

Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District



2017 ANNUAL PLAN

2/16/2017

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~~ **Root River Comprehensive Watershed 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~~ **Root River Comprehensive Watershed 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.

	SWCD Partners	Cooperative Projects and Programs
Federal	NRCS	EQIP (MRBI, RCPP), CSP, Local Work Group
	FSA	CRP, CCRP
State	BWSR	Grant funds (General Services, Easement Services, Conservation Delivery, Farm Bill Assistance, Feedlot Water Quality, Clean Water Fund), WCA Technical Evaluation Panel, RIM/CREP, Root River One Watershed, One Plan
	MPCA	Watershed Pollutant Load Monitoring Network (WPLMN), Citizen Stream Monitoring Program (CSMP)
	MDA	Ag BMP Loan Program, Root River Field to Stream Partnership monitoring grant, BWSR Clean Water Fund Phase II Implementation grant and Targeted Watershed grant, SE MN Nitrogen BMP Outreach, Township Nitrate Testing grant
	DNR	Springshed mapping, Observation Well Network, water permit review, Root River Landscape Stewardship Plan, SE Landscape Committee, Minnesota State Climatology Office Precipitation Monitoring Program, SWCD Forestry Committee and Field Day partner, Healthy Forests for Healthy Water grant
	MDH	Wellhead Protection Area Plans
	MASWCD	Envirothon; Outstanding Conservationist awards
	Grazing Lands Conservation Association	Grazing field days; soil health partner
	MN Milk Producers	Soil health partner
	MN Farmers Union	Soil health partner
	Lakeside Foods	Soil health partner
	Pinnacle Foods	Soil health partner
	Seneca Foods	Soil health partner
	SE MN Forage Council	Soil health partner
	CPS-Harmony	Soil health partner
	U of M Extension	Grazing Gazette, Ag in the Classroom, nutrient management/N BMP outreach
	Conservation Corps MN	Apprenticeship program, crew projects
Regional	SE MN Water Resources Board	Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network, 319 Feedlot Grants, SE MN Wastewater Initiative
	SE SWCD Technical JPB	Nutrient Management Specialist grant, N BMP Outreach Grant, BWSR SE MN Soil Health grant, BWSR LCCMR SE MN Cover Crop and Soil Health Initiative, engineering assistance, RCPP/BWSR Feedlot Grant
	BALMM	Network for sharing information and regional think tank
	Hiawatha Valley RC&D	Cover crops, grazing, civic engagement support
Local	Fillmore County	Root River One Watershed, One Plan, Local Water Management delegation,

		Wetland Conservation Act delegation, Feedlot Program technical support, Soil loss Ordinance, Sinkhole Ordinance, Decorah Shale Overlay District, Frac Sand Technical Evaluation Panel, Household Hazardous Waste collections, East Willow Creek flood control structures
	Watershed projects	Root River One Watershed, One Plan coordination, Rush-Pine Farmer Led Council, The Nature Conservancy (TNC): Root River Healthy Forests for Healthy Water grant, Upper Iowa River Watershed: Water quality monitoring
	Land Stewardship Project (LSP):	Soil health, women landowner workshops
	National Wildlife Federation	Cover Crop Champion Grants
	National Trout Center	Nitrate clinic, education
	4-H	Sponsor County Fair awards
	Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center	Friends of the Root River educational activities; promote Land Ethic workshops
	Bluff Country Hiking Club	Lost Creek Hiking Trail interpretive signs and brochure
	Friends of the Root River	Citizen group

2017 Annual Plan Outline

Soil Resources **7**

Goal #1: Control soil erosion and sustain soil productivity.....7

Objective #1: Provide funding and technical resources for soil erosion BMP's.....7

- Assist with implementing practices identified in USDA Conservation Plans and updating plans as requested.
- Assist landowners with enrollment in CRP.
- Program and practice implementation (Federal, State, District technical and financial assistance).
- Assist with county soil loss ordinance.
- Identification of high priority areas used for implementing BMPs in the Field to Stream Partnership study watersheds.
- SWCD funding for set aside acres for summer construction.
- Establish and maintain permanent vegetation and native plant species for vegetative buffers in sensitive areas; buffer law implementation.

