

Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District



2018 ANNUAL PLAN

2/22/18

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 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 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 (State Cost Share, Easement Services, Conservation Delivery, Farm Bill Assistance, Local Capacity, Buffer, Clean Water Fund), WCA Technical Evaluation Panel, RIM/CREP, Root River One Watershed, One Plan
	MPCA	Watershed Pollutant Load Monitoring Network (WPLMN), Surface Water Assessment Grant, Citizen Stream Monitoring Program (CSMP), Root River One Watershed, One Plan
	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, Root River One Watershed, One Plan
	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, Root River One Watershed, One Plan
	MDH	Wellhead Protection Area Plans, Root River One Watershed, One Plan
	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, noxious weed programs
	Conservation Corps MN	Apprenticeship program, crew projects
	MN Forestry Association	Root River Woodland Council membership
Regional	SE MN Water Resources Board	Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network, 319 Feedlot Grants, SE MN Wastewater Initiative, Ag Water Quality Certification Program, N BMP Outreach Grant

	SE SWCD Technical JPB	Nutrient Management Specialist 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, Buffer compliance
	Watershed projects	Root River One Watershed, One Plan coordination, Rush-Pine Farmer Led Council, Root River Healthy Forests for Healthy Water grant, Upper Iowa River Watershed: Water quality monitoring; Root River Cycle 2 monitoring
	Land Stewardship Project (LSP):	Soil health, women landowner workshops
	National Trout Center	Nitrate clinic, education
	4-H	Sponsor County Fair awards
	Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center	Education and outreach
	Bluff Country Hiking Club	Lost Creek Hiking Trail interpretive signs and brochure
	Friends of the Root River	Citizen group education and outreach

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- 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 for implementing BMPs in the Field to Stream Partnership study watersheds.
- Identification of high priority areas for implementing BMPs in the Root River One Watershed, One Plan
- 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.

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- 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
- Develop an annual SWCD education plan

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- Pesticide reduction and disposal practices

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- Outreach and demonstrations about reducing urban storm water volume and contaminants

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• Annual Forestry Field Day co-sponsored by the Root River Woodland Council (new membership as of January 2018)	
• Root River Landscape Stewardship Plan—Healthy Forests for Healthy Water project	
• Living Snow Fence program	
• Permaculture information	
• Decorah Shale monitoring project	
• Coordination with MDA, DNR and CCM re: treatment for Japanese hops and poison hemlock along the Root River corridor	
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• MN Wetland Conservation Act and associated activities	

- Provide assistance for landowner compliance with the MN Buffer Law and County Shoreland and Buffer Ordinances

