

# Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District



## 2021 ANNUAL PLAN

1/21/2021

## **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.

	<b>SWCD Partners</b>	<b>Cooperative Projects and Programs</b>
<b>Federal</b>	<b>NRCS</b>	EQUIP (RCPP), CSP, Local Work Group, Farm Bill Assistance
	<b>FSA</b>	CRP, CCRP
<b>State</b>	<b>BWSR</b>	Grant funds (State Cost Share, Easement Delivery, Conservation Delivery, Local Capacity, Buffer, Clean Water Fund), WCA Technical Evaluation Panel, RIM/CREP, Root River One Watershed, One Plan
	<b>MPCA</b>	Watershed Pollutant Load Monitoring Network (WPLMN), Surface Water Assessment Grant, Citizen Stream Monitoring Program (CSMP), Root River One Watershed, One Plan
	<b>MDA</b>	Ag BMP Loan Program, Root River Field to Stream Partnership monitoring grant, BWSR Targeted Watershed grant, SE MN Nitrogen BMP Outreach, Township Nitrate Testing, Root River One Watershed, One Plan
	<b>DNR</b>	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
	<b>MDH</b>	Wellhead Protection Area Plans, Root River One Watershed, One Plan
	<b>MASWCD</b>	Envirothon; Outstanding Conservationist awards
	<b>Grazing Lands Conservation Association</b>	Grazing field days; soil health partner
	<b>U of M Extension</b>	Grazing Gazette (online version), Ag in the Classroom, nutrient management/N BMP outreach, noxious weed programs, Fillmore County Integrated Roadside Management
	<b>Conservation Corps MN</b>	Crew projects
	<b>MN Forestry Association</b>	Root River Woodland Council membership
<b>Regional</b>	<b>SE SWCD Technical JPB</b>	Nutrient Management Specialist grant, NRCS Conservation Collaboration Grant for Soil Health, engineering assistance, RCPP/BWSR Feedlot Grant
	<b>BALMM</b>	Network for sharing information and regional think tank
	<b>Hiawatha Valley RC&amp;D</b>	Soil health, civic engagement support, Root River One Watershed, One Plan
<b>Local</b>	<b>Fillmore County</b>	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
	<b>Watershed projects</b>	Root River One Watershed, One Plan coordination, Rush-Pine Farmer Led

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		Council, Upper Iowa River Watershed: Water quality monitoring; Root River Cycle 2 monitoring
	<b>Land Stewardship Project (LSP):</b>	Soil health, women landowner workshops
	<b>National Trout Center</b>	Nitrate clinic, education
	<b>4-H</b>	Sponsor County Fair awards
	<b>Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center</b>	Education and outreach
	<b>Bluff Country Hiking Club</b>	Lost Creek Hiking Trail interpretive signs and brochure
	<b>Friends of the Root River</b>	Citizen group education and outreach

### Lead Staff Legend

<b>AA</b>	Administrative Assistant
<b>ASHS</b>	Area Soil Health Specialist
<b>CT</b>	Conservation Technician
<b>DA</b>	District Administrator
<b>ET</b>	Engineering Technician
<b>RCS</b>	Resource Conservation Specialist
<b>WMC</b>	Water Management Coordinator

## 2021 Annual Plan Outline

### **Soil Resources 8**

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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 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

### **Water Resources 10**

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#### **Goal #2: Maintain and improve surface and groundwater quality.....10**

##### **Objective #1: Reduce sources of agricultural pollution.....10**

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

##### **Objective #2: Reduce urban sources of water pollution.....10**

- 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

**Healthy Natural Communities 12**

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

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

- District Tree Program and Windbreak Program
- Permanent, diverse native species vegetation (e.g., pollinator habitat) and invasive species control (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
- 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: 6<sup>th</sup> 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, Friends of the Root River etc.)
- Communication with Federal and State legislators