Objective #2: Conduct education and outreach activities about soil resources.....8

- Field days, workshops in partnership with other organizations for women landowners, soil health, cover crop use, N management
- Grazing Gazette
- Soil stewardship materials
- Conduct research and field trials related to soil health and nutrient management

Water Resources **9**

Goal #2: Maintain and improve surface and groundwater quality.....9

Objective #1: Reduce sources of agricultural pollution.....9

- Animal feedlots/manure storage technical and financial assistance
- Nutrient and manure management planning and practices
- Practices to reduce runoff volumes
- Pesticide reduction and disposal practices

Objective #2: Reduce urban sources of water pollution.....9

- Administer rain barrel program
- Outreach and demonstrations about reducing urban storm water volume and contaminants

Objective #3: Reduce risk of water pollution from sewage and hazardous materials.....10

- Sewage and wastewater
- Hazardous waste disposal

Objective #4: Reduce ground water contamination risk due to karst topography.....10

- Fillmore County sinkhole ordinance
- Fillmore County Decorah shale overlay ordinance
- Well sealing
- Ground-water mapping projects
- Frac sand mining application reviews

Objective #5: Participate in watershed management planning and implementation.....10

- Monitoring activities and studies (MDA, MPCA, DNR, Upper Iowa)
- MDA Root River Field to Stream Partnership Phase II implementation activities
- East Willow Creek flood control structures
- Root River civic engagement efforts
- Root River One Watershed, One Plan implementation

Objective #6: Protect drinking water supplies.....11

- SWCD Bacteria Testing Lab
- SE MN Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network
- Wellhead Protection Plans
- Nitrate clinics and other drinking water protection information to a variety of audiences
- MDA Township Nitrate Testing Program

Healthy Natural Communities **12**

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

Objective #1: Promote practices that enhance high quality permanent vegetative cover.....12

- District Tree Program and Windbreak Program
- Permanent, diverse native species vegetation (e.g. pollinator habitat) and invasive species control
- Annual Forestry Field Day
- Root River Landscape Stewardship Plan—Healthy Forests for Healthy Water project
- Living Snow Fence program
- Permaculture information
- Decorah Shale monitoring project

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

- MN Wetland Conservation Act and associated activities
- Provide assistance for landowner compliance with the MN Buffer Law and Shoreland Ordinance

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

- Utilize media: newspaper ads, news releases, newspaper insert, commentaries, newsletters, radio ads, PSA’s, website, Facebook
- Outstanding Conservationist and volunteer recognition
- Two annual Scholarships
- Annual events: 6th Grade Conservation Field Day, Envirothon, Ag in the Classroom, Earth Day, County Fair
- School presentations and activities
- Coordination of activities with other organizations (Bluff Country Hiking Club, LSP, 4-H, FFA, rain gauge monitors, CSMP, Ag Water Quality Certification Program, DNR Observation Well Network, etc.)
- Canoe trip/streambank tour for Board and staff; conservation practice site visits with Board
- Communication with Federal and State legislators

SWCD Capacity **15**

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
- Coordination of 1W1P implementation efforts with watershed LGU partners.
- Improve technology capacity
- Provide internship opportunities

