

# Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District



Susan Nash

## 2015 ANNUAL PLAN

1/27/15

## **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.

	<b>SWCD Partners</b>	<b>Cooperative Projects and Programs</b>
<b>Federal</b>	<b>NRCS</b>	EQIP, CSP, Local Work Group, Tillage transect survey
	<b>FSA</b>	CRP, CCRP
<b>State</b>	<b>BWSR</b>	Grant funds (General Services, Easement Services, Conservation Delivery, Farm Bill Assistance, Feedlot Water Quality, Clean Water Fund), WCA Technical Evaluation Panel, RIM/CREP, Root River One Watershed, One Plan Pilot
	<b>MPCA</b>	Watershed Pollutant Load Monitoring Network (WPLMN), SE MN WRAP Nitrogen Planning, Citizen Stream Monitoring Program (CSMP), subcontractor: Upper Iowa Intensive Watershed Monitoring (Root River SWCD Surface Water Assessment Grant)
	<b>MDA</b>	Ag BMP Loan Program, Root River Field to Stream Partnership, SE MN Nitrogen BMP Outreach
	<b>DNR</b>	Springshed mapping, Observation Well Network, water permits, Root River Landscape Stewardship Plan, SE Landscape Committee, Minnesota State Climatology Office Precipitation Monitoring Program, SWCD Forestry Committee and Field Day partner
	<b>MDH</b>	Wellhead Protection Area Plans
	<b>MASWCD</b>	Envirothon; poster, mural, video contests; Outstanding Conservationist awards
	<b>Grazing Lands Conservation Association</b>	Grazing field days; soil health partner
	<b>MN Milk Producers</b>	Soil health partner
	<b>MN Farmers Union</b>	Soil health partner
	<b>Lakeside Foods</b>	Soil health partner
	<b>Pinnacle Foods</b>	Soil health partner
	<b>Seneca Foods</b>	Soil health partner
	<b>Winona State/Utah State</b>	Root River Sediment Budget
	<b>SE MN Forage Council</b>	Soil health partner
	<b>U of M Extension</b>	Grazing Gazette, Ag in the Classroom, women landowner workshops, Root River Civic Engagement, nutrient management/N BMP outreach
	<b>Conservation Corps MN</b>	Apprenticeship program, crew project
	<b>MN DOT</b>	Living Snow Fence Program
<b>Regional</b>	<b>SE MN Water Resources Board</b>	Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network, 319 Feedlot Grants, SE MN Wastewater Initiative
	<b>SE SWCD Technical JPB</b>	Nutrient Management Specialist grant, Area Soil Health Coordinator grant, engineering assistance
	<b>BALMM</b>	Network for sharing information and generating ideas
	<b>Hiawatha Valley RC&amp;D</b>	Cover crops, grazing, civic engagement support
<b>Local</b>	<b>Fillmore County</b>	Wetland Conservation Act delegation, Local Water Management delegation, Feedlot Program technical support, septic system inspections, Soil loss Ordinance, Sinkhole

		Ordinance, Decorah Shale Overlay District, Frac Sand Technical Evaluation Panel, Household Hazardous Waste collections, East Willow Creek flood control structures
	<b>Watershed projects</b>	Rush-Pine Farmer Led Council, The Nature Conservancy (TNC): Cover Crop Funding, Watson Creek nitrogen BMPs, Upper Iowa River Watershed: Water quality monitoring
	<b>Land Stewardship Project (LSP):</b>	Cover crop field days, women landowner workshops
	<b>National Wildlife Federation</b>	Cover Crop Champion Grants
	<b>National Trout Center</b>	Nitrate clinic, education
	<b>4-H</b>	Sponsor County Fair awards
	<b>Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center</b>	Earth Day celebration, Friends of the Root River educational activities
	<b>Bluff Country Hiking Club</b>	Lost Creek Hiking Trail interpretive signs and brochure
	<b>Winneshiek County Iowa SWCD</b>	No till field day partner
	<b>CPS-Harmony</b>	Soil health partners
	<b>Friends of the Root River</b>	Citizen group