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

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- 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: 2018 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>2017 Results: Assisted 14 landowners with soil maps, conservation planning questions and site visits regarding resource concerns. Assisted with field work on 29 grass waterways, 2 terraces with tile, 2 critical area seedings, and 1 grade stabilization cleanout. Assisted with field work assessing future conservation needs for 10 landowners for waterways, structures, terraces and helped survey 7 waterways for future construction.</p>	Ongoing	AK, / NRCS
<p>2. Assist landowners with enrollment into CRP or to re-enroll expiring CRP contracts related to CREP and other Farm Bill Assistance Grant activities.</p> <p>2017 Results: Farm Bill Assistance (-250.5 hrs. to 10/17) 2 contracts completed for 102.57 acres. New staff received training on RIM and CREP.</p>	Ongoing	AM / NRCS, FSA, BWSR
<p>3. Assist landowners with establishment of practices through the State Cost Program and NRCS EQIP.</p> <p>2017 Results: State Programs- Rick's time 60%, Doug's time 19% Federal Programs- Rick's time 0%, Doug's time 63% State cost share projects completed: FY16 and 17: 700' terrace/895' tile (1) and 4,870' grassed waterways (5), and 2 acres critical area seeding. EQIP: 4061' grassed waterways, 5687' terraces.</p>	Ongoing	RG, DK, AK, AM
<p>4. Assist Fillmore County with enforcement of the county's Soil Loss Control Ordinance.</p> <p>2017 Results: Four complaints received directly to the SWCD. All worked with the District staff to address the problem; also involved township and county staff on one site. Erosion complaint process reviewed and revised with 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>2017 Results: Field to Stream Partnership: Clean Water Fund grant: 11,045' waterways (2) MRBI-EQIP: 11,445' waterways (2). 3 cover crop contracts for 105 acres were seeded in the FSP study watersheds. Targeted Watershed Grant awarded for Headwaters study watershed and Crystal Creek E-3 structure maintenance: E3 sediment cleanout, seeding and mulching completed: ~\$138,000 .</p>	Ongoing	RG, DK, AK, AM / MDA
<p>6. Assist landowners with implementing cover crops, managed grazing and other soil health practices..</p> <p>2017 Results; District program: 334.33 acres seeded, 6 one-year contracts (all single species); 52 acres seeded, three-year contracts (2); LCCMR 3 contracts in Fillmore County for 221.72 acres</p>	Ongoing	DT, NMP / NRCS, Extension
<p>7. Provide SWCD funds for set aside acres for summer construction of grassed waterways and other practices</p> <p>2017 Results: One summer construction set aside project for 1.3 acres</p>	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 and CRP; provide technical assistance for state buffer law compliance 2017 Results: Other Waters resolutions were passed by the SWCD Board and County Board. About 94% of parcels are in compliance, and 99% are expected to be in compliance after seeding in the spring. About a dozen landowners still need to communicate their intentions for seeding their buffers. Data are being entered into the statewide database (BuffCAT). Assisted the county with review of their buffer ordinance, which was approved in November.	Ongoing	RG, DK, AK, AM
9. In cooperation with Root River 1W1P partners, identify priority areas for BMP implementation in the 1W1P planning area using PTMap and other tools and provide technical and financial assistance for implementation of practices and programs. 2017 Results: NA	Ongoing	CF, DR, RG, DK, AK, AM, DT, NMP / RR1W1P partners
10. Prepare a resolution to MASWCD requesting MASWCD and BWSR to develop a program to provide a reduction in crop insurance on acres planted to cover crops similar to the Iowa program now being piloted. 2017 Results: NA	June 2018	DR, Board

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

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Publish the Grazing Gazette with Extension 2017 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
2. Provide Soil Stewardship information to area churches, if available. 2017 Results: NACD materials emailed to 26 churches in the county in April.	April 2018	DR
3. Co-sponsor a workshop for women landowners if funding/partners available. Contact Ag Star re: mailing list and support. 2017 Results: LSP grant not funded.	Summer 2018	DR / partners
4. Assist with soil health (including grazing and minimum/no till) field days, workshops, studies and soil health information programs with NRCS and Extension 2017 Results: Soil health technician attended 4 meetings with soil health teams in Fillmore, Mower and Freeborn counties. the Mower/Fillmore Soil Health Team; did 19 presentations at workshops, field days, etc. Member of Area Training Team; helped organize and present Area Soil Health Training. Also worked with individual staff in several counties on cover crop training.	Summer/Fall 2018	DT / NRCS, GLCA, Extension
5. Investigate methods for seeding cover crops on commodity crop acres in partnership with BWSR utilizing LCCMR grant. 2017 Results: 2 winter workshops held in 2017; 3 cost share contracts signed and 221.72 acres seeded in Fillmore County.	Ongoing	DT, DR
6. Conduct side-by-side comparisons of various tillage practices and N practices (SE MN N BMP Outreach) 2017 Results: – Assisted with 15-20 plots installed and monitored. .	Spring-Fall 2018	NMP Specialist
7. Partner with Tour de Forage event with Midwest Forage Association. 2017 Results: Completed	Summer 2018	DT, Board
8. Develop an annual SWCD education and outreach plan. 2017 Results: NA	March 2018	DR, AM, Education Committee

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. 2017 Results: 3-319 projects completed; also assisted CFO with pollution abatement projects.	Ongoing	AK, CFO
2. Provide technical assistance to develop new and update existing nutrient and manure management plans focusing on vulnerable wellhead protection areas and nitrate impaired watersheds. 2017 Results: 20-2017 plans completed and 21-2018 plans completed	Ongoing	NMP Specialist
3. Promote practices, such as those that improve soil health, that reduce the need for pesticides. 2017 Results: included with other soil health education	Ongoing	DT
4. Provide information on the SWCD website about waste pesticide disposal. 2017 Results: Information on SWCD website (Links)	Ongoing	JS
5. Provide technical assistance for upland treatment and water retention practices to reduce runoff volumes; priority to the FSP watersheds following farm walkovers. 2016 Results: Began working to identify sites for restoration using funds left over from E-3 restoration.	Ongoing	DK, RG, AK, AM