**SWCD Capacity 16**

**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: 2021 Annual Plan

## Section #1: Soil Resources

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

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

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Assist landowners and operators with practices identified for implementation of resource concerns. <del>Refer to Root River</del> Conservation Planner for plan updates as requested. 2020 Results: No one was referred to Dan W.	Ongoing	ASHS, ET, RCS, CT / NRCS
2. Assist landowners with establishment of practices through the State Cost Program, Local Capacity Cost Share and NRCS EQIP. 2020 Results: 13,286' Grassed Waterway; 3 Rock Lined Waterways; 21 Grade Stabilization structures; 1,804' Terraces; 5,526' Subsurface Drain; 1,700' Underground Outlet, 1 Rock Chute. 19 of these practices were implemented pairing state and federal dollars, while 2 were implemented using straight federal dollars. State cost share projects completed: 2 Grade Stabilization Local Capacity: 2 Grade Stabilization; 1,194' Terraces; 2,720' Grassed Waterway; 1 Grazing Fencing	Ongoing	RCS, ET, CT / NRCS
3. Assist Fillmore County with enforcement of the county's Soil Loss Control Ordinance. 2020 Results: No activity.	Ongoing	RCS, ET, CT / Fillmore County
4. Continue to use results from LiDAR and Stream Power Index and farm walkovers for implementing programs and practices in FSP watersheds. 2020 Results: Field to Stream Partnership: 2 Grade Stabilization; 1 Feedlot Runoff Control; 1,375' Grassed Waterway; 0.7acre Buffer Incentive Phase II Implementation grant close out end of 2020; Targeted Watershed grant finish up in 2021 (funds allocated to projects in Mower to finish up)	Ongoing	RCS, ET, CT / MDA
5. Assist landowners with implementing cover crops, managed grazing and other soil health practices. 2020 Results: Certified 2,420.4 acres of CC for CSP & EQIP payments for 30 producers in 3 counties. Also certified prescribe grazing payment for EQIP & CSP for 9 producers on 848 acres. ASHS assistance to Wabasha SWCD: 28 cover crop plans developed and certified for payments; 756 acres.	Ongoing	ASHS, NRCS, Extension
6. Provide SWCD funds for set aside acres for summer construction of grassed waterways and other practices 2020 Results: 2 Landowners for total of 11.0 acres. Changed to Pre-construction Cover and cost-share funds from State Cost-share used.	Annually	RCS, ET, CT
7. Assist with establishing and maintaining vegetative buffers in sensitive areas such as shoreland, sinkholes and HEL, utilizing existing conservation programs including RIM; provide technical assistance for state buffer law compliance	Ongoing	RCS, ET, CT



2020 Results: Buffer law conduct status reviews according to monitoring plan, investigate any complaints/concerns, update internal database and BuffCAT

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.	Ongoing	WMC, Admin, RCS, ET, CT, ASHS, NMS / RR1W1P partners
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2020 Results: Installed 6 Grade Stabilization structures utilizing RR1W1P cost-share

9. Prepare resolution(s) to MASWCD		Admin, Board
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2020 Results: No new resolutions presented from Fillmore – supported Area resolutions presented

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

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. 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. 2020 Results: 2020 grazing training for pasture score sheet training in the SE and SW for 63 NRCS and Partners; Training in the SE and NE for 87 NRCS and Partners for fence/pipeline/water tanks/stream crossing/HUAP	Summer/Fall 2021	ASHS / NRCS, GDAA, Extension
2. Conduct side-by-side comparisons of various tillage practices and N practices (DWP in SEMN Grant) 2020 Results: Coordinated 6 plots for N Rate Trials. Completed pre-plant soil samples, field scouting for pre-side dressing N testing (PSNT), collected PSNT samples, took SPAD readings, collected samples for basal stalk nitrate testing and whole plant samples. Collected harvest data and reviewed with farmers to help form future nitrogen decisions. Information was also submitted into the Iowa State Nitrogen Fertilizer Calculator. 9 producers participate in N BMP incentive program to lower N rates	Spring-Fall 2021	NMS
3. Partner with Tour de Forage event with Midwest Forage Association. 2020 Results: No activity.	Summer 2021	ASHS, Board

**Section #2: Water Resources**

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

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

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Provide financial and technical assistance to feedlot operators for feedlot run-off control and ag waste storage facilities. 2020 Results: 1 Feedlot runoff control system installed; Assisted CFO with site inspections (22); Development of pollution abatement plans; MPARS water appropriation permit assistance to producers	Ongoing	ET, 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. 2020 Results: 26 new or updated plans completed in 7 different counties totaling at least 15,000 acres.	Ongoing	NMS

