

Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District



2013 ANNUAL PLAN

MISSION STATEMENT

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

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

All programs and activities are subject to funding.

GOALS/OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: Enhance and maintain soil resources by promoting best management practices to reduce erosion and sustain soil productivity. Total Estimated Staff Days needed: 1494

Objective 1

Provide information and education to the public on soils, soil conservation practices and run-off control. Estimated Staff Days: 867

1. Provide information to the public through the media, e.g. newspaper insert, newsletter and website, about the impacts of soil erosion.
2. Appoint a committee to work with Extension and other partners to provide information in a webinar, on the website, in the newsletters, through workshops/tours and other venues about how to incorporate conservation language into agricultural lease agreements.
3. Communicate with state and federal legislators about conservation programs and their effectiveness and continue to lobby for conservation compliance for federal farm programs and funding for the Conservation Stewardship Program.
4. Encourage the planting of soil conserving crops, cover crops and crop diversity. .
5. Provide financial and technical assistance for grazing studies and educational programs for pasture management through grazing field days and pasture management workshops, the bi-monthly Grazing Gazette newsletter and a grazing website.
6. Maintain the No-till informational website, and assist with a no-till field day in cooperation with Winneshiek County SWCD.
7. Investigate funding sources for side-by-side comparisons of no till and mulch till .
8. Provide information regarding access to soil stewardship materials to churches. [Send postcards that include rental agreement information from the SWCD website.](#)
9. Promote and target continuous CRP, RIM Buffer program, and the Hayable Buffer program for maximum soil and water benefits with emphasis on DNR protected shore land areas, sinkholes and other sensitive areas.
10. Assist NRCS with the tillage transect survey as needed to provide information to the public on the trends of tillage practices and residue management utilizing current staff.
11. Hold an annual awards event to recognize the 2013 Outstanding Conservationists and others.
12. Continue as the lead agency for the completion of the Root River Comprehensive Strategy and pursue funding for implementation activities and continued water quality assessment, such as the MPCA Pollutant Load Monitoring Grant.

13. Investigate other land management options for productive lands that consider such things as permaculture and soil quality. Post events related to these topics on the SWCD webpage,

14. Continue to partner with MDA on Root River Small Watershed Project to evaluate BMPs and work with farmers to adopt BMPs and measure performance using such things as SCI, PI, and basal stalk nitrate tests.

15. Develop a plan for maintenance of the East Willow Creek flood control structures with the County.

16. Complete erosion control measures on Lost Creek Hiking Trail with Conservation Corps Minnesota grant, place a sign by the practice and include it in the trail brochure.

Objective 2

Provide funding and technical assistance for the implementation of conservation practices and best management practices that reduce soil erosion. Estimated Staff Days: 627

1. Provide assistance to the county for the implementation of the county soil loss ordinance.
2. Promote, administer and provide technical assistance to landowners for the state cost-share program. Utilize status review letters to encourage landowners to consider additional conservation needs.
3. Provide assistance to NRCS in the implementation of the Federal Programs.
4. Administer the Ag BMP low interest loan program to provide funds for conservation practice implementation and the purchase of eligible equipment.
5. Provide technical and financial support and administration of programs for planting cover crops.
6. Promote the use of the designated District account for setting aside acres to allow for summer construction of conservation practices, specifically waterways installed using state cost-share or CRP

GOAL 2: Maintain and improve surface and groundwater quality to meet the needs of the public. Total Estimated Staff Days needed: 628

Objective 1

Reduce pollution impacts on surface and groundwater due to non-point source pollution from leaching and run-off from animal feedlots, manure storage facilities and manure applied to the land. Estimated Staff Days: 273

1. Support grant acquisition for feedlot improvements
2. Provide technical assistance for nutrient management planning and manure management.
3. Promote local cost-share programs to provide 50% cost-share for non-engineered feedlot run-off control practices and odor control (with priority to run-off control) for existing building sites.

Funding may come from the feedlot base grant or SE MN Water Resources Board 319 grant funds or other funding sources.