Objective #2: Reduce urban sources of water pollution

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Administer the SWCD rain barrel program and promote at the county fair (door prize) and other events. 2017 Results: 3 sold	Ongoing	CF, AM
2. Pursue funding for community assessments, outreach and demonstrations for reducing volume of and contaminants in urban stormwater, including designs by the Center for Changing Landscapes. Follow up: Community Partners Grant recipients. 2017 Results: Rain garden the Fillmore County Office Building needed some repairs; some still to be done.	Ongoing	CF, 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. 2017 Results: Some well information provided. Community project on hold. Some may use low interest loans.	As needed	CF, DR
2. Assist with the semi-annual Fillmore County Household Hazardous Waste Collections. 2017 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. 2017 Results: No inquiries in 2017.	Ongoing	DK, RG
2. Assist Fillmore County with investigating sites for development in the Decorah Shale Overlay District; review ordinance with Zoning staff. 2017 Results: no requests	Ongoing	CF, AM
3. Provide cost share for sealing abandoned wells; review eligibility criteria for use of state cost share funds. 2017 Results: No funding requests in 2017.	Ongoing	DR, RG, DK, AM
4. Assist with dye trace studies and ground water research. 2017 Results: Assisted MDA and DNR with installation of continuous nitrate monitoring equipment in a spring in Willow Creek watershed; equipment will be checked periodically; ongoing nitrate sampling of springs in Crystal Creek watershed.	Ongoing	CF, AM, intern/ DNR, UofM
5. Participate in the Technical Evaluation Panel for frac sand mining permit application reviews. 2017 Results: No permit applications in 2017	As needed	DR, CF, AM / 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. 2017 Results: Water quality monitoring continues. Current contract extended 2 years to June 30, 2019.	Ongoing	CF, AM, DR, RG, DK, AK / MDA
2. Continue partnership with MPCA to monitor Watershed Pollutant Load Monitoring Network (WPLMN) sites. 2017 Results: WPLMN completed for the sampling season. Two-year contract amendment to be signed in 2018.	Ongoing	CF, AM, 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.) 2017 Results: Fishers and Farmers grant administered for FSP educational activities.	Ongoing	CF, DR, , Extension, MPCA, Winona Co.
4. Assist with water quality monitoring in the Upper Iowa Watershed. 2017 Results: Completed Upper Iowa sampling once per month (April-October) in cooperation with IA DNR Staff attended meetings regarding the Upper Iowa WRAPS.	April -Oct 2018	CF, AM
5. Continue to oversee maintenance of the East Willow Creek flood control structures with Fillmore County and NRCS; 2017 Results: E-3 cleanout of sediment completed, seeded and mulched. Trees removed from dike by STS crew and stumps sprayed by volunteer. NRCS notified SWCD that two structures under the 1984 agreement require removal of vegetation and other minor maintenance. E-3 structure sediment removal completed.	Ongoing	RG, DR / Fillmore Co./ NRCS
6. Coordinate implementation of the Root River One Watershed, One Plan; facilitate Advisory Committee meetings (1-2/year), quarterly Policy Committee and Planning Work Group meetings; grant tracking and reporting and other admin/coordination. 2017Results: Root River 1W1P Advisory Committee met twice, Policy Committee met twice, and Planning Work Group met four times. Plan summary document final draft ready for Policy Committee review; draft work plan and budget developed in anticipation of watershed implementation grants in 2018.	Ongoing	CF, DR