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**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 and other events. 2020 Results: 5 rain barrels sold.	Ongoing	WMC, CT
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. 2020 Results: Inspection of Harmony Raingarden.	Ongoing	CT

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

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Assist with the semi-annual Fillmore County Household Hazardous Waste Collections. 2020 Results: Staff helped at event-in October	May/Oct 2021	Staff

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**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. 2020 Results: No activity.	Ongoing	RCS, CT
2. Assist Fillmore County with investigating sites for development in the Decorah Shale Overlay District; review ordinance with Zoning staff. 2020 Results: No activity.	Ongoing	WMC, CT
3. Provide cost share for sealing abandoned wells; review eligibility criteria for use of state cost share funds. 2020 Results: 4 wells sealed with SE MN Well Sealing grant funds – 4 additional inquiries but no action	Ongoing	RCS, WMC, CT, ET
4. Assist with dye trace studies and ground water research. 2020 Results: Assisted MDA and DNR with maintaining continuous nitrate monitoring equipment in springs in Fillmore County; assisted with flow measurements of springs in Fillmore County. Begin background of dye trace in Harmony area.	Ongoing	WMC, CT, intern/ DNR, U of M
5. Participate in the Technical Evaluation Panel for frac sand mining permit application reviews. 2020 Results: No permit applications in 2020.	As needed	Admin, WMC, CT / DNR, BWSR

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

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
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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. 2020 Results: Water quality monitoring continues.	Ongoing	Admin, WMC, CT, RCS, ET / MDA
2. Continue partnership with MPCA to monitor Watershed Pollutant Load Monitoring Network (WPLMN) sites. 2020 Results: WPLMN completed for the sampling season. Two-year contract renewed in 2020.	Ongoing	Admin, WMC, CT / MPCA
3. Support civic engagement efforts in the Root River watershed (Friends of the Root River, Rush-Pine Farmer Led Council, MDA FSP, etc.) 2020 Results: Work with Root River 1W1P Planning Workgroup to develop engagement strategies.	Ongoing	WMC, Extension, MPCA, Winona Co.
4. Assist with water quality monitoring in the Upper Iowa Watershed. 2020 Results: Completed Upper Iowa sampling once per month (April-October) in cooperation with IA DNR.	April -Oct 2021	WMC, CT
5. Continue to oversee maintenance of the East Willow Creek flood control structures with Fillmore County and NRCS. 2020 Results: Herbicide treatment of woody species. No 2020 inspection completed.	Ongoing	CT, 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. 2020 Results: Admin coordinated meetings of the Planning Work Group, Advisory Committee, and Policy Committee. Grant tracking completed by DA. Reporting completed by staff.	Ongoing	WMC, Admin

#### 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. 2020 Results: Internal audit completed in March. Ongoing lab services maintained; 112 total samples analyzed. Ongoing nitrate screening provided. Reviewed sample acceptance procedure with new staff. External audit completed.	Ongoing	WMC, CT, Admin, AA
2. Continue to coordinate Fillmore County's participation in the SE MN Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network. 2020 Results: Participation list updated; new consent forms were sent out and are being filed as returned.	Ongoing	WMC / Olmsted SWCD
3. Conduct at least two nitrate testing clinics. 2020 Results: No nitrate clinics were completed in 2020 due to COVID-19 safety precautions. 61 nitrate samples analyzed in Fillmore SWCD lab.	Spring/Summer 2021	WMC, CT / Public Health
4. Provide information on water treatment systems as requested. 2020 Results: Information provided as needed.	As needed	WMC, CT
5. Review Wellhead Protection Plans and provide assistance as needed. 2020 Results: No activity.	As needed	WMC, NMS, Public Water Suppliers