4. Provide the Ag BMP low interest loan program for ag waste management. Promote the program through public informational meetings and presentations.
5. Continue bacteria and nitrate monitoring before and after a feedlot fix to evaluate the effectiveness of the fix.

Objective 2

Reduce the potential for pollution of surface and groundwater resources due to the karst topography. Estimated Staff Days: 37

1. Cost-share the sealing of abandoned wells using state cost share funds in accordance with the cost share criteria established by the SWCD Board.
2. Assist public water suppliers with developing and implementing wellhead protection area plans as requested.
3. Support dye trace studies and other ground water research in the Root River watershed.
4. Assist the county with the administration of the Decorah Shale Ordinance.
5. Participate in the Technical Evaluation Panel for frac sand mining permit applications. .
6. Facilitate meetings on ground and surface water protection to targeted audience, such as community education classes.
7. Provide education in cooperation with Extension and MDA to producers regarding nutrient management in areas with karst and other sensitive features, in particular the MRBI watersheds.
8. Implement the Clean Water Fund mini-grant program for storm water management projects with cities, non-profits and community organizations. Include in storm water activities in the work plan for the summer intern .

Objective 3

Protect surface and groundwater from contamination from agricultural and non-agricultural use of fertilizers and pesticides. Estimated Staff Days: 284

1. Educate producers and landowners on the effects of over application of fertilizer and build-up of nutrients, and disseminate information on available technical and financial assistance. Promote and help recruit cooperators for additional research in nutrient management in the county..
2. Promote no fall application of nitrogen via anhydrous ammonia, urea and 28% fertilizer focusing efforts on producers and commercial suppliers, and work with MDA on their compliance with this recommendation.
3. Continue to support the citizen MPCA Citizen Stream Monitoring Program and publicize it in the newsletter and local newspapers.

4. Cooperate with MPCA, DNR and MDA in establishing long-term surface water monitoring sites and parameters.
5. Provide information on the SWCD website regarding a waste pesticide disposal options for county residents.
6. Continue to participate in the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative for the Root River.
7. Provide support for the revision of the State's Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan through staff input and assistance with public meetings for southeastern Minnesota, which is identified as a priority area for implementation of the plan because of elevated nitrate levels in ground water due to the karst geology.

Objective 4

Provide education and information about drinking water quality and ways to protect drinking water supplies. Estimated Staff Days: 16

1. Provide training and information to local officials and others about existing tools for land management and develop a list of resource people to contact for various resource issues as requested.
2. Provide testing services for total coliform bacteria, E. coli, and nitrates. Pursue funding for equipment maintenance and certification for bacteria testing program.
3. Conduct at least two water-testing clinics as funding allows.
4. Participate in regional ground water monitoring efforts, including the Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network.
5. Promote the Ag BMP loans for well replacement.

Objective 5

Reduce contaminants from sewage and wastewater in surface and groundwater by ensuring that all residences have access to adequate water treatment. Estimated Staff Days: 10

1. Provide Ag BMP low interest loan funds for the replacement of failing individual sewage treatment systems.
2. Provide information on water treatment systems as requested.
3. Assist with regional grants for wastewater and the Greenleafon wastewater project as needed.
4. Continue to assist the county with inspections of new septic systems as needed.

Objective 6

Protect surface and groundwater from contamination due to improper solid and hazardous waste disposal. Estimated Staff Days: 6

1. Provide assistance with clean-up of an illegal dump site and/or a sinkhole dump if needed.
2. Participate in county's Household Hazardous Waste collection.

Objective 7

Reduce the risks to public health and impacts on surface and groundwater from petroleum products, chemicals and other potentially hazardous materials from storage tank leaks and overfills. Estimated Staff Days: 2

1. Provide education on farm tank spill containment and automatic shutoff nozzles including information about setbacks from wells. Post the information on the District website.
2. Conduct outreach and education with the Amish population in MRBI watersheds regarding BMPs for petroleum products near wellheads. Tie in with Public Health contacts with the Amish for water quality testing.

