

Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District



2019 ANNUAL PLAN

1/29/19

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 Delivery, 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, 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, , 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
	U of M Extension	Grazing Gazette (online version), Ag in the Classroom, nutrient management/N BMP outreach, noxious weed programs, Fillmore County Integrated Roadside Management
	Conservation Corps MN	Crew projects
	MN Forestry Association	Root River Woodland Council membership
Regional	SE MN Water Resources Board	Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network, 319 Feedlot Grants, , Ag Water Quality Certification Program, N BMP Outreach Grant
	SE SWCD Technical JPB	Nutrient Management Specialist grant, NRCS Conservation Collaboration Grant for Soil Health, , engineering assistance, RCPP/BWSR Feedlot Grant
	BALMM	Network for sharing information and regional think tank
	Hiawatha Valley RC&D	Soil health, civic engagement support, Root River One Watershed, One Plan
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, 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

2019 Annual Plan Outline

Soil Resources

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Goal #1: Control soil erosion and sustain soil productivity.....8

Objective #1: Provide funding and technical resources for soil erosion BMP's.....8

- Assist with implementing practices identified in USDA Conservation Plans and refer requests to the Root River Conservation Planner.
- 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.

Objective #2: Conduct education and outreach activities about soil resources.....9

- Field days, workshops in partnership with other organizations for women landowners, soil health, cover crop use, N management
- Soil stewardship materials
- Conduct research and field trials related to soil health and nutrient management
- Implement the annual SWCD education plan

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- 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

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- 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

- Hazardous waste disposal

Objective #4: Reduce ground water contamination risk due to karst topography.....11

- 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.....11

- 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.....12

- 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; follow up support

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- District Tree Program and Windbreak Program
- Permanent, diverse native species vegetation (e.g. pollinator habitat) and invasive species control (Japanese hops, poison hemlock, wild parsnip, and others)
- Annual Forestry Field Day co-sponsored by the Root River Woodland Council (new membership as of January 2018)
- Annual Prairie Walk
- 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
- Conduct wild parsnip study along county highways

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 County Shoreland and Buffer Ordinances

Objective #3: Conduct education and outreach activities that promote land and water stewardship.....14

- Utilize media: newspaper ads, news releases, newspaper insert, commentaries, newsletters, radio ads, PSA's, website, Facebook
- Outstanding Conservationist and volunteer recognition
- Ask cooperators if they would be willing to make their project available to the public for a field day or other promotion/outreach for a practice they have installed.
- Two annual Scholarships, high school and college
- 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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Goal #4: Maintain the efficient use of district resources and staff.....16

Objective #1: Support staff and Board activities that increase the District's capacity.....16

- Staff and board training and development
- Support of and partnership with regional and local organizations
- Annual reviews: By-Laws, Annual Plan, staff performance evaluations, customer satisfaction surveys
- Long term programs: Ag BMP, Observation Well Network, , summer interns, Local Work Group
- Coordination of 1W1P implementation efforts with watershed LGU partners.
- Improve local capacity utilizing Local Capacity Grant and other funding
- Provide internship opportunities