Objective #6: Protect drinking water supplies

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Maintain operation of the SWCD Bacteria Testing Lab and provide nitrate screening as requested. 2017 Results: Ongoing lab services maintained; 112 total samples analyzed. Internal audit completed. Coordination with RPU and SE MN Water Analysis Laboratory for 2018 external audit. Ongoing nitrate screening provided. Reviewed sample acceptance procedure with all staff.	Ongoing	CF, AM, DR, JS
2. Continue to coordinate Fillmore County's participation in the SE MN Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network. 2017 Results: Mailing list updated for the lab: contacted well owners with unusual results or unreturned samples. Mailed a spring newsletter explaining the difference between the volunteer network and the MDA Township Testing Program.	Ongoing	CF / SE MN WRB
3. Conduct at least two nitrate testing clinics. 2017 Results: 3 Nitrate clinics at the at implement open houses in Chatfield, Rushford and Spring Valley in February, all held in partnership with Public Health radon clinics. National Trout Center event cancelled due to bad weather.	Spring/Summer 2018	CF, AM, DR/ Public Health
4. Provide information on water treatment systems as requested. 2017 Results: As needed	As needed	CF
5. Review Wellhead Protection Plans and provide assistance as needed 2017 Results: Notices received in 2017 from Lanesboro, Ostrander, Peterson, Chatfield (update), Fountain, Rushford	As needed	DR, CF / Public Water Suppliers
6. Provide assistance as needed for the second phase of the MDA Township Testing Program. 2017 Results: All requirements fulfilled for phase one of the project; lab mailed sample kits to 4, 412 parcels; 35% return rate.	2018	CF, DR

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. 2017Results: Successful year: 11,398 trees sold; profit of \$ \$11,241.24	Ongoing	JS, RG, AK, AM
2. Administer District Windbreak Program. 2017 Results: 3 contracts completed for 2160', total paid \$980.	Ongoing	RG, AM
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, implementing strategies in the Root River Landscape Stewardship Plan. 2017 Results: 7 landowners signed contracts for 7 practices plus 1 forest stewardship plan for 369 acres; 4 practices were completed and paid	Ongoing	DR
4. Sponsor annual Forestry Field Day on July 25, 2018. 2017 Results: Field day held July 26 at Forestville State Park; ~ 50 attended; topic was use of fire for vegetation management.	July 25, 2018	DR, RG, AM, Intern, Forestry Committee

5. Promote the use of native 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. 2017 Results: website update not completed	Ongoing	JS,CF, AM
6. Promote invasive species control With funding and assistance from DNR, MDA and Conservation Corps Minnesota for treatment of Japanese hops and poison hemlock along the Root River; also conduct wild parsnip roadside integrated management project with Fillmore County Highway Department, Extension, Prairie Smoke, and a summer intern. 2017 Results: CWMA discussed with partners at Root River watershed meetings; other counties proceeding with forming their own CWMA's. Forestry Committee will meet with DNR Forester and Woodland Council members from Houston County.	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. 2017 Results: None State does the promotion.	As needed	CF, RG, DK, AM
8. Investigate permaculture practices and post information on the SWCD website about permaculture. 2017 Results: Permaculture links researched for website.	As needed	DR, AM
9. 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 2017 Results: Site visit completed in May to survey site to evaluate slumping; some movement occurred following heavy rains in September 2016. Area burned in 2017 by landowner. Indian grass is establishing well.	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.); begin shared staffing for WCA with Wabasha SWCD. 2017 Results: See WCA annual report to BWSR; Fischer, Ronnenberg and Rasmussen serve on the TEP; Aaren Mathison hired following resignation of Jennifer Ronnenberg and hiring of Caleb Fischer as Water Management Coordinator. Discussions held with Winona and Wabasha SWCDs, Winona County and the City of Winona re: WCA shared services position. Final agreement for shared position with Wabasha SWCD completed and signed for implementation in 2018.	Ongoing	AM, DR, CF
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. 2017 Buffer information included in annual newspaper insert.	Ongoing	RG, AK, , AM

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. 2017 Results: Investigation of options for website update continues.	Ongoing	JS, DR, Staff
2. Submit periodic news releases or commentaries from the Board and staff to the local newspapers about SWCD priorities 2017 Results: See calendar of events for 75th anniversary. June 27th conservation tour and meal attended by 43 and 57, respectively.	Ongoing	DR, Board