GOAL 3: Promote the wise use of natural resources to sustain productivity while promoting stewardship of plant and animal communities. Total Estimated Staff Days needed: 101

Objective 1

Promote the establishment of permanent vegetative cover to provide habitat for wildlife species and protect water quality and soil erosion. Estimated Staff Days: 60

1. Continue to administer the district tree program including tree sales and design of farmstead windbreaks. Include productive trees, such as hazelnuts, and pollinator species on the tree order list.
2. Provide technical assistance for developing grazing management plans and for the implementation of those plans.
3. Research and promote the use of a seed mixture for rain and/or butterfly gardens and for CSP/EQIP pollinator species and prepare a list of available vendors for customers. Place pictures of successful plantings on the website.
4. Promote Forest Stewardship Plans as part of developing conservation plans on cropland.
5. Promote invasive species control, such as buckthorn control, including follow up management under EQIP contracts.
6. Promote re-vegetation of native species through direct mailings, news articles, radio ads, etc. and provide technical assistance to landowners for programs for establishing native vegetation, including CCRP, the BWSR RIM Buffer Program, TNC Hayable Buffer program and other similar programs.
7. Develop a resolution for more participation and more input from resource professionals in setting practice guidelines for CRP that are more site specific.
8. Encourage the use of cover crops through a District education program.
9. Encourage the use of perennial crops.

10. Provide information about invasive species control on private and public lands, including follow up management under EQIP contracts.
11. Promote the Living Snow Fence Program and offer species on the tree sales list that are recommended for living snow fences. Work with the County to also identify suitable areas along county roads.
12. Assist with implementation of the Root River Landscape Plan in cooperation with the Root River team. .

Objective 2

Enhance the benefits of wetlands, floodplains and shoreland. Estimated Staff Days: 41

1. Administer the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act.
2. Work with legislators to restore funding for the Wetland Preservation Area program.
3. Cooperate with conservation groups and other government agencies to promote the use of rotational grazing in shoreland areas and such programs as CCRP, BWSR RIM Buffer and Hayable Buffer programs..
4. Assist with wetland restoration projects as requested by landowners. Promote agricultural wetland mitigation banking through BWSR.

GOAL 4: Carry out the duties of the soil and water conservation district in the most efficient and professional manner. Total Estimated Staff Days needed: 405

Objective 1

Support activities that will allow staff and board members to increase the capacity of the SWCD. Estimated Staff Days: 256

1. Seek funding and activities to enhance District capacity.
2. Provide funding for employee and supervisor training and development as budgeted.
3. Conduct annual performance evaluations. Begin developing individual staff work plans, that are reviewed at least once a year along with the performance evaluations while keeping the personnel policy handbook up to date with current policies.
4. Annually review and approve the District By-Laws.
5. Coordinate the activities and/or provide representation for Local Watershed Projects.
6. Encourage supervisor and staff attendance at area and state meetings.
7. Support of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) and the SE MN Area VII MASWCD, State MACDE and SE MACDE (MN Assoc. of Conservation District Employees).

8. Provide board member and/or staff attendance at the Hiawatha Valley RC&D, SE MN Area VII MASWCD, SE MN Technical Joint Powers Board, and SE MN Water Resources Board meetings.
9. Participate in regional initiatives that enhance the mission statement, including BALMM and the Driftless Area Initiative.
10. Participate in EQIP local workgroup.
11. Continue to be an active participant in activities with the National Trout Center in Preston.
12. Provide opportunities for Board members to visit or tour sites where conservation practices are being implemented.

Objective 2

Conduct educational activities that promote and carry out the mission and goals of the SWCD.