Fillmore County Soil and Water Conservation District: 2017 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
<p>1. Assist landowners and operators with practices identified for implementation in their USDA Conservation Plans and with plan updates as requested.</p> <p>2016 Results: 3 plans completed for 339.2 acres; developed 108 CRP conservation plans for 2301.68 acres (94 HEL plans for 1917.59 acres); assisted with field work for 8 grassed waterways, 2 terrace/tile, 1 survey for sediment basin; assisted 15 landowners with copies of plans for MDA reports, 4 soils maps, 3 crop rotation/practice questions.</p>	Ongoing	AK, CF / NRCS
<p>2. Assist landowners with enrollment into CRP or to re-enroll expiring CRP contracts.</p> <p>2016 Results: Farm Bill Assistance (512 hrs.) 138 contracts completed for 2,816.47 acres + plans completed in 1. above</p>	Ongoing	CF / NRCS, FSA
<p>3. Assist landowners with establishment of practices through the State Cost Program and NRCS EQIP.</p> <p>2016 Results: State Programs- Rick's time 37%, Doug's time 14% Federal Programs- Rick's time 23%, Doug's time 74% State cost share projects completed: FY15: 1,115' grassed waterway (1) and 900' terrace with 522' tile (1); FY16: 1150' terrace (1) and 4,445' grassed waterway (3). EQIP: 9,069' waterways (4) and 7,425' terraces (2)</p>	Ongoing	RG, DK, DT, AK
<p>4. Assist Fillmore County with enforcement of the county's Soil Loss Control Ordinance.</p> <p>2016 Results: none referred from the county</p>	Ongoing	DK, RG / Fillmore County
<p>5. Continue to use results from LiDAR and Stream Power Index and farm walkovers for implementing programs and practices in FSP watersheds.</p> <p>2016 Results: Field to Stream Partnership: Clean Water Fund grant: 15,192' waterways (8), 2 sediment basins; MRBI-EQIP: 8,700' waterways (2). Targeted Watershed Grant awarded for Headwaters study watershed and Crystal Creek E-3 structure maintenance.</p>	Ongoing	RG, DK, AK / MDA
<p>6. Assist landowners with implementing cover crops, managed grazing and other soil health practices. Provide Dean's contact information to cash contributors' to soil health grant; encourage them to send to their producers/members.</p> <p>2016 Results: 13,580 acres with EQIP and around 3240 acres seeded on their own; District program: 611.57 acres seeded, 8 contracts (2 multi-species); LCCMR 3 contracts in Fillmore County for 221.72 acres</p>	Ongoing	DT / NRCS, Extension
<p>7. Provide SWCD funds for set aside acres for summer construction of grassed waterways and other practices</p> <p>2016 Results: One summer construction set aside project for 8.4 acres</p>	Annually	RG, DK
<p>8. Assist with establishing and maintaining vegetative buffers in sensitive areas such as shoreland, sinkholes and HEL, utilizing existing conservation programs including RIM and CRP; provide technical assistance for state buffer law compliance</p> <p>2016 Results: Aerial photo reviews were completed for over 2800 parcels. Fillmore County parcels are currently 85% compliant. General information letter was sent out in July to 1551 landowners. There have been numerous landowner contacts. Data is being entered into the statewide database (BuffCAT).</p>	Ongoing	RG, DK, CF

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

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Publish the Grazing Gazette with Extension 2016 Results: 6 issues published and distributed to about 1300 recipients. The newsletter is being forwarded and linked to many other recipients especially in other states.	Every 2 months	DT / Extension
3. Provide Soil Stewardship information to area churches, if available. 2016 Results: NACD did not produce materials for churches in 2016. Governor's Water Week information was posted on Facebook.	April 2017	DK, DR
4. Co-sponsor a workshop for women landowners in partnership with Land Stewardship Project, if funded. 2016 Results: Not completed	Summer 2017	DR / LSP
6. Assist with soil health (including grazing and minimum/no till) field days, workshops, studies and soil health information programs with NRCS and Extension 2015 Results: Attended 5 meetings of the Mower/Fillmore Soil Health Team; did 20 presentations at workshops, field days, etc. 2 interviews with AgriNews and LSP.	Summer/Fall 2017	DT / NRCS, GLCA, Extension
7. Investigate methods for seeding cover crops on commodity crop acres in partnership with BWSR utilizing LCCMR grant. 2016 Results: 2 winter workshops held in 2016; 3 cost share contracts signed and 221.72 acres seeded in Fillmore County.	Ongoing	DT, DR
8. Conduct side-by-side comparisons of various tillage practices and N practices (SE MN N BMP Outreach) 2016 Results: 19 plots installed and monitored. Winter producer meetings held in December.	Spring-Fall 2017	JB
9. Partner with Tour de Forage event with Midwest Forage Association. 2016 Results: Completed	Summer 2017	DT, 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. 2016 Results: 3-319 projects completed; also assisted CFO with 21 feedlot compliance inspections.	Ongoing	AK, CFO
2. Provide technical assistance to develop new and update existing nutrient and manure management plans. 2016 Results: 9 new plans completed, 23 plans updated plus ongoing work to update additional plans.	Ongoing	JB
3. Conduct activities in the SE MN N BMP Outreach grant work plan supporting the implementation of the MN Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan. Continue to work with producers in Watson Creek and Rush-Pine Creek watersheds. 2016 Results: Communication with POET, MDA and local fertilizer dealer regarding MN Corn Growers grant for demonstrating use of Veris equipment, variable rate technology, and other nutrient management tools.	Ongoing	JB / MDA, Extension
5. Promote practices, such as those that improve soil health, that reduce the need for pesticides. 2016 Results: included with other soil health education	Ongoing	DT
6. Provide information on the SWCD website about waste pesticide disposal. 2016 Results: Information on SWCD website	Ongoing	JS