Fillmore County Soil and Water Conservation District: 2019 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; refer to Root River Conservation Planner for plan updates as requested.</p> <p>2018 Results: Soil Erosion Grant activities reported in eLINK April 2018: Assisted 9 landowners with different conservation needs - waterway needs, maintenance/clean out, conservation planning for future, beginning farmer inquiry, MDA corporate farm report questions, permitting with DNR & WCA to clean up and do maintenance along protected waters. Attended trainings for Hydrology and Soil Health. Work with DNR Hydrologist on streambank erosion concern and permitting. Completed annual and final grant reporting.</p>	Ongoing	AK, DK, AM, WG / NRCS
<p>2. Assist landowners with establishment of practices through the State Cost Program, Local Capacity Cost Share and NRCS EQIP.</p> <p>2018 Results: State Programs- Rick's time 47%, Doug's time 43%, Aaren: 30%, Anne: 15% Federal Programs- Rick's time 0%, Doug's time 35% State cost share projects completed: FY 17: 1855' grassed waterways (1), and 1 grade stabilization; FY18: 1095' grassed waterway, 1 grade stabilization, 1 well decommissioning. Local Capacity FY17: 2110' grassed waterway, 2 grade stabilizations. EQIP: 4 grade stabilization structures, 6135' grassed waterways, 2375' MRBI grassed waterways (FSP-Crystal Creek).</p>	Ongoing	DK, AK, AM, WG
<p>3. Assist Fillmore County with enforcement of the county's Soil Loss Control Ordinance.</p> <p>2018 Results: Follow up on one complaint from last year.</p>	Ongoing	DK, AK, AM / Fillmore County
<p>4. 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: 800' waterway; 1 milkhouse waste system . 1 cover crop contracts for 26.5 acres were seeded in the FSP study watersheds. Targeted Watershed Grant (Headwaters study watershed and Crystal Creek E-3 structure maintenance). Unable to complete dozer work on E-3 due to wet conditions.</p>	Ongoing	DK, AK, AM, WG / MDA
<p>5. Assist landowners with implementing cover crops, managed grazing and other soil health practices..</p> <p>2018 Results; District program: 52 acres seeded, three-year contracts (2);</p>	Ongoing	DT, SW / NRCS, Extension
<p>6. Provide SWCD funds for set aside acres for summer construction of grassed waterways and other practices</p> <p>2018 Results: One summer construction set aside project for 10acres</p>	Annually	DK, AK, AM
<p>7. 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>2018 Results: 99% of parcels are in compliance; of the two landowners remaining, one landowner came into compliance and one landowner remains out of compliance Enforcement flow chart completed with the County in case of need for enforcement. Data are being entered into the statewide database (BuffCAT).</p>	Ongoing	DK, AK, AM
<p>8. In cooperation with Root River 1W1P partners, identify priority areas for BMP implementation in the 1W1P planning area using PTMApp and other tools and provide technical and financial assistance for implementation of practices and programs.</p> <p>2018 Results: 1W1P work plan and budget for \$851,301 approved and funded with BWSR grant. Subagreement with Winona SWCD approved. PTMApp work began in Riceford Creek watershed under contract with SE MN Water Resources Board. Rush</p>	Ongoing	CF, Admin, DK, AK, AM, DT, SW, WG / RR1W1P partners

Pine Farmer Led Council met in December to discuss use of funds allocated for support of farmer led efforts in the watershed. Funding from the grant for Nutrient Management Specialist begins July 1 and for the Soil Health Technician begins October 1.

9. Prepare a resolution(s) to MASWCD: Fine-tune 2018 resolution to submit again and develop one to promote minimum/no tillage on soybean ground. June 2019 Admin, Board
 2018 Results: Resolution submitted and approved at the June Area 7 Resolutions Meeting regarding crop insurance premium reduction for planting cover crops; resolution failed at the MASWCD convention.