## 2014 Annual Plan Outline

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

- Program and practice implementation (Federal, State, District technical and financial assistance)
- Assist with county soil loss ordinance
- Identification of high priority areas for erosion control
- SWCD funding for set aside acres for summer construction
- Establish and maintain permanent vegetation and native plant species for vegetative buffers in sensitive areas

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

- Field days, workshops
- Grazing Gazette
- No-till web page
- Soil stewardship materials to churches
- Cover Crop Champion Grant activities

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**Healthy Natural Communities** **12**

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**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 and invasive species control
- Annual Forestry Field Day
- Root River Landscape Stewardship Plan—Healthy Forests for Healthy Water project
- Living Snow Fence program
- Permaculture information

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

- MN Wetland Conservation Act and associated activities
- Voluntary compliance with the ag buffer requirement in the Shoreland District
- Request legislators to restore funding for Wetland Preservation Areas

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

- Utilize media: newspaper ads, news releases, newspaper insert, Board commentaries, newsletters, radio ads, PSA’s, website
- Outstanding Conservationist and volunteer recognition
- Two annual Scholarships
- Annual events: 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Conservation Field Day, Envirothon, Ag in the Classroom, Earth Day, County Fair
- Communication with schools and home school students re: MASWCD contests, careers, etc.
- Coordination of activities with other organizations (Bluff Country Hiking Club, LSP, 4-H, FFA, rain gauge monitors, CSMP, etc.)
- Canoe trip/streambank tour for Board and staff; conservation practice site visits with Board
- Communication with Federal and State legislators

**SWCD Capacity** **15**

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**Goal #4: Maintain the efficient use of district resources and staff.....15**

**Objective #1: Support staff and Board activities that increase the District’s capacity.....15**

- Staff and board training and development
- Support of and partnership with regional and local organizations
- Annual reviews: By-Laws, Annual Plan, staff performance evaluations
- Long term programs: Ag BMP, Observation Well Network, Water Plan Administration, summer interns, Local Work Group)
- Regular communication with the County Board and neighboring SWCDs

# Fillmore County Soil and Water Conservation District: 2014 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 USDA Conservation Plan updates, focusing on MRBI and MDA watersheds and expiring CRP <a href="#">2014 Results: Total acres planned in 2014: 15,381.5 acres</a>	Ongoing	AK, CF / NRCS, MDA
2. Assist landowners with enrollment into CRP or to re-enroll expiring CRP contracts <a href="#">2014 Results: 92 plans enrolled for 295.5 acres</a>	Ongoing	CF / NRCS, FSA
3. Assist landowners with establishment of practices through the State Cost Program and NRCS EQIP <a href="#">2014 Results: State Programs- Rick's time 44%, Doug's time 9% Federal Programs- Rick's time 24%, Doug's time 65%</a> <a href="#">State cost share projects completed: FY14: 1430' grassed waterway, 1182' of terraces, 1 WASCB; FY13: 2 terraces (2150' total), 1100' grassed waterway; FY12: 2 grassed waterways (1700' total); 4 wells sealed; 3 windbreaks</a>	Ongoing	RG, DK, DT, AK
4. Assist Fillmore County with enforcement of the county's Soil Loss Control Ordinance <a href="#">2014 Results: none referred to the county</a>	Ongoing	DK, RG / Fillmore County
5. Use results from LiDAR and Stream Power Index and farm walkovers to assist with prioritizing and implementing programs and practices in FSP watersheds <a href="#">2014 Results: FSP project analysis for BMP implementation</a>	Ongoing	JR, CF, AK, RG, DK / MDA
6. Assist landowners with implementing cover crops, managed grazing and other soil health practices. Provide Dean's contact information to cash contributors' to soil health grant; encourage them to send to their producers/members. <a href="#">2014 Results: 3499 acres in regular EQIP and 1068 acres in EQIP Soil Health Practice plus advice on prevented planting acres 2014: 1883.73 acres in Fillmore County signed up for cover crops in EQIP totaling over \$106,000; Wabasha: 540.7 ac, \$40,105; Mower: 235 acres, \$19,183.</a>	Ongoing	DT / NRCS, Extension
7. Provide SWCD funds for set aside acres for summer construction of grassed waterways and other practices <a href="#">2014 Results: \$4042 paid out for 4 projects</a>	Annually	RG, DK
8. Assist with establishing and maintaining vegetative buffers in sensitive areas such as shoreland, sinkholes and HEL, utilizing existing conservation programs including RIM <a href="#">2014 Results: 3 RIM spot checks completed per BWSR list; 3 RIM applications submitted, none funded.</a>	Ongoing	RG, DK, CF
9. Assist NRCS or other partners with tillage transects surveys; consider completing surveys in targeted watersheds <a href="#">2014 Results: NA</a>	As needed	Staff