7. Provide technical assistance for upland treatment and water retention practices to reduce runoff volumes; priority to the FSP watersheds following farm walkovers. 2016 Results: 2 water/sediment basins installed in Bridge Creek.	Ongoing	DK, RG, AK
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Objective #2: Reduce urban sources of water pollution

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Administer the SWCD rain barrel program. 2016 Results: 9 sold	Ongoing	JR
2. Pursue funding for community assessments and outreach and demonstrations for reducing volume of and contaminants in urban stormwater, including the designs developed by the Center for Changing Landscapes. 2016 Results: Rain garden project completed with Conservation Corps crew at the Fillmore County Office Building using TNC funds to pay for some of the plants. Applied for Clean Water Fund Grant for Rushford-Peterson School-not approved.	Ongoing	JR, DR

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

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Support the SE MN Wastewater Initiative to assist homeowners with upgrading their wastewater treatment. 2016 Results: Provided well information for the proposed project in Cherry Grove.	As needed	JR, DR
2. Assist with the semi-annual Fillmore County Household Hazardous Waste Collections. 2016 Results: Staff helped at both events in May and October	May, Oct 2017	Staff

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. 2016 Results: Yes, inquiries addressed	Ongoing	DK, RG
2. Assist Fillmore County with investigating sites for development in the Decorah Shale Overlay District; review ordinance with Zoning staff. 2016 Results: no requests	Ongoing	JR, CF
3. Provide cost share for sealing abandoned wells. 2016 Results: No funding requests in 2016.	Ongoing	DR, RG, DK
4. Assist with dye trace studies and ground water research. 2016 Results: Assisted MDA with dye trace study in Crystal Creek and Upper Iowa watersheds; ongoing nitrate sampling of springs in Crystal Creek watershed.	Ongoing	JR, CF, intern/ DNR, U of M
5. Participate in the Technical Evaluation Panel for frac sand mining permit application reviews. 2016 Results: No permit applications in 2016	As needed	DR, CF / 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 with monitoring and the BMP implementation phase in the Headwaters, Bridge and Crystal Creek watersheds in cooperation with Root River and Mower SWCDs. 2016 Results: Water quality monitoring continues. Walkovers completed with farmers in the Headwaters. Targeted Watershed grant awarded; three Headwaters projects using state funding and 2 EQIP applications for three projects.	Ongoing	CF, JR, DR, RG, DK, AK / MDA
2. Continue partnership with MPCA to monitor Watershed Pollutant Load Monitoring Network (WPLMN) sites. 2016 Results: WPLMN completed for the sampling season.	Ongoing	CF, JR, intern / MPCA
3. Support civic engagement efforts in the Root River watershed (Friends of the Root River , Rush-Pine Farmer Led Council, Watson Creek nutrient management BMP implementation, MDA FSP, etc.) 2015 Results: MSU meeting with Watson Creek producers in July; NMP specialist attended Rush-Pine meeting; Friends of the Root River forms non-profit and implements Community Partners stormwater mini-grant for rain barrel promotion.	Ongoing	JR, DR, JB, Extension, MPCA, Winona Co.
4. Assist with water quality monitoring in the Upper Iowa Watershed. 2016 Results: Completed Upper Iowa sampling once per month (April-October) in cooperation with IA DNR. Completed final sampling at 2 SWAG sites and E. coli testing.	April -Oct 2017	CF, JR
5. Continue to oversee maintenance of the East Willow Creek flood control structures with Fillmore County and NRCS; coordinate maintenance for E-3 structure using Targeted Watershed grant. 2016 Results: No immediate maintenance needs in 2016; meeting with MDA staff in July re: E-3 project	Ongoing	RG, DR / Fillmore Co./ NRCS
6. Coordinate implementation activities for the Root River One Watershed, One Plan; facilitate 1W1P Advisory Committee meetings (1-2/year), coordinate quarterly Policy Committee and Planning Work Group meetings, create 1-2 page plan summary, and run PTMApp and validate results. 2016 Results: Root River 1W1P completed; approved by BWSR Board and Policy Committee; staff provided coordination. Preparations for Year 1 implementation in 2017.	Ongoing	JR, 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. 2016 Results: Ongoing lab services maintained; 185 total samples analyzed. Internal and external audits completed. Ongoing nitrate screening provided.	Ongoing	CF, JR, DR, JS
2. Continue to coordinate Fillmore County's participation in the SE MN Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network. 2015 Results: Mailing list updated for the lab.	Ongoing	JR / SE MN WRB
5. Conduct at least two nitrate testing clinics. 2016 Results: 4 Nitrate clinics at the National Trout Center (Feb. 20), Public Health (March 22), Harmony (March 26), and Lanesboro EMS open house (April 21); all held in partnership with Public Health radon clinics.	Spring/Summer 2017	JR / Public Health
6. Provide information on water treatment systems as requested. 2016 Results: As needed	As needed	JR
7. Review Wellhead Protection Plans and provide assistance as needed	As needed	DR, JR / Public Water Suppliers