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

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Grazing Gazette publication will be limited to an online version starting in 2019. 2018 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. 2018 Results: NACD materials emailed to 26 churches in the county April 13..	April 2019	Admin
3. Co-sponsor a workshop for women landowners if funding/partners available. Contact Ag Star re: mailing list and support. 2018 Results: No activity. Contact made with League of Women Voters in December for potential workshops in 2019.	Summer 2019	Admin / 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; share soil temperature research results. 2018 Results: Area Soil Health Technician assisted with local cover crop programs in 5 counties,soil health field day in Freeborn County provided presentations at about a dozen workshops, field days, and educational events including demonstrating the rainfall simulator. Member of Area Training Team; helped organize and present statewide Soil Health Training at a total of 12 locations for NRCS and SWCD staff. Also worked with individual staff in several counties on cover crop training. Assists NRCS with EQIP standards and tech notes; planning and application of EQIP and CSP practices; soil temperature research.	Summer/Fall 2019	DT / NRCS, GLCA, Extension
5. Investigate methods for seeding cover crops on commodity crop acres in partnership with BWSR utilizing LCCMR grant. 2018 Results: 2 winter workshops held in 2018; completed seeding checks on six demo sites and assisted with Haney tests on several demo sites.	Ongoing	DT, DR
6. Conduct side-by-side comparisons of various tillage practices and N practices (SE MN N BMP Outreach) 2018 Results: – Assisted with 4 plots installed and monitored- pre-plant soil samples, field scouting for pre-sidedressing N testing (PSNT), collected PSNT samples, took SPAD readings, collected samples for basal stalk nitrate testing and whole plant samples.	Spring-Fall 2019	SW
7. Partner with Tour de Forage event with Midwest Forage Association. 2018 Results: Completed	Summer 2019	DT, Board
8. Update and implement the annual SWCD education and outreach plan. 2018 Results: Completed and activities tracked as completed (Radio and newspaper ads, May Wildflower Walk at Forestville State Park, October Prairie Walk at Gossman Farm, Dairy Night at the Farm, etc.)	March 2019	AM, Education Committee, staff

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. 2018 Results: 1-319 projects completed; also assisted CFO with site inspections.	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. 2018 Results: 1-2018 plans completed and 20-2019 plans completed	Ongoing	SW
3. Promote practices, such as those that improve soil health, that reduce the need for pesticides. 2018 Results: included with other soil health education	Ongoing	DT
4. Provide information on the SWCD website about waste pesticide disposal. 2018 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. 2018 Results: Identified sites for restoration using FSP funds including those left over from E-3 restoration. Hired temporary engineering assistance to complete surveys and designs of grade stabilization structures using Civil 3D; 33 design surveys completed; 18 designs completed; 4 projects installed	Ongoing	DK, WG, 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. 2018 Results: 16 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. 2018 Results: Rain garden at the Fillmore County Office Building needed some repairs; some still to be done. Communicated with the city of Harmony about improvements for the Harmony gardens. Assisted Kingsland with their rain garden at their request.	Ongoing	AM

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

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Assist with SE MN Wastewater Initiative projects in the county. 2018 Results: No activity. Funding ends 12/31/18	NA	NA

[2018 Results: Staff helped at both events in May and October](#)

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. 2018 Results: No inquiries in 2018.	Ongoing	DK, AM
2. Assist Fillmore County with investigating sites for development in the Decorah Shale Overlay District; review ordinance with Zoning staff. 2018 Results: no requests	Ongoing	CF, AM
3. Provide cost share for sealing abandoned wells; review eligibility criteria for use of state cost share funds. 2018 Results: Two requests; one sealed.	Ongoing	DK, CF, AM
4. Assist with dye trace studies and ground water research. 2018 Results: Assisted MDA and DNR with maintaining continuous nitrate monitoring equipment in a spring in Willow Creek and Camp Creek watersheds deploying and retrieving charcoal bugs; ongoing nitrate sampling of springs in Crystal Creek watershed. Planning begun to add Stagecoach Spring in 2019.	Ongoing	CF, AM, intern/ DNR, U of M
5. Participate in the Technical Evaluation Panel for frac sand mining permit application reviews. 2018 Results: No permit applications in 2018	As needed	Admin, 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. 2018 Results: Water quality monitoring continues. Work plan and budget prepared for new contract to continue the monitoring to June 30, 2021.	Ongoing	Admin, CF, AM, DK, AK, WG / MDA
2. Continue partnership with MPCA to monitor Watershed Pollutant Load Monitoring Network (WPLMN) sites. 2018 Results: WPLMN completed for the sampling season. Two-year contract amendment signed in 2018 extended to June 30, 2020	Ongoing	Admin, CF, AM / 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.) 2018 Results: Fishers and Farmers grant administered for FSP educational activities.	Ongoing	CF, Extension, MPCA, Winona Co.
4. Assist with water quality monitoring in the Upper Iowa Watershed. 2018 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 2019	CF, AM
5. Continue to oversee maintenance of the East Willow Creek flood control structures with Fillmore County and NRCS; 2018 Results: Trees removed from dike of two structures by as directed by NRCS. 2018 structure inspections completed by Aaren Mathison and Willis Goll; inspection information submitted to NRCS. Waiting for STS to remove more trees on the same structures that they were unable to access in 2018.	Ongoing	AM, WG / 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.	Ongoing	CF, Admin