3. Publish annual newspaper insert and at least two online newsletters. 2017 Results: Newspaper insert published in February in the Fillmore County Journal as pages within the newspaper; 1 online newsletter completed in 2017.	Annually	DR, JS, Staff
4. Select and promote a county Outstanding Conservationist (from District 5 in 2018) and other award candidates. Hold annual recognition event. 2017 Results: January event at the Branding Iron; Kevin and Kris Borgen selected for 2017, and Kevin attended the state convention.	Annually	Staff, Board
5. Sponsor the annual 6th Grade Conservation Day. 2017 Results: Held September 20 with over 180 kids attending from three schools.	Annually	RG, Staff
6. Assist with annual Farm Safety Day Camp. 2017 Results: Dean and Donna assisted in 2017. Pencils and native seed packets provided for student activity bags.	Annually	DT, Staff
7. Support and assist with the Area 7 Envirothon. 2017 Results: Rick attended the planning meetings and helped at the Area event.	Annually	RG, AM
8. Promote and provide two \$500 scholarships, one to a graduating senior and one to a returning college student. 2017 Results: Both scholarships awarded. High School: Jared Troendle; College: Madeline Snyder	Annually	JS, DR, Board
9. Provide information on natural resources conservation at the county fair. 2017 Results: Location in the Commercial Building; MPCA stream table set up; kids activities Tuesday through Friday afternoons.	Annually	JS, AK, Staff, Board
10. 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. 2017Results: Kingsland HS Vo-Ag stream table and groundwater model demonstrations; also demonstrated water monitoring during their field day to the Lanesboro hatchery in October. About 250 tree seedlings were distributed to 5th graders in the county; a tree was planted at four schools (Fillmore Central, Lanesboro, Mabel-Canton, and Chatfield).	Annually	CF, AM, DR, Staff
11. Promote the MPCA Citizen Stream Monitoring Program. 2017 Results: Staff and board member participated in a Friends of the Root River event with MPCA staff to promote the program.	Annually	CF, DR
12. Coordinate the Volunteer Precipitation Monitoring Network. 2017 Results: Volunteer data collected and submitted to the state.	Annually	DK
13. 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. 2017 Results: SWCD board approved funding for signage for Fillmore Central FFA test plot. FFA students attended the March 30th soil health field day near Preston. Soil health technician and NRCS soil scientist demonstrated the rain simulator at the FFA soils practice competition in Lanesboro Nov. 1.	Spring/Fall 2018	Staff
14. Provide opportunities for Board members to visit or tour sites where conservation practices are being implemented. Create a list of practices/projects of interest. 2017: Board members attended the 75th anniversary conservation tour.	Spring-Fall 2018	Staff
15. Distribute information to hunter safety classes about how to reduce tree damage from tree stands; also post on Facebook in August and include an article in one of the online newsletters. 2017 Results: Yes, information provided to the Spring Valley class in March.	Spring 2018	DR, DNR
16. Communicate with state and federal legislators about conservation programs and their effectiveness. 2017 Results: Day at the Capitol attended by Administrator March 20-21.	Spring 2018	DR, Staff, Board
17. Schedule a canoe trip/streambank tour for Board and staff on the Root River to view areas of special interest for specific educational purposes. Could participate in the Friends of the Root River float planned for summer 2018. 2017 Results: Several staff took a walking tour of the streambank and habitat restoration project along the South Branch of the Root River in Preston in August.	Summer 2017	Staff

18. 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. 2017 Results: Yes, eight 4-H awards sponsored	July 2018	Board
19. Coordinate efforts with the Bluff Country Hiking Club to maintain interpretive information for the Lost Creek Hiking Trail. 2017 Results: CCM apprentice updated the brochure information with club members, and new brochures were printed. New signs were made for the additional educational sites along the trail, and damaged signs were replaced. New information was put on the Fillmore SWCD website.	Summer 2018	DR, RG, Intern, Forestry Committee
20. 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.) 2017 Results: SWCD historical display was in the county courthouse April- May and October-November and at the Harmony Visitor Center in October, Dairy Night at the Farm and Cattlemen's Steak Fry in June, Fillmore County Fair in July,	As needed	Staff, Board
21. Provide scholarships or incentives to attend local or regional educational events that are consistent with the SWCD's mission. 2017 Results: Rush-Pine Farmer Led Council sponsored a trip to South Dakota to the Hefty Brothers' Ag PhD Field Day and to the Dakota Lakes Research Farm July 27-28. Two farmers from Fillmore County attended and each received a \$100 scholarship.	As needed	Staff, Board
22. Assist MDA with Ag Water Quality Certification Program (AWQCP). 2017 Results: No promotion of the program; assisted with gathering information for some applicants.	As needed	Staff
23. 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. 2017 Results: Geologic atlases distributed with the 75th anniversary display.	Ongoing	DR, CF / Zoning
24. Create Root River 1W1P education/outreach program and/or templates in cooperation with 1W1P Planning Work Group. 2017 results: Staff participated on the committee that developed the plan summary document. A full-fledged education/outreach program will be developed with watershed implementation funds when available.	Ongoing	CF, 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. 2017 Results: Yes. New board members attended New Supervisor orientation sponsored by BWSR. Two staff attended BWSR Academy.	Ongoing	Staff, Board
2. Conduct annual performance evaluations and review staff work plans. 2017 Results: Staff evaluations completed for two staff receiving step increases.. Conservation Corps apprentice evaluations completed. Personnel Committee completed evaluation for Administrator. Exit interviews completed with 3 staff.	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). 2017Results: Yes	Ongoing	Staff, Board