2016 Results: Notice of plans received in 2016 from Canton and Ostrander; attended public meetings for Rushford Village and Spring Valley. Provided information to the City of Ostrander. Attended public presentation sponsored by the City of Chatfield.

8. Fulfill contract requirements for the MDA Township Testing Program.	2017	CF, DR
2016 Results: NA		

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. 2016 Results: Successful year: 10,770 trees sold; profit of \$8,913	Ongoing	JS, RG, AK
2. Administer District Windbreak Program. 2016 Results: 1 contract paid for \$384.	Ongoing	RG
3. Oversee grant for development of Forest Stewardship Plans and Conservation Practice Plans in Riceford Creek and Rush-Pine Creek watersheds for the Healthy Forests for Healthy Water project, which implements strategies in the Root River Landscape Stewardship Plan. 2016 Results: 6 landowners signed contracts for 11 practices; 9 practices were completed and paid	Ongoing	DR
4. Sponsor annual Forestry Field Day. 2016 Results: Field day held July 27 at Forestville State Park; about 50-60 attended	July 2017	DR, RG, Intern, Forestry Committee
5. Promote the use of a plants and CSP/EQIP pollinator species habitat plantings. Post a list of available vendors on the SWCD website along with pictures of successful plantings. Investigate the use of native plants on mound systems. Add information with update of SWCD website. 2016 Results: No activity	Ongoing	JR, JS, CF
6. Promote invasive species control, such as buckthorn. Investigate forming a Cooperative Weed Management Area with other local partners and accessing BWSR grants for implementation. 2016 Results: CWMA topic at Forestry Committee meeting in January with partners.	Ongoing	DR, RG, DK, Forestry Committee
7. Provide support to the Living Snow Fence Program and other snow fence options with MnDOT and the county to identify areas suitable for the practice as opportunities become available. 2016 Results: None State does the promotion.	As needed	CF, RG, DK
8. Investigate permaculture practices and post information on the SWCD website about permaculture. 2016 Results: No activity	As needed	DR, CF
10. Monitor Decorah Shale outcrop on Timm property on County Road 5 following planting of deep-rooted natives to stabilize slumping area that periodically fills the road ditch 2016 results: Site visit completed in July to survey site to evaluate slumping.	Ongoing	DR, RG, / TNC, County Highway, Timm family

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.); pursue shared staffing for WCA with neighboring counties 2016 Results: See WCA annual report to BWSR; Fischer, Ronnenberg and Rasmussen serve on the TEP; discussions held with Winona and Wabasha SWCDs and counties re: WCA shared services position.	Ongoing	CF, JR, DR
2. Identify areas lacking a vegetative buffer in the shoreland impact zone and promote establishment of buffers. Educate landowners about the buffer law and work with them to achieve compliance. 2016 Results: Staff attended 2 webinars regarding the Buffer Mapping Initiative and the HEI Alternative Practices, 3 meetings including the landowner meeting July 28 in Fountain attended by 83 people. Articles in newspaper insert and in Conservation Chronicles.	Ongoing	RG, AK, CF

