Spring 2014	JR, JS
6. Promote invasive species control, such as buckthorn control, including follow-up management after EQIP contracts at Forestry field day. <a href="#">2013 Results: Forestry Field Day</a>	July 2014	JR, RG, DK
7. Promote the Living Snow Fence Program and other snow fence options with MnDOT and the county to identify areas suitable for the practice. <a href="#">2013 Results: none</a>	As needed	JR, RG, DK
8. Investigate permaculture practices and post information on the SWCD website about permaculture. Consider partnering with Lanesboro Local to promote a tour to a permaculture farm. <a href="#">2013 Results: none</a>	As needed	JS, DR
9. Pursue funding from MN Forest Resources Council for a Forestry Intern in cooperation with DNR	Spring 2014	DR, Forestry Committee/DNR Forestry

## Objective #2: Enhance the benefits of wetlands, floodplains and shoreland

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Administer the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act and associated activities (wetland banking, restorations, etc.) <a href="#">2013 Results: Yes</a>	Ongoing	JR, JM, DR
2. Identify areas lacking a vegetative buffer in the shoreland impact zone and promote establishment of buffers to the landowners utilizing CRP, RIM or other programs. <a href="#">2013 Results: None</a>	Ongoing	JR, RG, DK
3. Work with Legislators to restore funding for the Wetland Preservation Area Program. <a href="#">2013 Results: Day at the Capitol</a>	May 2014	DR, Board / BWSR, MASWCD

## Objective #3: Conduct education and outreach activities that promote land and water stewardship

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Update and maintain the SWCD website. <a href="#">2013 Results: Yes</a>	Ongoing	JS, DR, Staff
2. Hold 3-6 meetings of the Local Water Management Plan Technical Committee & Citizens' Advisory Committee. <a href="#">2013 Results: Yes</a>	Ongoing	JM
3. Submit monthly commentaries from the Board to the local newspapers about SWCD priorities. <a href="#">2013 Results: Board commentaries in the local papers June-Dec</a>	Ongoing	DR, Board
4. Publish annual newspaper insert and at least two online newsletters. <a href="#">2013 Results: Newspaper insert in Jan; purchased ads in July; 2 online newsletters</a>	Annually	DR, JS, Staff, /NRCS, MDA
5. Select and promote a county Outstanding Conservationist (from District 1 in 2014) and other award candidates. Hold annual recognition event. <a href="#">2013 Results: January event at Pedal Pushers; Willfords selected in 2013</a>	Annually	Staff, Board
6. Sponsor the annual 6th Grade Conservation Day. <a href="#">2013 Results: Yes, held Sept 18<sup>th</sup></a>	Annually	RG, Staff
7. Support and assist with the Area 7 Envirothon. <a href="#">2013 Results: Yes</a>	Annually	RG
8. Promote and provide two \$500 scholarships, one to a graduating senior and one to a returning college student. <a href="#">2013 Results: Yes</a>	Annually	JS, DR, Board
9. Provide information on natural resources conservation at the county fair. <a href="#">2013 Results: Yes</a>	Annually	JS, AK, Staff, Board

10. Participate in Ag in the Classroom, Earth Day and other activities in the schools and contact the schools twice a year to encourage them to utilize SWCD staff as presenters. <a href="#">2013 Results: Ag in the Classroom at Kingsland, Earth Day at Lanesboro, need contact list for schools</a>	Annually	JM, DR, Staff
11. Contact schools and home schooled students regarding participation in the MASWCD poster, mural and video contests. <a href="#">2013 Results: No</a>	Annually	DR
12. Promote the MPCA Citizen Stream Monitoring Program. <a href="#">2013 Results: Newspaper insert article</a>	Annually	JM, DR
13. Coordinate the Volunteer Precipitation Monitoring Network. <a href="#">2013 Results: Yes, one new volunteer in 2013</a>	Annually	DK
14. Work with the FFA and 4H organizations to promote soil conservation and to provide information about BMPs, careers, forestry, water testing, etc. Invite to field days (establish email list for FFA and 4-H). <a href="#">2013 Results: No</a>	Spring/Fall 2014	Staff
15. Provide opportunities for Board members to visit or tour sites where conservation practices are being implemented. <a href="#">2013 Results: No</a>	Spring/Fall 2014	Staff, Board
16. Distribute information to hunter safety classes (including Eagle Bluff) about how to reduce tree damage from tree stands. <a href="#">2013 Results: Attempted</a>	Spring 2014	DR, DNR
17. Communicate with state and federal legislators about conservation programs and their effectiveness. <a href="#">2013 Results: Resolution re: crop insurance/compliance; Day at the Capitol</a>	Spring 2014	DR, Staff, Board
18. Schedule a canoe trip/streambank tour for Board and staff on the Root River to view areas of special interest. <a href="#">2013 Results: No</a>	Summer 2014	Staff
19. Continue sponsoring the awards for forestry and other conservation practices through 4H and work with the leaders to encourage better participation in these programs among their members. <a href="#">2013 Results: Yes</a>	July 2014	Board
20. Coordinate efforts with the Bluff Country Hiking Club to maintain interpretive information for the Lost Creek Hiking Trail. <a href="#">2013 Results: Forestry field day in July; Grant for CCM crew awarded; completed erosion control steps in June</a>	Summer 2014	DR, RG, intern, Forestry Committee
21. Coordinate activities with other conservation organizations that help meet the goals of the SWCD (e.g. Eagle Bluff, Project Get Outdoors, Land Stewardship Project, National Trout Center, The Nature Conservancy, etc.) <a href="#">2013 Results: LSP cover crop field days - March, November</a>	As needed	Staff, Board
22. Provide scholarships or incentives to attend local or regional educational events that are consistent with the SWCD's mission. <a href="#">2013 Results: Promoted LSP trip to STRIPS study at Ames</a>	As needed	Staff, Board
23. Partner with U of M Extension demonstrating use of various species of cover crops and grasses with alfalfa to evaluate feed value.	Summer 2014	DT, B Hazel
24. Set up SWCD Facebook account and maintain with current information.	Spring 2014	JS, DR