### Section #3: Healthy Natural Communities

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

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

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Administer the District Tree Program. 2020 Results: 12,256 trees sold, interest and purchase of bee lawn seed mix and tree tubes, continues purchases of tree mats with staples and fertilizer packets	Ongoing	AA, ET
2. Administer District Windbreak Program. 2020 Results: 6 cost-share contracts completed for 4,670', total cost-share paid \$2,703.00.	Ongoing	ET, CT
3. Sponsor annual Forestry Field Day on July 29, 2021. 2020 Results: Field day held July 29 at Isinours Forest Management Unit outside of Preston. Handouts were created for self-guided tours. 25 attendees in person.	July 29, 2021	CT, Intern, Forestry Committee
4. Sponsor annual Prairie Walk. 2020 Results: Event not held due to Covid-19 precautions.	Summer/Fall 2021	CT, Forestry Committee-Board members
5. 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. 2020 Results: Continue with roadside test plot management. Survey effectiveness in 2021. Look into holding collaborative meeting in 2021.	Ongoing	CT, intern, Forestry Committee, Extension, County Highway, MDA
6. 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. 2020 Results: no further survey completed since County reshaped hillside in 2019 – monitoring activity completed. Hwy Department did extensive digging of roadside and tentatively plan to excavate further in future years.	Ongoing	Gossman, ET, CT, 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. 2020 Results: See WCA annual report to BWSR; Mathison served on TEP; monthly meetings held either in person or by phone.	Ongoing	CT, Admin, WMC
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. 2020 Results: Continued buffer monitoring – provide information in annual newspaper insert	Ongoing	ET, CT, Fillmore County

**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. 2020 Results: Investigation of options for website update continues.	Ongoing	AA, Admin, Staff
2. Submit periodic news releases or commentaries from the Board and staff to the local newspapers about SWCD priorities 2020 Results: Articles and advertisements placed in Journal throughout year as needed	Ongoing	Admin, Board
3. Publish annual newspaper insert and at least two online newsletters. 2020 Results: Newspaper insert published in February in the Fillmore County Journal; 1 online newsletter completed in 2020.	Annually	Admin, AA, Staff
4. Select and promote a county Outstanding Conservationist (from District 3 in 2021) and other award candidates. Hold annual recognition event. 2020 Results: January event at Branding Iron; 2020 winners selected: Gary & Josh Eisenman – State Convention was held virtually and no recognition ceremony was held. Eisenman’s will be invited to recognition event in 2021.	Annually	Staff, Board
5. Sponsor the annual 6th Grade Conservation Day. 2020 Results: Created 5 different units of “distance learning friendly” topics and distributed to all 6 grade teachers in Fillmore County to an estimated 350 students.	Annually	CT, Staff
6. Assist with annual Farm Safety Day Camp. 2020 Results: No activity.	Annually	ASHS, Staff
7. Support and assist with the Area 7 Envirothon. 2020 Results: Aaren attended the planning meetings for event. He assisted in creating new junior high activities.	Annually	CT
8. Promote and provide two \$500 scholarships, one to a graduating senior and one to a returning college student. 2020 Results: Both scholarships awarded. High School: Kelsey Biel from Fillmore Central HS; College: Tyler Raaen	Annually	AA, Admin, Board
9. Provide information on natural resources conservation at the county fair. 2020 Results: no County Fair held due to COVID	Annually	AA, ET, 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. 2020 Results: Provided 6 <sup>th</sup> grade curriculum to high school ag teachers as requested.	Annually	WMC, CT, Admin, NMS, Staff
11. Promote the MPCA Citizen Stream Monitoring Program. 2020 Results: Unable to promote during county fair as fair was cancelled due to COVID-19 precautions.	Annually	WMC
12. Coordinate the Volunteer Precipitation Monitoring Network. 2020 Results: Volunteer data collected and submitted to the state.	Annually	RCS
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. 2020 Results: No activity due to COVID-19 precautions.	Spring/Fall 2021	Staff
14. Provide opportunities for Board members to visit or tour sites where conservation practices are being implemented. 2020: No activity.	Spring-Fall 2021	Staff
15. Communicate with state and federal legislators about conservation programs and their effectiveness.	Spring 2021	Admin, Staff, Board