2018 Results: Staff coordinated meetings of the Planning Work Group (8), Advisory Committee (2), and Policy Committee (3). Proposal for assistance from the U of M and Extension for a civic engagement plan approved. Work begins in preparation for RCPP-EQIP funds for the Root River.

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. 2018 Results: External audit completed in January; all findings addressed and entered into ELDO. Internal audit completed in March. Ongoing lab services maintained; 105 total samples analyzed Ongoing nitrate screening provided. Reviewed sample acceptance procedure with all staff at the April staff meeting.	Ongoing	CF, AM, Admin, JS
2. Continue to coordinate Fillmore County's participation in the SE MN Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network. Invite to the SWCD's January Recognition Event. 2018 Results: Mailing list updated for the lab. Mailed a fall newsletter Mailed invitations to all volunteers for a recognition event in June for volunteers in three counties; response poor so event cancelled.	Ongoing	CF / SE MN WRB
3. Conduct at least two nitrate testing clinics. 2018 Results: 3 Nitrate clinics: Preston Equipment and National Trout Center in February, Mabel Farmers' Market in October	Spring/Summer 2019	CF, AM, / Public Health
4. Provide information on water treatment systems as requested. 2018 Results: As needed	As needed	CF, AM
5. Review Wellhead Protection Plans and provide assistance as needed. 2018 Results: Notices received in 2018: Spring Valley, Mabel, Chatfield, Lanesboro	As needed	CF / Public Water Suppliers
6. Provide assistance as needed for follow up to the MDA Township Testing Program. 2018 Results: No assistance requested. Some questions/inquiries received from well owners regarding second round tests.	2019	CF

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. 2018 Results: Successful year: 12,251 trees sold; profit of \$10,731.29	Ongoing	JS, AK
2. Administer District Windbreak Program. 2018 Results: 5 contracts completed for 4,120', total paid \$1,530.	Ongoing	AK, AM
3. Administer Healthy Forests for Healthy Waters Grant. 2018 Results: 1 landowner signed 1 contract for 1 practices; 6 practices and 1 Forest Stewardship Plan were completed and paid. Grant ended in 2018.	NA	NA
3. Sponsor annual Forestry Field Day on July 24, 2019. 2018 Results: Field day held July 25 at Magelssen Bluff Park in Rushford; ~ 50 attended; topic was how site conditions (soils, slope,	July 24, 2019	AM, Intern, Forestry Committee

aspect) affect vegetation types.