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

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Publish the Grazing Gazette with NRCS and Extension <a href="#">2014 Results: 6 issues published</a>	Every 2 months	DT / NRCS, Extension
2. Support Cover Crop Champion Grant activities submitted by Mower SWCD: field day, and other outreach <a href="#">2014 Results: Fillmore SWCD Cover Crop Champions Grant: April 17 field day, March 13 meeting w/agronomists, Grazing Gazette articles, newspaper and radio interviews</a>	Jan-Nov 2014	DT
3. Provide Soil Stewardship information to area churches <a href="#">2014 Results: information emailed to about 60 churches; news releases in local papers</a>	April 2014	DK, DR
4. Co-sponsor a workshop for adding conservation language into lease agreements for absentee landowners; focus on women landowners <a href="#">2014 Results: Women Caring for the Land Soil Health Workshop in Lanesboro in June, field trip to Brian Hazel's farm</a>	Summer 2014	DR / NRCS
5. Maintain and update the no-till web page <a href="#">2014 Results: No updates in 2014</a>	Summer 2014	DR, DT, JB / NRCS
6. Conduct a minimum till field day (preferably in cooperation with Winneshiek County SWCD) <a href="#">2014 Results: Winneshiek SWCD did not have the time/resources to co-sponsor a field day in 2014; helped Distribute information regarding their Turkey River Nutrient Management Project open house in June</a>	Summer 2014	DR / NRCS, Winneshiek SWCD
7. Assist with grazing field days, workshops, studies and soil health information programs with NRCS and Extension <a href="#">2014 Results: Organized and presented information at 7 field days and meetings (including Aug. 22 with CPS to demonstrate a Rowbot for seeding cover crops in standing corn (70 people attended); hosted Area NRCS and SWCD training at his farm July 16 on precision Ag and rotational grazing (60 people attended).</a>	Summer/Fall 2014	DT / NRCS, GLCA, Extension
8. Investigate methods for seeding cover crops on commodity crop acres in partnership with BWSR utilizing LCCMR grant. <a href="#">2014 Results: NA</a>	Fall/Winter 2014	DT, DR
9. Pursue funding to do side-by-side comparisons of various tillage practices and N practices (SE MN N BMP Outreach) <a href="#">2014 Results: NA</a>	Fall/Winter 2014	DR
10. Partner with Tour de Forage event with Midwest Forage Association. <a href="#">2014 Results: Completed</a>	Summer 2014	DT, Board



## Section #2: Water Resources

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

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

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Provide financial and technical assistance to feedlot operators for feedlot run-off control and ag waste storage facilities. <a href="#">2014 Results: 3 Clean Water Fund projects completed, 5 county c/s projects completed</a>	Ongoing	AK, CFO
2. Provide technical assistance to develop new and update existing nutrient and manure management plans. <a href="#">2014 Results: 167 contacts to date; over 66,000 acres with plans</a>	Ongoing	JB
3. Conduct activities in the SE MN N BMP Outreach grant work plan supporting the implementation of the MN Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan. Continue to work with producers in Watson Creek and Rush-Pine Creek watersheds using results from the lysimeter network, soil N, tissue testing, and basal stalk nitrate tests. <a href="#">2014 Results: Spring soil N and fall basal stalk nitrate test results shared with producers.</a>	Ongoing	JB, DT / MDA, Extension
4. Promote no fall application of nitrogen fertilizer. <a href="#">2014 Results: MDA rule information was published in local papers</a>	Fall 2014	JB, DR, Board
5. Promote practices, such as those that improve soil health, that reduce the need for pesticides. <a href="#">2014 Results: included with other soil health education</a>	Ongoing	DT
6. Provide information on the SWCD website about waste pesticide disposal. <a href="#">2014 Results: Information on SWCD website</a>	Ongoing	JS
7. Provide technical assistance for upland treatment and water retention practices to reduce runoff volumes; priority to the FSP watersheds following farm walkovers. <a href="#">2014 Results: EQIP and State Cost Share practices</a>	Ongoing	DK, RG, AK