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 and Facebook page. Redesign the website to better reflect SWCD programs. Include a link to the No Till Farmer website. 2016 Results: Yes. 1W1P updates and information were posted on the website.	Ongoing	JS, DR, Staff
2. Hold meetings of the Root River One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) Advisory Committee 2016 Results: No meetings of the LWM committees held during 1W1P process	Ongoing	JR
3. Submit periodic news releases or commentaries from the Board to the local newspapers about SWCD priorities. See list of topics and activities for the 75 th anniversary celebration throughout the year. 2016 Results: 3 submitted	Ongoing	DR, Board
4. Publish annual newspaper insert and at least two online newsletters. 2016 Results: Newspaper insert published in February in the Bluff Country Reader as pages within the newspaper; 2 online newsletters completed in 2016.	Annually	DR, JS, Staff
5. Select and promote a county Outstanding Conservationist (from District 4 in 2017) and other award candidates. Hold annual recognition event. 2016 Results: January event at the Branding Iron; Jeff and Norman Eickhoff selected, and they attended the state convention.	Annually	Staff, Board
6. Sponsor the annual 6th Grade Conservation Day. 2016 Results: Plans made for September 20, but the event got rained out.	Annually	RG, Staff
7. Assist with annual Farm Safety Day Camp. 2016 Results: Dean assisted in 2016.	Annually	DT, Staff
8. Support and assist with the Area 7 Envirothon. 2016 Results: Rick attended the planning meetings and helped at the Area event.	Annually	RG
9. Promote and provide two \$500 scholarships, one to a graduating senior and one to a returning college student. 2016 Results: Both scholarships awarded.	Annually	JS, DR, Board
10. Provide information on natural resources conservation at the county fair. 2016 Results: Location in the Commercial Building; landscape model from Winona State University was set up.	Annually	JS, AK, Staff, Board

11. Participate in Ag in the Classroom, Earth Day and other activities in the schools and communities. Contact the schools to encourage them to utilize SWCD staff as presenters and plan other activities. 2016 Results: No school presentations requested in 2016.	Annually	JR, DR, Staff
12. Promote the MPCA Citizen Stream Monitoring Program. 2016 Results: No activity	Annually	JR, DR
13. Coordinate the Volunteer Precipitation Monitoring Network. 2016 Results: Yes, volunteer data collected and submitted to the state.	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. Demonstrate the rain simulator at the FFA soils competition. Invite students to job shadow with staff. 2015 Results: Contacts with Fillmore Central FFA advisor by Board member; new Vo-Ag teacher at Fillmore Central attended Board meeting	Spring/Fall 2017	Staff
15. Provide opportunities for Board members to visit or tour sites where conservation practices are being implemented. Create a list of practices/projects of interest.	Spring-Fall 2017	Staff
16. Distribute information to hunter safety classes about how to reduce tree damage from tree stands. 2016 Results: Yes, information provided to the Spring Valley class in March.	Spring 2017	DR, DNR
17. Communicate with state and federal legislators about conservation programs and their effectiveness. 2016 Results: Day at the Capitol attended by Administrator	Spring 2017	DR, Staff, Board
18. Schedule a canoe trip/streambank tour for Board and staff on the Root River to view areas of special interest for specific educational purposes. 2016 Results: None	Summer 2017	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. 2016 Results: Yes	July 2017	Board
20. Coordinate efforts with the Bluff Country Hiking Club to maintain interpretive information for the Lost Creek Hiking Trail. 2016 Results: No activities	Summer 2017	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.) 2016 Results: SWCD display at Eagle Bluff for Land Ethic at Work event in April and the MOSES New Farmer U event in October.	As needed	Staff, Board
22. Provide scholarships or incentives to attend local or regional educational events that are consistent with the SWCD's mission. 2015 Results: No activities in 2016	As needed	Staff, Board
24. Assist MDA with Ag Water Quality Certification Program (AWQCP). 2016 Results: Six applications were received by the May 31st deadline (goal was 10) plus additional applications received after the deadline.	As needed	AK, RG
25. Provide information about resources that assist in making good land use decisions (ex: Geologic Atlas, Root River Landscape Plan, Root River WRAPS and 1W1P, etc.) to local officials, homeowners, realtors, lenders, etc. 2016 Results: Geologic atlases distributed at Friends of the Root River meeting	Ongoing	DR, JR / Zoning
26. Create Root River 1W1P education/outreach program and/or templates. 2016 results: NA	Ongoing	JR, 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. 2016 Results: Yes	Ongoing	Staff, Board
2. Conduct annual performance evaluations and review staff work plans. 2016 Results: 7 completed but not all reviewed with the staff; Conservation Corps Apprentice evaluations completed	Ongoing	DR
3. Support staff and supervisor attendance at meetings of regional organizations that help achieve SWCD goals (SE Technical Support JPB, BALMM, SE MN Water Resources Board). 2016 Results: Yes	Ongoing	Staff, Board
4. Administer the Ag BMP Loan Program. 2016 Results: Loans for 1 manure equipment (\$95,000), 3 septic systems (\$29,650)	Ongoing	AK, DR
6. Attend County Department Head and Technology Committee meetings when applicable. 2016 Results: None notified	Ongoing	DR
7. Annually review and approve the District By-Laws. 2016 Results: Yes	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). 2016 Results: Yes	Annually	Board
9. Continue participation in the DNR Observation Well Network. 2016 Results: Yes	March-Nov 2017	DK
10. Participate in Local Work Group for federal programs (EQIP, CRP, etc.) 2015 Results: Yes, Supervisors and staff attended May 23rd meeting	Summer 2017	Staff, Board / NRCS
12. Pursue funding to hire a summer intern to assist with SWCD projects and programs. 2016 Results: Selected as a work site for one Conservation Corps Apprentice.	Nov. 2017	DR, Personnel Committee
13. Purchase technology/devices for increasing efficiency of field work and data collection. 2016: Staff completed technology needs survey and attended regional technology meeting.	Ongoing	Staff
14. Develop work plan for use of 2018 Local Capacity Grant Funds and policy for non-structural practices (cover crops). 2016: Vehicle purchased. Cover crop program implemented. Stormwater application submitted for Rushford Peterson School project. Staff gained access to the PTMApp files from Houston Engineering/BWSR and began becoming familiar with the application in anticipation of future training opportunities.	July 2017	Staff and Board
15. Distribute customer satisfaction surveys and compile results for an annual report to the SWCD staff and Board. 2016: NA	Ongoing	DR, JS, and staff

Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District

Comprehensive Plan Addendum – 2017 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, water and sediment control basins and gully control structures. If demand exceeds funding, priority for these projects will be given to projects where the landowner can control 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. With the completion of the Root River One Watershed, One Plan, PTMApp will be field verified and used as a tool for targeting practices. USDA HEL conservation plans that have been updated 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

Fillmore SWCD Programs:

- Windbreaks: Cost share rate is 50% per tree based on the cost of potted stock offered by the SWCD; maximum cost-share of \$1000.
- Summer construction set aside funds are available to seed down areas where a conservation practice is to be installed in the summer months. The payment is \$163/acre for up to 10 acres of set aside.

Area 7 Soil Health Technician:

- Funded by FY2014 Clean Water Fund Shared Services Grant to the SE SWCD Technical JPB.
- Currently housed in the Fillmore SWCD office to offer technical assistance for managed grazing, cover crops and other soil health practices in 11 counties with financial and in-kind support from NRCS, the SWCDs and other local organizations and canning companies.
- The Soil Health Technician will continue to provide technical assistance to cooperators for cover crop demonstration plots around Area 7 for the BWSR LCCMR SE MN Cover Crop and Soil Health Initiative. He is responsible for operation and maintenance of the BWSR rain simulator.

USDA HEL Conservation Plan updates:

- Updates will continue, as needed, funded by the FY2014 BWSR Soil Erosion Compliance Grant, which was extended until the end of 2017. Assistance will be provided to landowners with installing practices identified in their conservation plans.
- The BWSR grant goal is 40,000 acres by the end of 2016. Due to new duties for staff related to the Buffer Law, staff time is being reduced to work on plan updates with more emphasis on implementing practices that address conservation needs in the plans.

Nutrient Management:

- Activities will support the strategies in the MN Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan.
- Continue to communicate with partners about ways to evaluate nitrogen management tools for producers in Watson Creek, Rush-Pine Creek and other watersheds.
- On-farm N BMP comparison study plots were installed with MDA and Extension on about 30 farms in five counties (N BMP Outreach).
- Nutrient Management Specialist position is funded by a BWSR CWF grant and a MDA grant through the SE MN Technical Support JPB.

Farm Bill Assistance:

- Expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract numbers remain high in 2017 but there is uncertainty regarding contract approvals due to caps on CRP acres statewide and nationwide.
- Farm Bill Assistance Grant is funding a 0.5 FTE to do plans for re-enrollment; two staff are working on plans.
- Maintaining CRP buffers, grassed waterways and perennial cover in sensitive areas is a priority.

Feedlots:

- Complete runoff control projects utilizing 319 grants (three completed in 2016).
- BWSR was awarded federal RCPP funding to be matched with state funds for feedlot projects in SE MN. First signups are expected in March 2017. None are planned in Fillmore County for the first year.