4. Sponsor annual Prairie Walk. Consider holding it at the Harmony rain garden. 2019 Results: The Prairie Walk was held Oct. 10 at Tim and Susan Gossman farm, Chatfield. About 20 people attended even though it was very cold and windy with rain/snow mix.	Summer/Fall 2019	AM, Forestry Committee-Board members
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. 2018 Results: website update not completed	Ongoing	JS, AM, CF
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. 2018 Results: No Spray program implemented with County Highway Dept. Ten signed up. Jess, Stevens, CCM apprentice, assisted with roadside natives inventory with Debbie Anderson. Roadside alternative control demonstration plots set up along CR 17 north of Preston; Prairie Moon seed mix frost seeded in November. MDA Noxious Weed Grant and Conservation Corps crew application funded for J. hops treatment. Stantec contracted with to do treatments from the water but only completed a portion due to logistics and timing issues; CCM crew completed land-based treatments. Stantec contract extended to June 2019 to complete work from Preston to Lanesboro. 2019 Noxious Weed Grant submitted to continue treatments to the Fillmore/Houston county line. Landowner meeting held in Rushford November 29; seven attendees.	Ongoing	AM, intern, Forestry Committee, Extension, County Highway, MDA
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. 2018 Results: None State does the promotion.	As needed	DK, AM
8. Investigate permaculture practices and post information on the SWCD website about permaculture. 2018 Results: No activity	As needed	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 2018 Results: Survey not completed.	Ongoing	AK, AM, 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. 2018 Results: See WCA annual report to BWSR; Mathison, Fischer, Rasmussen serve on the TEP; Contract with Wabasha for WCA shared services position; monthly meetings held either in person or by phone.	Ongoing	AM, Admin, 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. 2018 Buffer information included in annual newspaper insert.	Ongoing	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. 2018 Results: Investigation of options for website update continues.	Ongoing	JS, Admin, Staff
2. Submit periodic news releases or commentaries from the Board and staff to the local newspapers about SWCD priorities 2018 Results: See education plan.	Ongoing	Admin Board
3. Publish annual newspaper insert and at least two online newsletters. 2018 Results: Newspaper insert published in February in the Bluff Country Reader as pages within the newspaper; 2 online newsletters completed in 2018.	Annually	Admin, JS, Staff
4. Select and promote a county Outstanding Conservationist (from District 1 in 2019) and other award candidates. Hold annual recognition event. 2018 Results: January event at the Branding Iron; Gerald and DiAnne Peter selected for 2018, and Gerald attended the 2018 state convention.	Annually	Staff, Board
5. Sponsor the annual 6th Grade Conservation Day. 2018 Results: Held September 19 with 165 kids attending from three schools.	Annually	AM, Staff
6. Assist with annual Farm Safety Day Camp. 2018 Results: Dean assisted in 2018.	Annually	DT, Staff
7. Support and assist with the Area 7 Envirothon. 2018 Results: Aaren attended the planning meetings and helped at the Area event. He also contacted all the Vo Ag teachers in the county with information about the Envirothon.	Annually	AM
8. Promote and provide two \$500 scholarships, one to a graduating senior and one to a returning college student. 2018 Results: Both scholarships awarded. High School: Brady Ristau; College: No applications	Annually	JS, Admin, Board
9. Provide information on natural resources conservation at the county fair. 2018 Results: Location in the Commercial Building; CCM apprentice conducted kids' activities: stream table, groundwater model, the landscape model and edible soil 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. 2018 Results: Kingsland HS Fish and Waters class in October: stream table and groundwater model demonstrations and demonstrated water monitoring during their field day to the Lanesboro hatchery. About 350 tree seedlings were distributed to 5th graders in 7 schools in the county in May; a tree was planted at 5 schools (Fillmore Central, Lanesboro, Mabel-Canton, Kingsland and Chatfield).	Annually	CF, AM, Admin, JS, Staff
11. Promote the MPCA Citizen Stream Monitoring Program. 2018 Results: Information at the county fair.	Annually	CF,
12. Coordinate the Volunteer Precipitation Monitoring Network. 2018 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. 2018 Results: Contact with Fillmore Central but no activities.	Spring/Fall 2019	Staff
14. Provide opportunities for Board members to visit or tour sites where conservation practices are being implemented. Create	Spring-Fall 2019	Staff

a list of practices/projects of interest.