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

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Administer the Community Partners Stormwater Mini-Grant Program. <a href="#">2014 Results: 1 project completed (Kingsland Courtyard), 2 applications in progress</a>	Ongoing	JR, DR
2. Administer the SWCD rain barrel program. <a href="#">2014 Results: 16 sold</a>	Ongoing	JR
3. Assist with outreach and demonstrations for reducing volume of and contaminants in urban stormwater, including the designs developed by the Center for Changing Landscapes. <a href="#">2014 Results: City of Hokah independently implemented part of the design for the canoe landing.</a>	Ongoing	JR, DR

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

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Support the SE MN Wastewater Initiative to assist homeowners with upgrading their wastewater treatment. <a href="#">2014 Results: Project in progress in Greenleafon which is slated for completion in 2015</a>	As needed	JR, DR
2. Assist with the semi-annual Fillmore County Household Hazardous Waste Collections. <a href="#">2014 Results: Staff helped at both events</a>	May, Oct 2014	Staff
3. Promote the use of farm fuel tank spill containment and automatic shutoff nozzles including setbacks from wells. <a href="#">2014 Results: No activity</a>	July 2014	Staff / Public Health
4. Provide assistance to the county for inspections of new septic systems as needed. <a href="#">2014 Results: No requests (Licensure expires in March 2016—no plans to renew)</a>	As needed	DR

### 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. <a href="#">2014 Results: Yes, inquiries addressed</a>	Ongoing	DK, RG
2. Assist Fillmore County with investigating sites for development in the Decorah Shale Overlay District. <a href="#">2014 Results: no requests</a>	Ongoing	JR, CF
3. Provide cost share for sealing abandoned wells. <a href="#">2014 Results: 4 wells sealed with cost share funds</a>	Ongoing	DR, RG, DK
4. Assist with dye trace studies and ground water research. <a href="#">2014 Results: Crystal Creek and Bridge Creek traces; staff deploy and retrieve charcoal bugs</a>	Ongoing	CF, JR, intern, DNR
5. Participate in the Technical Evaluation Panel for frac sand mining permit application reviews. <a href="#">2014 Results: No permit applications in 2014</a>	As needed	DR, CF / DNR, BWSR

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

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Continue partnership with MDA in the Field to Stream Partnership and begin BMP identification and implementation phase in Bridge and Crystal Creek watersheds. <a href="#">2014 Results: Water quality monitoring continues. Contract development for farm walkovers completed, signatures in December</a>	Ongoing	CF, JR, DR, RG, DK, AK / MDA

2. Continue partnership with MPCA to monitor WPLMN and Continuous Nitrate monitoring sites. <a href="#">2014 Results: WPLMN monitoring goals met; maintained Cont. N stations, grab samples at Lanesboro Hatchery; processed invoices from WSU</a>	Ongoing	CF, JR, DR, intern/MPCA
3. Support civic engagement efforts in the Root River watershed (Friends of the Root Rive , Rush-Pine Farmer Led Council, Watson Creek nutrient management BMP implementation, MDA FSP, etc.) <a href="#">2014 Results: Root River Citizen Conversations in June 2014; Citizens' group moving forward to form non-profit; R-P FLC cover crop program continued, also basal stalk testing; Watson basal stalk testing</a>	March 2014 - ongoing	CF, DR / MPCA, Extension, Winona County & SWCD, MDA
4. Assist with water quality monitoring in the Upper Iowa Watershed; SWAG sites will be added in 2015 <a href="#">2014 Results: First Tuesday of every month (April-October); monitor 3 sites</a>	April -Oct 2014	CF, JR
5. Continue to oversee maintenance of the East Willow Creek flood control structures with Fillmore County and NRCS; investigate resources for maintenance for E-3 structure <a href="#">2014 Results: STS completed maintenance on 3-4 structures in fall 2014</a>	Spring 2014	RG, DR / Fillmore Co./ NRCS
6. Assist with completion of Root River WRAPS to provide framework for Root River One Watershed, One Plan; coordinate 1W1P committee meetings and complete grant reporting <a href="#">2014 Results: WRAPS strategy table completed to meet grant requirements;</a>	Ongoing	JR, DR