4. Administer the Ag BMP Loan Program. 2017 Results: Loans for 1 manure equipment (\$68,000), 1 feedlot fix (51,558), 8 septic systems (\$79,553) , 2 no till equipment (\$83,000), and 1 well replacement (\$14,300)	Ongoing	AK, DR
6. Attend County Technology Committee meetings, and when applicable, Department Head meetings. 2017 Results: None notified	Ongoing	AK, DR
7. Annually review and approve the District By-Laws. 2017 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). 2017 Results: Yes	Annually	Board
9. Continue participation in the DNR Observation Well Network. 2017 Results: Yes	March-Nov 2018	DK
10. Participate in Local Work Group for federal programs (EQIP, CRP, etc.) 2017 Results: No LWG meeting in 2017	Summer 2018	Staff, Board / NRCS
12. Pursue funding to hire a summer intern to assist with SWCD projects and programs. 2017 Results: Selected as a work site for one Conservation Corps Apprentice.	Nov. 2018	DR, Personnel Committee
13. Provide technology/devices for increasing efficiency of field work and data collection and continuing education for use; investigate time tracking options that can better summarize information for grant applications and reporting. 2017: Purchased Surface Pro for water quality monitoring field data collection; also used for Water Management Coordinator's work station. Purchased Trimble TSC3 and R8s receiver and accessories.	Ongoing	Staff
14. Develop work plan for use of 2019 Local Capacity Grant Funds and policy for non-structural practices (cover crops). 2017: 2017 Jeep purchased. Cover crop program implemented; policy submitted to BWSR for FY18 funds. Also included cost share for structural practices in FY18 work plan plus staff time for training new technicians and conducting education and outreach.	July 2018	Staff and Board
15. Distribute customer satisfaction surveys and compile results for an annual report to the SWCD staff and Board. 2017: Survey results compiled and presented at December board meeting.	Ongoing	DR, JS, and staff

Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District

Comprehensive Plan Addendum – 2018 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 (CWF) 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 crops and other soil health practices. 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 June 2018. Assistance will be provided to landowners with installing practices identified in their conservation plans.
- The BWSR grant goal was 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.
- On-farm N BMP comparison study plots installed with MDA and Extension will continue with ten sites planned for 2018-2019.
- Nutrient Management Specialist position is funded by a BWSR CWF grant, which ends in 2018 so funding will be from the Root River 1W1P watershed-based grant. The MDA N BMP Outreach grant will be administered through the SE MN Water Resources Board beginning in January 2018.

Farm Bill Assistance:

- Farm Bill Assistance Grant has funded a 0.5 FTE. Due to staff turnover and NRCS staff doing CRP plans, no FY18 FBA funds were applied for in 2017. FY2017 funds are being used up to fund staff who are training on RIM and CREP in anticipation of the retirement of the staff person overseeing those programs.
- Maintaining CRP buffers, grassed waterways and perennial cover in sensitive areas is a priority.

Feedlots:

- Continue to complete runoff control projects utilizing 319 grants (three milkhouse waste systems completed in 2017). Another 319 grant was awarded for feedlot projects starting in 2018.
- BWSR was awarded federal RCPP funding to be matched with state funds for feedlot projects in SE MN. First signups were completed in March 2017. None were planned in Fillmore County for the first year. Communication will continue with the County Feedlot Officer regarding potential projects.