[2018: No activity.](#)

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. 2018 Results: Yes, information provided to the Spring Valley class in March.	Spring 2019	AM, DNR
16. Communicate with state and federal legislators about conservation programs and their effectiveness. 2018Results: MASWCD Legislative Briefing and Day at the Capitol attended by Administrator March 12-13.	Spring 2019	Admin, 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 2019. 2018 Results: FORR river float attended by one staff and one Board member.	Summer 2019	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. 2018 Results: Yes, eight 4-H awards sponsored	July 2019	Board
19. Coordinate efforts with the Bluff Country Hiking Club to maintain interpretive information for the Lost Creek Hiking Trail. 2018 Results: CCM apprentice inspected signage along the trail. No replacements needed.	Summer 2019	AM, 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.) 2018 Results: SWCD historical display was in the county courthouse April- May, stream table at Dairy Night at the Farm and the National Trout Center Water Quality Day in February.	As needed	Staff, Board
21. Provide scholarships or incentives to attend local or regional educational events that are consistent with the SWCD's mission. 2018 Results: No activity	As needed	Staff, Board
22. Assist MDA with Ag Water Quality Certification Program (AWQCP). 2018 Results: Informational meeting held in March. Gathered information for 6 applications.	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. 2018 Results: Geologic atlases distributed at various meetings.	Ongoing	Staff / Zoning
24. Create Root River 1W1P education/outreach program and/or templates in cooperation with 1W1P Planning Work Group. 2018 results: Proposal approved by the Regional Sustainable Development Partnership for assistance with developing a civic engagement plan with assistance from Extension and U of M.	Ongoing	CF, Admin
25. Ask cooperators if they would be willing to make their project available to the public for a field day or other promotion/outreach for a practice they have installed. 2019 results:	Ongoing	All staff

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. 2018 Results: Two staff attended Area 7 trainings on WASCObS, grassed waterways (online) and hydrology (classroom).	Ongoing	Staff, Board
2. Conduct annual performance evaluations and review staff work plans. 2018 Results: Six month evaluations completed with two staff; one annual evaluation completed for recommended step increase. IDPs completed with all technical staff. Conservation Corps apprentice evaluations completed. Exit interview held with retiring staff person. Monthly one-on-one staff meetings held in November and December as an outcome of the PRAP office assessment process.	Ongoing	Admin
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). 2018 Results: The SWCD was represented by staff and board members at several regional meetings of the Technical JPB, Hiawatha Valley RC&D, Water Resources Advisory Committee, Water Resources Board, District Managers' meetings, and BALMM.	Ongoing	Staff, Board
4. Administer the Ag BMP Loan Program. 2018 Results: 19 loan applications for \$673,103; 13 completed for \$591,503.25: 3 manure equipment (\$297,357), 2 completed (\$294,856.50); 2 feedlot fix (\$15,248), 1 completed (\$13,747.70); 10 septic systems (\$129,496), 6 completed (\$61,896.23); 1 no till equipment (\$64,000), completed; 3 well replacement (\$55,583), 2 completed (\$45,482.82); (1 Variable Rate Technology (\$111,420), completed	Ongoing	AK, Admin
6. Attend County Technology Committee meetings, and when applicable, Department Head meetings. 2018 Results: Anne Koliha attended the monthly meetings and received information about the county's phone system in the event that USDA phones will no longer be available.	Ongoing	AK, Admin
7. Annually review and approve the District By-Laws. 2018 Results: Completed in February.	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). 2018 Results: Dues were paid to all organizations.	Annually	Board
9. Continue participation in the DNR Observation Well Network. 2018 Results: One well is monitored by staff.	March-Nov 2019	DK
10. Participate in Local Work Group for federal programs (EQIP, CRP, etc.) 2018 Results: LWG meeting was held in March in coordination with the Root River 1W1P Advisory Committee meeting.	Spring 2019	Staff, Board / NRCS
12. Pursue funding to hire a summer intern to assist with SWCD projects and programs. 2018 Results: Selected as a work site for one Conservation Corps Apprentice.	Nov. 2019	Admin, 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. 2018: No purchases in 2018	Ongoing	Staff

14. Develop work plan for use of 2019 Local Capacity Grant Funds and policy for non-structural practices (cover crops). 2018: 2018 grant: \$40,000 cost share, \$50,000 TA, \$10,000 Education/outreach	July 2019	Staff and Board
15. Distribute customer satisfaction surveys and compile results for an annual report to the SWCD staff and Board. 2018: Surveys distributed; 29 returned since Dec. 2017; results to be compiled.	Ongoing	DR, JS, and staff

Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District

Comprehensive Plan Addendum – 2019 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 and the Root River 1W1P 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 which ended in 2018. NRCS Conservation Collaboration Grant awarded to continue to fund 85% of the position for 3 years. Remaining 15% will be funded by the Root River 1W1P grant and other sources. 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 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 ended in April 2018. Assistance continues to be provided to landowners with installing practices identified in their conservation plans. A Root River Watershed Conservation Planner funded by the Watershed Conservation Planning Initiative is housed in the Root River SWCD office. Torkelson Creek was identified as a priority watershed by the Local Work Group for EQIP and conservation planning efforts.

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 four sites planned for 2019. The MDA N BMP Outreach grant is administered through the SE MN Water Resources Board as of January 2018. It funds 20% of the NMP position.
- Nutrient Management Specialist position was funded by a BWSR CWF grant, which ended in 2018, so funding from the Root River 1W1P watershed-based grant began funding 80% of the position in August 2018.
- Buffers
 - Maintaining CRP buffers, grassed waterways and perennial cover in sensitive areas is a priority.
 - Complete compliance checks for the buffer law.
 - Assist Fillmore County Zoning with any enforcement procedures related to the buffer law. Funding was approved for buffer work again in 2019: \$30,000 buffer grant plus \$2000 from the Local Capacity Grant matched by \$2000 from Fillmore County.
 - All information is entered into BUFFCAT, the statewide database that serves as the annual reporting mechanism for the grant. As of the end of 2018, 99% of parcels are in compliance, and just one landowner remains to come into compliance.

Feedlots:

- Continue to complete runoff control projects utilizing 319 grants. Another 319 grant was awarded for feedlot projects starting in 2018 and continuing through 2020.
- BWSR was awarded federal RCPP funding to be matched with state funds for feedlot projects in SE MN. Communication will continue with the County Feedlot Officer regarding potential projects.

Root River 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 and the Joint Powers Agreement in 2017.
- In 2018, Fillmore SWCD continued to provide day-to-day coordination; Winona SWCD continued as fiscal agent. A watershed implementation grant was awarded in June 2018 in the amount of \$851,301. A work plan and budget were approved by the Policy Committee and implementation activities have commenced.
- Root River Cycle 2 Intensive Watershed Monitoring: 2018 marked the second round of intensive watershed monitoring in the Root River watershed. 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 were approved to continue the work in 2018-2019.
- SE MN Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network:
 - The Water Management Coordinator will assist with maintaining the volunteer list, filling empty nodes, 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 2019 using funding from MRBI-EQIP for the Lower South Fork, a BWSR Clean Water Fund Grant, and a BWSR Targeted Watershed Grant.
 - Funds left from the E-3 project will be used for water storage structures or other practices 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:

- Meetings were held regarding the WRAPS document for the Upper Iowa expected to be completed in 2019.
- Continue monitoring with Iowa DNR.

Healthy Forests for Healthy Water:

- The portion of the funds transferred to BWSR were spent in 2018. The final financial report and project results were entered into eLINK.

Summer Intern:

- An application was not submitted to Conservation Corps Minnesota to be a worksite for an apprentice position for 2019 because of cuts to state funding which would require the SWCD to fund the position entirely.
- 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 24, 2019 at Lost Creek Trail west of Chatfield.

- An intern will continue to work with the SWCD, Fillmore County Highway Department, Extension and Prairie Smoke volunteers in 2019 to study options for treating wild parsnip along county 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.

Ag Water Quality Certification Program (AWQCP):

- Promotional activities were conducted in 2018 with funds to be requested from the SE MN Water Resources Board. Additional funds are available in 2019 if needed.

MDA Township Nitrate Testing Program:

- The second round of township testing was conducted by MDA in 2018. Assistance will be provided with follow up if requested by MDA.