### Objective #6: Protect drinking water supplies

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Maintain operation of the SWCD Bacteria Testing Lab and provide nitrate testing as requested. <a href="#">2014 Results: &gt;100 Samples analyzed; External audit completed and changes made and entered in ELDO; LWM grant subsidizing lab costs</a>	Ongoing	CF, JR, DR, JS
2. 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. <a href="#">2014 Results: Ongoing</a>	Ongoing	DR, JR / Zoning
3. Continue to coordinate Fillmore County's participation in the SE MN Domestic Well Network. <a href="#">2014 Results: August sampling results distributed; spring sampling mailing list completed</a>	Spring, August 2014	JR / SE MN WRB
4. Conduct outreach and education regarding BMPs for petroleum products near wellheads, grey water systems, and conservation practices to send out with water test results. <a href="#">2014 Results: No activity; county lawsuit regarding SSTS limiting outreach that can be done with the Amish at this time</a>	Spring 2014	DR / Public Health
5. Conduct at least two nitrate testing clinics <a href="#">2014 Results: 4 clinics in Feb. (3 at implement dealers, 1 at NTC) with Public Health radon clinics</a>	Summer 2014	JR / Public Health
6. Provide information on water treatment systems as requested. <a href="#">2014 Results: As needed</a>	As needed	JR
7. Review Wellhead Protection Plans and provide assistance as needed <a href="#">2014 Results: Notice of plans received in 2014 from Preston, Harmony, Chatfield, Wykoff, Fountain and Lanesboro;</a>	As needed	JR, DR / 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. <a href="#">2014 Results: Successful year: 11,890 trees sold; profit of \$13,380</a>	Ongoing	JS, RG, AK
2. Administer District Windbreak Program. <a href="#">2014 Results: 2 contracts paid; \$550 total. Also four completed using state cost-share funds.</a>	Ongoing	RG
3. Oversee development of Forest Stewardship Plans and Conservation Practice Plans in Riceford Creek and Rush-Pine Creek watersheds for the Healthy Forests for Healthy Water project, which implements strategies in the Root River Landscape Stewardship Plan. <a href="#">2013 Results: Root River Landscape Plan completed; 10 Comprehensive Stewardship Plans completed; 2 field days held</a>	Ongoing	DR
4. Sponsor annual Forestry Field Day. <a href="#">2014 Results: Field day held in July at Isinours; about 40 attended</a>	July 2015	DR, RG, Intern, Forestry Committee
5. Promote the use of a seed mixture for rain gardens and CSP/EQIP pollinator species habitat plantings. Post a list of available vendors on the SWCD website along with pictures of successful plantings. Investigate use of native plants on mound systems. <a href="#">2014 Results: Vendor list updated</a>	Ongoing	JR, JS
6. Promote invasive species control, such as buckthorn control, including follow-up management after EQIP contracts at Forestry field day. Investigate forming a Cooperative Weed Management Area with other local partners and accessing BWSR grants for implementation. <a href="#">2014 Results: 2014 Forestry Field Day topics</a>	ongoing	DR, RG, DK, Forestry Committee
7. Promote the Living Snow Fence Program and other snow fence options with MnDOT and the county to identify areas suitable for the practice. <a href="#">2014 Results: None State has articles in the paper.</a>	As needed	CF, RG, DK
8. Investigate permaculture practices and post information on the SWCD website about permaculture. Consider partnering with Lanesboro Local to promote a tour to a permaculture farm. <a href="#">2014 Results: Provided funding for transportation for tour of permaculture farm in Wisconsin in September sponsored by U of M Regional Partnerships.</a>	As needed	JS, DR
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  <a href="#">2014 results: Site visit completed with family and monitoring plans developed. Site surveyed to evaluate slumping before and after planting.</a>	Ongoing	DR, RG, / TNC, County Highway, Timm family