Estimated Staff Days: 149

1. Coordinate efforts with other conservation organizations to carry out the goals of the SWCD (e.g. Project Get Outdoors, Eagle Cliff Root River Clean up)-
2. Conduct a field day highlighting a successful feedlot project, cover crops, grazing and other practices.
3. Coordinate efforts with the Bluff Country Hiking Club and others to include additional interpretive signs, to update information in the brochure for practices that demonstrate good management of forest, prairie and cropland along the trail, and to conduct a landowner field day. Provide a link to the Hiking Club on the SWCD website.
4. Pursue grant funds for informational signs about garlic mustard and a boot scraper to reduce the risk of spreading it for the Lost Creek Hiking Trail.
5. Oversee the completion of designs for the Root River demonstration sites by the U of M Center for Changing Landscapes, and seek funding to implement the designs.
6. Develop a list of contacts and distribute hunter education materials to gun clubs and hunter safety instructors about how to reduce tree damage from tree stands..
7. Conduct joint meetings with County Commissioners and neighboring SWCDs every two years to review District programs.
8. Hold 3-6 meetings with the Local Water Management technical committee and Citizens' Advisory Committee.
9. Update and maintain the SWCD web page.
10. Publish a newspaper insert and at least two online newsletters in 2013.
11. Publish monthly newspaper columns submitted by a staff person assigned to each month highlighting projects, programs or events.

12. Conduct radio ads and public service announcements to promote the goals of the SWCD.
13. Carry out the DNR Well Monitoring Program.
14. Conduct the County Rain Gauge Monitoring Program.
15. Continue to hold a 6th grade field day with a goal of all schools participating. Invite home schooled students to the event. Have more direct contact with Lanesboro and Chatfield schools to encourage participation in 6th grade field day and other events or activities.
16. Support and assist with the Area VII Envirothon.
17. Promote and provide two \$500 scholarships, one to a graduating high school senior entering an agricultural or natural resource related field and one to a returning college student continuing education in an agricultural or natural resource related field limiting scholarships to one per individual.
18. Provide scholarships or other incentives to attend local educational events that are consistent with the SWCD's mission.
19. Provide information on natural resources conservation and renewable energy at the county fair as well as countywide throughout the year.
20. Select and promote a county Outstanding Conservationist (from District 5 in 2013) to be recognized at the annual MASWCD Convention, as well as other possible award candidates in other categories.
21. Promote District Accomplishments.
22. Work with the FFA and 4H organizations to promote soil conservation and to provide information about careers, forestry, water testing, etc.
23. Participate in Ag in the Classroom, Earth Day and other activities in the schools and contact the schools twice a year to encourage them to utilize SWCD staff as presenters.
24. Contact schools and home schooled students regarding participation in the MASWCD poster, mural and video contests.
25. Consider hiring a summer intern to assist with existing SWCD programs and expand outreach and education on forest management and urban storm water BMPs.
26. Schedule a canoe trip/streambank tour for board and staff on the Root River to view areas of special interest.
27. Collaborate with Eagle Bluff on an educational event, possibly a farm rental workshop with Extension incorporating ideas such as flexible rent based on price, yield or both.
28. Continue sponsoring the awards for forestry and other conservation practices through 4-H and FFA and work with the leaders to encourage better participation in these programs among their members.

GOAL 5: Maximize efficiency in GIS implementation by providing current training to SWCD staff. Total Estimated Staff Days needed: 36

Objective 1

Technical support of ongoing programs and practices. Estimated Staff Days: 36

1. Train SWCD staff in “Toolkit”, RUSLE, general map development, and other applicable GIS-based software.
2. Attend various local and regional software training sessions to keep abreast of technology.
3. Perform mapping services in support of nutrient management plan development and the buffer initiative.
4. Maintain GIS database of soil and water conservation practices within the County and continue to add older practices as time allows.
5. Continue involvement in the Fillmore County Technology Committee.
6. Keep current on the use of LiDAR for preliminary designs for conservation practices and targeting of practices.
7. Continue to utilize the free access to the Agren software as a testing site for planning waterways and ponds.

Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District Comprehensive Plan Addendum-State Cost Share

High Priority Erosion Problems

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

High Priority Water Quality Problems

High priority water quality problems outlined in the Local Water Management plan are:

Fecal coliform bacteria in streams and groundwater: This will be addressed by the SWCD through the implementation of feedlot water quality projects funded with Clean Water Funds available through the Board of Water and Soil Resources and 319 grants. The SWCD will work with the Fillmore County Feedlot Officer to implement low cost feedlot run-off control projects. A Nutrient Management Planning Specialist will continue to be housed with the SWCD to assist farmers with developing nutrient management plans and mini manure management plans. The feedlot fixes and nutrient management plans reduce fecal coliform bacteria in surface and ground waters of Fillmore County. The SWCD has been awarded \$175,000 in Clean Water Fund grants for FY13 for one feedlot project. With the importance of livestock in Fillmore County, filter strips are an important tool to minimize livestock damage to streambanks and reduce fecal coliform bacteria loading into nearby waters. Managed grazing in these areas can limit livestock access and help maintain permanent grass cover on streambanks. Continuous CRP cannot be grazed but can be used where manure is applied on fields adjacent to streams and sinkholes to reduce the risk of bacteria entering streams or ground water.. Compliance with the 50-foot buffer requirement in the Shoreland Ordinance will be emphasized. Technical assistance for development and implementation of nutrient management plans and grazing management plans also help achieve these goals. The Grazing Management Specialist will be assisting with at least five field days in 2013 plus coordinating the publication of the Grazing Gazette, a bi-monthly newsletter mailed to over 700 producers in three states. A grazing website is also being proposed. Assistance will also be provided as needed on small community wastewater projects implemented in the county by the SE MN Wastewater Initiative. The community of Greenleaf is in the process of planning a community wastewater system which should increase interest in the Ag BMP Loan Program.

Nitrates in groundwater: The SWCD provides state cost-share funds for sealing wells that meet the guidelines set by the SWCD Board at 50% cost-share not to exceed \$1,000. Technical assistance is available for nutrient management plans which help producers apply nutrients to cropland more efficiently improving the likelihood for reducing input costs. Nitrates are also reduced by addressing pollution from high priority feedlots and malfunctioning septic systems. Studies to better understand nitrate transport in karst continue through funding from MPCA and MDA. Nitrate clinics and the Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network will educate the public about nitrates in ground water and help to gather information about nitrate levels in drinking water wells. Loans for well replacement will be promoted through the Ag BMP loan program. The city of Chatfield has requested assistance with education and outreach to its residents with private wells and septic systems within the city limits and within the Drinking Water Management Supply Area to test their wells for nitrates, and to provide

education about proper use of fertilizers and proper operation and maintenance of septic systems. The Nutrient Management Specialist is on the Minnesota Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan Committee which will be finalizing the update to the plan in 2013. Southeast Minnesota is expected to be a priority area for implementing the plan's recommendations due to the sensitivity of the region's ground water to nitrate contamination because of the karst geology. The continuous nitrate monitoring stations installed at the Lanesboro Hatchery and the lysimeter network established regionally in cooperation with MDA, MPCA, and Winona State University are anticipated to continue with funding from MPCA.

Pesticides in streams: Monitoring is being conducted in conjunction with the MDA to identify areas of concern, but adequate data are not available to provide detailed information for mapping purposes. Two MDA pesticide monitoring sites are located in Fillmore County. Monitoring is also being conducted at the MDA Field to Stream sites. Assistance will be given to landowners for practices that reduce pesticide runoff into streams, such as filter strips. Education about setback requirements is ongoing.

Turbidity in surface waters: The Root River Turbidity TMDL study (2008-2011) was completed and the SWCD is now in the process of developing a Comprehensive Strategy with MPCA. This will provide an overall strategy for addressing turbidity and sediment, bacteria, nitrate and other stressors to aquatic life in the impaired segments of the river and its tributaries. Sediment fingerprinting data indicate that a significant percentage of the sediments carried in the streams is from upland erosion. This work is continuing through a two-year contract with Utah State University in cooperation with Winona State University to develop a sediment budget for the Root River watershed. The next step is to identify areas for implementing BMPs to begin seeing reductions in sediment in the river. Civic engagement activities have begun with the formation of a Root River Citizens' Advisory Group, plus smaller farmer led groups are taking hold in Rush-Pine and Watson Creek watersheds. The Citizens' Group is conducting local events in at least six communities to gather input for the Comprehensive Strategy and to develop a wider network of contacts for future water quality activities. A \$3000 grant from the Meadowlark Institute is helping to pay expenses for the local events. Five sites will be monitored in the Root River watershed as part of the MPCA Watershed Pollutant Load Monitoring Network beginning in 2013 in a continuing effort to assess water quality in the watershed. The SWCD staff will collect samples and manage the data for this effort.