## Section #4: SWCD Capacity

### Goal: Maintain the efficient use of District resources and staff

#### Objective #1: Support staff and Board activities that increase the District's capacity

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Provide funding for employee and supervisor training and development as budgeted. <a href="#">2013 Results: Yes</a>	Ongoing	Staff, Board
2. Conduct annual performance evaluations and review staff work plans. <a href="#">2013 Results: 6 out of 8 completed</a>	Ongoing	DR
3. Support staff and supervisor attendance at meetings of regional organizations that help achieve SWCD goals (BALMM, SE MN Water Resources Board). <a href="#">2013 Results: Yes</a>	Ongoing	Staff, Board
4. Administer the Ag BMP Loan Program. <a href="#">2013 Results: 5 ag waste loans, 7 septic system loans, 2 no-till equip loans</a>	Ongoing	AK, DR
6. Attend County Department Head and Technology Committee meetings. <a href="#">2013 Results: Yes</a>	Ongoing	DR
7. Annually review and approve the District By-Laws. <a href="#">2013 Results: Yes</a>	Annually	Board
8. Financially support the Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) including SE Area 7, the Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees (MACDE), including the SE Area 7, the SE MN SWCD Technical Support Joint Powers Board, Hiawatha Valley RC&D Council, and the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). <a href="#">2013 Results: Yes</a>	Annually	Board
9. Continue participation in the DNR Observation Well Network. <a href="#">2013 Results: Yes</a>	March-Nov 2014	DK
10. Participate in Local Work Group for federal programs (EQIP, CRP, etc.) <a href="#">2013 Results: Yes – July</a>	Summer 2014	DR / NRCS
11. Conduct joint meetings with the County Board and neighboring SWCD's every two years. <a href="#">2013 Results: Joint meeting with Co. Board in January</a>	Neighboring SWCD in 2014	DR, Board
12. Pursue funding to hire a summer intern to assist with SWCD projects and programs. <a href="#">2013 Results: Yes</a>	Nov. 2014	DR, Personnel Committee

## Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District

### Comprehensive Plan Addendum-High Priority Issues and Special Projects

#### **High Priority Erosion Problems**

The rolling and often steep topography of the county creates erosion problems if proper land use practices are not used. The Fillmore SWCD has targeted and will continue to target the majority of its state cost-share funds to the construction of grassed waterways that will minimize gully erosion. The remainder of the funds will continue to be used for such practices as terraces and gully control structures. Priority for these projects will be given to projects that have upland treatment of cropland that maintains soil loss to T or less as determined by NRCS RUSLE2 calculations. The Root River water quality studies are helping to identify areas for prioritization. Updating USDA HEL conservation plans will also identify areas of need for conservation practices.

#### **High Priority Water Quality Problems**

High priority water quality problems and their primary sources identified in the Fillmore County Local Water Management plan are listed below. Strategies for reducing water quality problems from these sources are embedded in the actions above as part of ongoing SWCD programs and special projects listed below.