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

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Administer the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act and associated activities (wetland banking, restorations, etc.) <a href="#">2014 Results: See WCA annual report to BWSR</a>	Ongoing	CF, JR, , DR
2. Identify areas lacking a vegetative buffer in the shoreland impact zone and promote establishment of buffers to the landowners utilizing CRP, RIM or other programs. <a href="#">2014 Results: Some landowner inquiries for CRP</a>	Ongoing	CF, RG, DK
3. Work with Legislators to include Fillmore and Houston counties in RIM Decorah/St. Lawrence Edge program <a href="#">2014 Results: Day at the Capitol</a>	May 2015	DR, Board / BWSR, MASWCD

## 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. <a href="#">2014 Results: Yes</a>	Ongoing	JS, DR, Staff
2. Hold up to 4 meetings of the Local Water Management Plan Technical Committee & Citizens' Advisory Committee. <a href="#">2014 Results: Yes</a>	Ongoing	JR
3. Submit monthly news releases or commentaries from the Board to the local newspapers about SWCD priorities. Develop list of topics for the whole year. Staff suggestions: interview farmers with good practices, SWCD accomplishments <a href="#">2014 Results: One submitted in June</a>	Ongoing	DR, Board
4. Publish annual newspaper insert and at least two online newsletters. <a href="#">2014 Results: Newspaper insert published in Jan.in Bluff Country Reader; 2 online newsletters completed in 2014</a>	Annually	DR, JS, Staff, /NRCS, MDA
5. Select and promote a county Outstanding Conservationist (from District 2 in 2015) and other award candidates. Hold annual recognition event. <a href="#">2014 Results: January event at Harmony Golf Course; Bruihlers of Rushford selected in 2014</a>	Annually	Staff, Board
6. Sponsor the annual 6th Grade Conservation Day. <a href="#">2014 Results: Yes, held Sept 24<sup>th</sup></a>	Annually	RG, Staff
7. Support and assist with the Area 7 Envirothon. <a href="#">2014 Results: Yes</a>	Annually	RG
8. Promote and provide two \$500 scholarships, one to a graduating senior and one to a returning college student. <a href="#">2014 Results: Yes</a>	Annually	JS, DR, Board
9. Provide information on natural resources conservation at the county fair. <a href="#">2014 Results: Yes in new location in Commercial Building; also held a nitrate clinic—37 samples analyzed</a>	Annually	JS, AK, Staff, Board

10. 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. <a href="#">2014 Results: Ag in the Classroom at Kingsland in May, Earth Day at Lanesboro in April, need contact list for schools</a>	Annually	JR, DR, Staff
11. Contact schools and home schooled students regarding participation in the MASWCD poster, mural and video contests. <a href="#">2014 Results: No</a>	Annually	DR
12. Promote the MPCA Citizen Stream Monitoring Program. <a href="#">2014 Results: Newspaper insert article</a>	Annually	JR, DR
13. Coordinate the Volunteer Precipitation Monitoring Network. <a href="#">2014 Results: Yes, results mailed in April and August</a>	Annually	DK
14. Work with the FFA and 4H organizations to promote soil conservation and to provide information about BMPs, careers, forestry, water testing, etc. Invite to field days (establish email list for FFA and 4-H). <a href="#">2014 Results: Contacts with Fillmore Central FFA advisor by Board member</a>	Spring/Fall 2015	Staff
15. Provide opportunities for Board members to visit or tour sites where conservation practices are being implemented. <a href="#">2014 Results: None</a>	Spring/Fall 2015	Staff, Board
16. Distribute information to hunter safety classes (Spring Valley 3/7/15, also Eagle Bluff) about how to reduce tree damage from tree stands. <a href="#">2014 Results: No</a>	Spring 2015	DR, DNR
17. Communicate with state and federal legislators about conservation programs and their effectiveness. <a href="#">2014 Results: Day at the Capitol</a>	Spring 2015	DR, Staff, Board
18. Schedule a canoe trip/streambank tour for Board and staff on the Root River to view areas of special interest. <a href="#">2014 Results: No</a>	Summer 2015	Staff
19. Continue sponsoring the awards for forestry and other conservation practices through 4H and work with the leaders to encourage better participation in these programs among their members. <a href="#">2014 Results: Yes</a>	July 2015	Board
20. Coordinate efforts with the Bluff Country Hiking Club to maintain interpretive information for the Lost Creek Hiking Trail. <a href="#">2014 Results: Boot brush kiosks installed—DNR grant funded interns to do the labor</a>	Summer 2015	DR, RG, intern, Forestry Committee
21. Coordinate activities with other conservation organizations that help meet the goals of the SWCD (e.g. Eagle Bluff, Project Get Outdoors, Land Stewardship Project, National Trout Center, The Nature Conservancy, etc.) <a href="#">2014 Results:</a>	As needed	Staff, Board
22. Provide scholarships or incentives to attend local or regional educational events that are consistent with the SWCD's mission. <a href="#">2014 Results: Permaculture tour transportation sponsorship</a>	As needed	Staff, Board
23. Partner with U of M Extension demonstrating use of various species of cover crops and grasses with alfalfa to evaluate feed value. <a href="#">2014 results: June bus tour visited site; July field day; results from plots published by Extension in 2015 newspaper insert.</a>	Summer 2015	DT, B Hazel, Jim Paulson-U of M
24. Set up SWCD Facebook account and maintain with current information. <a href="#">2014 results: Some investigation completed by staff</a>	Spring 2015	JS, DR