Root River One Watershed:

- The Root River One Watershed, One Plan Pilot was completed in 2016 with approval of the watershed implementation plan by the BWSR Board on December 14, 2016, and by the Root River 1W1P Policy Committee on December 19, 2016.
 - Each of the 13 LGUs will consider the plan for adoption in 2017.

- The Joint Powers Agreement approved by the Policy Committee on December 19 will go to the 13 LGUs to consider for adoption.
- In 2017, Fillmore SWCD will continue to provide day-to-day coordination; Winona SWCD will continue as fiscal agent. However, no grant funds are available in 2017 for implementation. Fillmore SWCD Water Management Coordinator will provide coordination funded by LWM and Local Capacity funds.
- A preliminary work plan prepared by the Root River 1W1P Planning Work Group includes initiating education/outreach/civic engagement activities and providing staff training for and verification of PTMApp.
- MPCA Watershed Pollutant Load Monitoring Network:
 - Two SWCD staff are partially funded for monitoring activities at five sites on the main stem and major tributaries of the Root River.
- SE MN Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network:
 - The Water Management Coordinator will assist with updating the volunteer list and distribution of volunteer newsletters.
- MDA Root River Field to Stream Partnership:
 - Two SWCD staff are partially funded to conduct monitoring activities.
 - A contractor will continue to work with the farmers in all three study watersheds who completed the farm walkovers and have one or more practices identified as priorities.
 - Federal EQIP funds from the Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI) were approved for all three study watersheds. A Targeted Watershed grant application was approved in March for \$493,233 for implementation of practices in the Headwaters study watershed, some of which leverage the EQIP funds. About half the grant is for maintenance (sediment removal) from the E-3 structure in Crystal Creek.
 - SWCD technicians installed 12 practices in 2016 in Crystal and Bridge Creek watersheds totaling almost 24,000 feet of waterways and two sediment basins using both EQIP and state funds. Future monitoring will measure BMP effectiveness by comparing to baseline data collected in the first six years of the project.

Upper Iowa Watershed:

- A Surface Water Assessment Grant awarded to the Root River SWCD funded Intensive Watershed Monitoring at six sites in the Upper Iowa Watershed in 2015 and 2016 in preparation for developing a Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS)
- Fillmore SWCD monitored two sites and analyzed bacteria samples under a subcontract with Root River SWCD.

Healthy Forests for Healthy Water:

- The SWCD entered into an agreement with the MN DNR to administer and coordinate the Healthy Forests for Healthy Water Grant to pay forestry consultants to assist landowners with developing Forest Stewardship Plans and implementing practices in Riceford Creek and Rush-Pine Creek watersheds.
- A portion of the cost share funds in the grant was shifted to a BWSR grant to extend the implementation period to the end of 2018. The DNR portion of the grant funds will expire in May 2017.
- All DNR cost share funds have been encumbered or spent. About \$8,000 is encumbered or spent from the DNR funds. In 2016, six landowners signed contracts for 11 practices; nine practices were completed and paid.

Summer Intern:

- Application was submitted to Conservation Corps Minnesota to be a worksite for an apprentice position which was approved for 2017.
- The interns 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, the annual field day is planned for July 26, 2017 at Forestville State Park.

Buffer Promotion and Technical Assistance:

- The passage of the state Buffer Law in June resulted in funding to SWCDs for promotion and technical assistance to landowners.
- Aerial photo reviews have been completed and information is being entered into BUFFCAT, the statewide database that serves as the annual reporting mechanism for the grant.
- An informational meeting was held in Fountain in July which was attended by over 80 people.
- SWCD staff will present findings to the SWCD and County boards.
- SWCD staff will compile a list of “Other Waters” for inclusion in the watershed plan.

Ag Water Quality Certification Program (AWQCP):

- Funding was received to promote the AWQCP and to provide assistance to farmers working with MDA staff to get certification.
- There were six applications from Fillmore County by the end of May 2016. The goal was 10 applications. Additional applications have been received since then.
- Funding will be available in 2017 for staff time to assist with the program.

MDA Township Nitrate Testing Program:

- An agreement was signed with MDA to coordinate the Township Nitrate Testing Program in 2017.
- Primary responsibilities are outreach and education to township officials and the public, preparing the mailing list, and coordination with the SE MN Water Quality Lab in Rochester for mailing the test kits.