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.
 - All 13 LGUs adopted the plan in 2017.
 - The Joint Powers Agreement approved by the Policy Committee on December 19 was adopted by all 13 LGUs.
- In 2017, Fillmore SWCD continued to provide day-to-day coordination; Winona SWCD was named as fiscal agent. However, no grant funds were available in 2017 for implementation. A plan summary was developed by a subcommittee to be approved by the Policy Committee in January 2018. A draft work plan and budget were developed based on priorities in the watershed plan in anticipation of watershed implementation funding in 2018.
- Root River Cycle 2 Intensive Watershed Monitoring: 2018 will mark the second round of intensive watershed monitoring in the Root River watershed. Local staff provided input for the location of the monitoring sites. Olmsted, Fillmore and Root River SWCDs are partnering to conduct the chemistry and bacteria monitoring at 14 sites in 2018 and 2019 with Olmsted serving as the fiscal agent.
- 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. A new budget and work plan are being developed to continue the work in 2018-2019.
- SE MN Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network:
 - The Water Management Coordinator will assist with maintaining 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.
 - Projects are being completed and are being planned for 2018 using funding from MRBI-EQIP, a BWSR Clean Water Fund Grant, and a BWSR Targeted Watershed Grant.
 - SWCD technicians installed 11,045 feet of grass waterways using state funds and 11,445 feet using EQIP funds in 2017 in Crystal and Bridge Creek watersheds .
 - Sediment removal was completed in the E-3 flood control structure in Crystal Creek watershed restoring it to its original water and sediment holding capacity. Seeding and mulching was also completed. Some minor waterway repairs are planned for spring 2018 to complete the project. Funds left from this project will be used for similar restorations of other water storage structures in the watershed.
 - Future monitoring will measure BMP effectiveness by comparing to baseline data collected in the first eight years of the project.

Upper Iowa Watershed:

- Monitoring and assessment were completed in 2016.
- Meetings were held regarding the WRAPS document for the Upper Iowa.
- Continue monitoring with Iowa DNR.

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 final report for the DNR grant that ended in May 2017 was submitted and approved by DNR.
- The portion of the funds transferred to BWSR will expire December 31, 2018. Seven landowners signed contracts for 8 practices and 1 forest stewardship plan in 2017. Four practices were completed and paid. About \$6400 remain to be spent in 2018.

Summer Intern:

- Application was submitted to Conservation Corps Minnesota to be a worksite for an apprentice position for 2018.
- 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 25, 2018 at Magelssen Bluff in Rushford.
- Another intern will work with the SWCD, Fillmore County Highway Department, Extension and Prairie Smoke volunteers in 2018 to study options for treating wild parsnip along county and township roads using integrated management practices and to provide education on these practices to landowners and road maintenance personnel; a county database will be established to identify areas not to be sprayed where landowners agree to be responsible for wild parsnip control.

Buffer Promotion and Technical Assistance:

- Funding was approved for buffer work again in 2018: \$30,000 buffer grant plus \$2000 from the Local Capacity Grant matched by \$2000 from Fillmore County.
- All information has been entered into BUFFCAT, the statewide database that serves as the annual reporting mechanism for the grant. As of the end of 2017, about 94% of parcels are in compliance, and 99% are expected to be in compliance when they are seeded in the spring. About one dozen landowners still need to communicate their plans for seeding their buffers in 2018. A flow chart for buffer enforcement was developed with the county.
- SWCD staff presented results to the SWCD and County boards.
- Other Waters resolutions were approved by the SWCD Board and the County Board.
- The County's buffer ordinance was approved in November and sent to BWSR for final approval. The SWCD will provide assistance to the county with buffer areas that need to come into compliance.

Ag Water Quality Certification Program (AWQCP):

- Promotional activities are planned for 2018 with funds to be requested from the SE MN Water Resources Board. Staff will assist with running the assessment tool for applicants.

MDA Township Nitrate Testing Program:

- An agreement was signed with MDA to coordinate the Township Nitrate Testing Program in 2017.
- A subagreement was signed with the SE MN Water Analysis Lab to send out the initial and reminder postcards, sample kits and sample results as well as entering the sample results and survey responses into a database for the MDA. All deliverables were completed within the allotted budget. Sample kits were mailed to 4,412 parcels, and 35% were returned. Reminder postcards were sent in October to 2,966 parcels. All data were submitted to MDA by December 31, 2017. Assistance will be provided for the second phase of testing if requested by MDA.