## Section #4: SWCD Capacity

### Goal: Maintain the efficient use of District resources and staff

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

Actions	Timeline	Lead staff/Partners
1. Provide funding for employee and supervisor training and development as budgeted. <a href="#">2014 Results: Yes</a>	Ongoing	Staff, Board
2. Conduct annual performance evaluations and review staff work plans. <a href="#">2014 Results: 4 completed, 2 exit interviews, 3 new employee orientations</a>	Ongoing	DR
3. Support staff and supervisor attendance at meetings of regional organizations that help achieve SWCD goals (BALMM, SE MN Water Resources Board). <a href="#">2014 Results: Yes</a>	Ongoing	Staff, Board
4. Administer the Ag BMP Loan Program. <a href="#">2014 Results: 5 ag waste (\$475,000), 1 manure equipment (\$11,000), 8 septic systems (\$104,010), 2 no-till equip (\$101,030), 3 well replacements (\$85,946),</a>	Ongoing	AK, DR
6. Attend County Department Head and Technology Committee meetings when applicable. <a href="#">2014 Results: Yes</a>	Ongoing	DR
7. Annually review and approve the District By-Laws. <a href="#">2014 Results: Yes</a>	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). <a href="#">2014 Results: Yes</a>	Annually	Board
9. Continue participation in the DNR Observation Well Network. <a href="#">2014 Results: Yes</a>	March-Nov 2015	DK
10. Participate in Local Work Group for federal programs (EQIP, CRP, etc.) <a href="#">2014 Results: Yes–August meeting</a>	Summer 2015	Staff, Board / NRCS
11. Conduct joint meetings with two new County Commissioners and neighboring SWCD's every two years. <a href="#">2014 Results: none</a>	Neighboring SWCD in 2015	DR, Board
12. Pursue funding to hire a summer intern to assist with SWCD projects and programs. <a href="#">2014 Results: Yes, 2 Conservation Corps interns, 4 interns shared position funded by DNR Landscape Stewardship Grant to complete Isinours history project, Lost Creek Hiking Trail signage and assist DNR with fencing state forest land</a>	Nov. 2015	DR, Personnel Committee

## Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District

### Comprehensive Plan Addendum-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 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 USDA HEL conservation plans will also identify areas of need for conservation practices.

#### **High Priority Water Quality Problems**

High priority water quality problems and their primary sources identified in the Fillmore County Local Water Management plan are listed below. Strategies for reducing water quality problems from these sources are embedded in the actions above as part of ongoing SWCD programs and special projects listed below.

##### **Turbidity (sediment)**

Primary sources: Upland erosion from agricultural fields  
Stream bank erosion due to high flows and floods  
Urban storm water runoff adding sediment and increasing flow volumes

##### **Fecal coliform bacteria**

Primary sources: Feedlot runoff  
Manure applications  
Malfunctioning septic systems

##### **Nitrates**

Primary sources: Nitrogen fertilizer applications  
Manure applications  
Malfunctioning septic systems

##### **Pesticides**

Primary sources: Row crop pesticide applications  
Urban storm water runoff



## Special Projects

### The Fillmore SWCD Windbreak Program:

- Cost share rate is 50% per tree based on the cost of potted stock offered by the SWCD; up to a maximum cost-share of \$1000.