##### **Turbidity (sediment)**

Primary sources: Upland erosion from agricultural fields  
Stream bank erosion due to high flows and floods  
Urban storm water runoff adding sediment and increasing flow volumes

##### **Fecal coliform bacteria**

Primary sources: Feedlot runoff  
Manure applications  
Malfunctioning septic systems

##### **Nitrates**

Primary sources: Nitrogen fertilizer applications  
Manure applications  
Malfunctioning septic systems

##### **Pesticides**

Primary sources: Row crop pesticide applications  
Urban storm water runoff



## Special Projects

### The Fillmore SWCD Windbreak Program:

- Cost share rate is 50% per tree based on the cost of potted stock offered by the SWCD; up to a maximum of \$1000.

### Area 7 Soil Health Coordinator:

- Funded by FY2014 Clean Water Fund Shared Services Grant to the SE SWCD Technical JPB.
- Will be housed in the Fillmore SWCD office to offer technical assistance for managed grazing, cover crops and other soil health practices in 11 counties with support from NRCS, the SWCDs and other local organizations.
- The Nature Conservancy and Land Stewardship Project are strong partners in promoting cover crops. TNC funding for cover crops in Rush-Pine watershed will be available again in 2014.
- National Wildlife Federation Cover Crop Champions Grant for the Coordinator to work with a Farmer Champion to promote cover crops. Activities include a meeting with 10-20 local agronomists and a field day.

### USDA HEL Conservation Plan updates:

- Updates will continue by staff partially funded by NRCS MRBI technical assistance contribution agreement and the FY2014 BWSR Soil Erosion Compliance Grant.
- The goal of 38,000 acres planned with NRCS funding is on track to be achieved by August 2014.
- The BWSR grant goal is 40,000 acres by the end of 2015.
- Planning assistance helps landowners identify conservation needs leading to implementation of practices.

### Nutrient Management:

- Support strategies in the MN Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan in focus areas in the county
- Continue to evaluate nitrogen management tools for producers in Watson Creek and Rush-Pine Creek watersheds.
- Pursue funding to continue staffing Nutrient Management Specialist positions through the SE SWCD Technical Support JPB.
- Coordinate sampling activities for the SE MN Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network

### Community Partners Grant for Storm Water Mini-grants:

- FY2013 Clean Water Fund Grant for \$45,000 for funding and technical assistance to cities, non-profits, school, youth and community groups to promote and install practices that reduce and filter storm water from urban and developed areas.
- Eligible practices include rain barrels, rain gardens, pervious pavers, stormwater basins and swales, and native buffers.
- The Local Water Management Plan Technical Committee developed program criteria. The SWCD Board will have final approval of the projects to be funded.
- One grant funded in 2013; a second application is in progress.
- Two funding application deadlines in 2014 are May 2nd and August 1st.

Farm Bill Assistance:

- Expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract numbers remain high in 2014 at over 100 contracts.
- Farm Bill Assistance Grant funding was doubled in 2013-14 for a 0.5 FTE to do plans for re-enrollment.
- Maintaining CRP buffers, waterways and perennial cover in sensitive areas is a priority.

Feedlots:

- Complete runoff control projects utilizing Clean Water Fund grants, 319 grants and County low-cost fix grants

Root River Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS):

- Complete the Comprehensive Strategy table for all impairments in the watershed.
- Hold seven Citizen Conversations to gain public input on proposed local strategies.

Root River Watershed monitoring:

MPCA Watershed Pollutant Load Monitoring Network:

- Two SWCD staff partially funded for monitoring activities at five sites in the watershed

MPCA SE MN WRAPS Nitrogen Planning

- Maintain three continuous monitoring stations at Lanesboro Fish Hatchery and collect grab samples once a month.

MDA Root River Field to Stream Partnership:

- Two SWCD staff partially funded for monitoring activities.
- SWCD technicians will begin to work with farmers in 2014 to identify conservation needs with implementation starting in 2015. Future monitoring will measure BMP effectiveness by comparing to baseline data collected in the first five years of the project.

Root River Landscape Stewardship Plan:

- The SWCD entered into an agreement with the MN DNR to administer and coordinate the development of Comprehensive Stewardship Plans by a private consultant working with 10 landowners in two high priority Conservation Opportunity Areas identified in the Root River Landscape Plan.

Summer Intern:

- Application submitted to Conservation Corps Minnesota to be a worksite for an apprentice position. If the position is not available, the SWCD will fund the position.
- The intern will gain experience with water quality monitoring, doing outreach and education on forestry and storm water management, data management for the bacteria testing lab, and implementing conservation practices.
- With the SWCD Forestry Committee, information and educational resources for the Lost Creek Hiking Trail will continue (garlic mustard kiosks installed, brochure updates, permanent tree ID signs), and the annual field day will be held at Isinours Forestry Unit.