2020 Results: MASWCD Day at the Capitol canceled due to COVID-19 precautions. District Administrator reached out to local legislators via email.		
16. 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.	July 2021	Board
2020 Results: No activity.		
17. Coordinate efforts with the Bluff Country Hiking Club to maintain interpretive information for the Lost Creek Hiking Trail.	Summer 2021	CT, Intern, Forestry Committee
2020 Results: Lost Creek Hiking Trail maps were printed. A new forestry loop will be added in 2021.		
18. Coordinate activities with other conservation organizations that help meet the goals of the SWCD (e.g., Eagle Bluff, Project Get Outdoors, National Trout Center, The Nature Conservancy, etc.)	As needed	Staff, Board
2020 Results: no activities held due to COVID		
	As needed	Staff, Board
19. Provide scholarships or incentives to attend local or regional educational events that are consistent with the SWCD's mission.		
2020 Results: No activity		
20. Assist MDA with Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP).	As needed	Staff, ET
2020 Results: Provide information to landowners about program; news articles, Facebook, held lunch n learn event in January		
21. 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.	Ongoing	Staff / Zoning
2020 Results: Information available at SWCD office.		
22. Create Root River 1W1P education/outreach program and/or templates in cooperation with 1W1P Planning Work Group.	Ongoing	WMC, Admin
2020 results: Completion of civic engagement plan with assistance from Extension and U of M.		

## 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. 2020 Results: BWSR Tool Talk Webinars, BWSR Academy, Other online training courses	Ongoing	Staff, Board
2. Conduct annual performance evaluations and review staff work plans. 2020 Results: Annual evaluations completed with all staff. Individual Development Plans updated in eLink for technical staff.	Ongoing	Admin
3. Support staff and supervisor attendance at meetings of regional organizations that help achieve SWCD goals (SE Technical Support JPB, BALMM). 2020 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, District Managers' meetings, and BALMM.	Ongoing	Staff, Board
4. Administer the Ag BMP Loan Program. 2020 Results: 14 loan applications for \$458,528; 10 completed for \$380,703: 4 manure equipment, 1 feedlot fix, 5 septic systems	Ongoing	ET, Admin

5. Annually review and approve the District By-Laws. 2020 Results: Completed in February.	Annually	Board
6. 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). 2020 Results: Dues were paid to all organizations.	Annually	Board
7. Continue participation in the DNR Observation Well Network. 2020 Results: Two wells were monitored by staff.	March-Nov 2021	RCS
8. Participate in Local Work Group for federal programs (EQIP, CRP, etc.) 2020 Results: LWG meeting was held virtually.	Spring 2021	Staff, Board / NRCS
9. Pursue funding to hire a summer intern to assist with SWCD projects and programs. 2020 Results: No intern hired	Nov. 2021	Admin, Personnel Committee
10. 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. 2020 Results: Continue to look into other technology needs; especially for virtual meetings	Ongoing	Staff
11. Develop work plan for use of 2021 Local Capacity Grant Funds. 2020 Results: 2020 Grant Allocation - \$115,669 total; \$20,000 for staff Education/Outreach efforts; \$95,669 for Technical Assistance	July 2021	Staff and Board
12. Distribute customer satisfaction surveys and compile results for an annual report to the SWCD staff and Board. 2020 Results: Surveys distributed; results to be compiled.	Ongoing	AA and staff

**Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District**  
**Comprehensive Plan Addendum – 2021 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 1WIP 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.

#### Area 7 Soil Health Technician:

- 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 1WIP 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:

- 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 2020. The BWSR SE Drinking Water Protection in SE MN grant is a regional grant which supports this work. Fillmore SWCD acts as the fiscal agent for this grant.
- Nutrient Management Specialist position so funding from the Root River 1WIP 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 according to the monitoring plan.
- Assist Fillmore County Zoning with any enforcement procedures related to the buffer law. Funding was approved for buffer work again in 2021: \$25,800 BWSR Buffer grant.
- All information is entered into BUFCAT, the statewide database that serves as the annual reporting mechanism for the grant. Feedlots:
  - Continue to assist County Feedlot Officer with site inspections.
  - Continue to complete runoff control projects utilizing any available cost-share funds.
  - 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. In March of 2020, the Root River watershed was awarded \$1,469,595. Fillmore SWCD continues to provide day-to-day coordination while Winona SWCD continues as fiscal agent.
- 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 2020 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 2021 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 and outreach conducted in 2020 with available funds – continue to request funds to use to continue promotion and outreach of program.

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.