### Area 7 Soil Health Technician:

- Funded by FY2014 Clean Water Fund Shared Services Grant to the SE SWCD Technical JPB.
- Currently housed in the Fillmore SWCD office to offer technical assistance for managed grazing, cover crops and other soil health practices in 11 counties with support from NRCS, the SWCDs and other local organizations.
- The Nature Conservancy and Land Stewardship Project are strong partners in promoting cover crops. National Wildlife Federation Cover Crop Champions Grant awarded to Mower SWCD for the Soil Health Technician to work with a Farmer Champion in 2015 to promote cover crops. Activities include meetings with local agronomists, newspaper and radio interviews, and a field day.

### USDA HEL Conservation Plan updates:

- Updates will continue by 0.75 FTE funded by the FY2014 BWSR Soil Erosion Compliance Grant.
- The goal of 38,000 acres planned with NRCS funding was exceeded by August 2014.
- The BWSR grant goal is 40,000 acres by the end of 2016.
- Planning assistance helps landowners identify conservation needs leading to implementation of practices.

### Nutrient Management:

- Support strategies in the MN Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan in focus areas in the county.
- Continue to evaluate nitrogen management tools for producers in Watson Creek and Rush-Pine Creek watersheds.
- Clean Water Fund grant to continue staffing Nutrient Management Specialist positions through the SE SWCD Technical Support JPB.
- Begin on-farm N BMP comparison study plots in cooperation with MDA and Extension on 25-30 farms in five counties (N BMP Outreach).

### Community Partners Grant for Storm Water Mini-grants:

- FY2013 Clean Water Fund Grant for \$45,000 for 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 developed program criteria. Continuous application period.
- The SWCD Board will have final approval of the projects to be funded.
- One project completed in 2014; 3 applications in progress.

### Farm Bill Assistance:

- Expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract numbers remain high in 2015 because of the extension for re-enrollment from 2014 to 2015.

- Farm Bill Assistance Grant is funding a 0.5 FTE to do plans for re-enrollment.
- Maintaining CRP buffers, waterways and perennial cover in sensitive areas is a priority.

#### Feedlots:

- Complete runoff control projects utilizing Clean Water Fund grant (one to be completed in 2015) and 319 grants.

#### Root River Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS):

- WRAPS strategies and scale of adoption form framework for watershed plan.
- Support activities of the newly formed Friends of the Root River to improve public awareness of the watershed and water resource issues.
- Coordinate committee meetings for the Root River One Watershed, One Plan Pilot Project and participate in the Planning Work Group.

#### Root River Watershed monitoring:

##### MPCA Watershed Pollutant Load Monitoring Network:

- Two SWCD staff partially funded for monitoring activities at five sites in the watershed.

##### MPCA SE MN WRAPS Nitrogen Planning

- Maintain three continuous monitoring stations at Lanesboro Fish Hatchery and collect grab samples once a month.
- Oversee contract with WSU for lysimeter network.

Coordinate distribution of water test results for the SE MN Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network.

#### MDA Root River Field to Stream Partnership:

- Two SWCD staff partially funded for monitoring activities.
- SWCD technicians will begin to work with farmers in 2015 to identify conservation needs for implementation starting in 2015 with existing cost share programs and future funding from Clean Water Fund applications. Future monitoring will measure BMP effectiveness by comparing to baseline data collected in the first five years of the project.

#### Root River Landscape Stewardship Plan:

- The SWCD entered into an agreement with the MN DNR to administer and coordinate the Healthy Forests for Healthy Water Grant to pay forestry consultants to assist landowners with developing Forest Stewardship Plans and implementing practices in their plans.

#### Summer Intern:

- Application submitted to Conservation Corps Minnesota to be a worksite for an apprentice position. (If the position is not available, the SWCD will fund the position)
- The intern will 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, information and educational resources for the Lost Creek Hiking Trail will continue and the annual field day will be held July 29, 2015 at the Chatfield Fish and Game Club.