Special Projects

The Fillmore SWCD has several ongoing special projects that will be implemented over the next several years. The Fillmore SWCD continues to provide assistance to create farmstead windbreaks for future energy conservation and offers state cost-share funds to provide 75% not to exceed established cost-share rates on file at the SWCD.

The Cover Crop program will continue as funding becomes available. Promotion of cover crops is becoming more of a priority for NRCS, Land Stewardship Project and others, so opportunities for a role for the SWCD could continue with the support of organizations like The Nature Conservancy.

The expiration of Conservation Reserve Program contracts is at its peak in 2013 with over 200 contracts set to expire. Farm Bill Assistance Grant funding is set to double for this effort. Maintaining CRP buffers, waterways and perennial cover on the most sensitive areas is a priority.

The MDA Root River Field to Stream Partnership will continue in 2013 to evaluate the effectiveness of BMPs. Two part-time staff will be funded in the SWCD to work with farmers on the adoption of BMPs and measuring their effectiveness and to conduct water quality monitoring. Cost share funds

will be available to the producers in the watersheds for implementation of practices. Funding for continuation of the project will be determined in May 2013.

A summer intern position has been applied for through the Conservation Corps of Minnesota. If the position is not available, the SWCD will fund the position. The intern will gain experience with implementing conservation practices, doing outreach and education on storm water management, data management for the bacteria testing lab, and assisting with water quality monitoring.

The Fillmore SWCD will continue to be an active participant in the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative for the Root River which provides additional funding through NRCS for practices funded through the EQIP, WHIP and Conservation Innovations Grant programs. 2013 is the last year of MRBI funding for implementation of practices. SWCD staff will be promoting the practices eligible for these funds and assisting landowners with their implementation. BWSR TA funding will help to pay for some staff time for this effort. The funding from NRCS and The Nature Conservancy will continue to pay for staff time to update conservation plans with a focus on the MRBI watersheds.

A USDA Conservation Innovations Grant awarded to the MDA is establishing more edge of field monitoring sites in the Root River watershed. The SWCD is partnering with MDA to set up and maintain the sites and to collect samples from a site in the Root River.

In 2004, the Fillmore SWCD began assisting the county on an “as needed” basis with conducting on-site inspections of new and upgraded ISTS systems. In addition, the District administers the Ag BMP loan program to assist homeowners with upgrading systems that are failing. Ag BMP loans are also available to landowners to assist in implementation of conservation practices and BMPs, such as feedlot fixes, variable rate technology, no till planters and to replace wells that are contaminated or do not meet setback requirements from pollution sources.

The SWCD has participated in the Southeast Minnesota Landscape Committee, which reports back to the Minnesota Forest Resources Council. From this relationship, the SWCD entered into an agreement with the MN DNR to administer and coordinate the development of a Root River Landscape Plan with a consultant, the Root River Project Steering Team, and the Root River Landscape Stewardship Planning/Coordination Committee. The plan was completed in 2012, and funding is available for Phase II of the project to begin working with landowners in the Conservation Opportunity Areas identified in Phase I to develop and implement plans that maintain and improve perennial vegetation and high biodiversity areas.

The SWCD Forestry Committee, which became active in 2011, will continue to develop ways to assist and inform landowners about managing forest resources. Information and educational resources for the Lost Creek Hiking Trail will continue to be updated to supplement the brochure and educational signage done in 2011, as well as conducting another successful landowner field day. Funding sources will be investigated for installing informational signs about garlic mustard and boot scrapers to reduce the risk of spreading it.

The SWCD was awarded a FY2013 Clean Water Fund Community Partners Grant to develop a storm water mini-grant program. The \$45,000 grant will provide funding and technical assistance to cities, non-profits, school, youth and community groups to promote and install practices that reduce and filter storm water from urban and developed areas. Eligible practices include rain barrels, rain gardens, pervious pavers, stormwater basins and swales, and native buffers. The Local Water Management Plan Technical Committee will develop program criteria. The SWCD Board will have final approval of the projects to be funded.