

Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District



2016 ANNUAL PLAN

1/26/2016

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.

	SWCD Partners	Cooperative Projects and Programs
Federal	NRCS	EQIP, CSP, Local Work Group, Tillage transect survey
	FSA	CRP, CCRP
State	BWSR	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
	MPCA	Watershed Pollutant Load Monitoring Network (WPLMN), Citizen Stream Monitoring Program (CSMP), subcontractor: Upper Iowa Intensive Watershed Monitoring (Root River SWCD Surface Water Assessment Grant)
	MDA	Ag BMP Loan Program, Root River Field to Stream Partnership Phase II grant and Walkover grant, BWSR Clean Water Fund Phase II Implementation grant, SE MN Nitrogen BMP Outreach
	DNR	Springshed mapping, Observation Well Network, water permit review, Root River Landscape Stewardship Plan, SE Landscape Committee, Minnesota State Climatology Office Precipitation Monitoring Program, SWCD Forestry Committee and Field Day partner, Healthy Forests for Healthy Water project
	MDH	Wellhead Protection Area Plans
	MASWCD	Envirothon; Outstanding Conservationist awards
	Grazing Lands Conservation Association	Grazing field days; soil health partner
	MN Milk Producers	Soil health partner
	MN Farmers Union	Soil health partner
	Lakeside Foods	Soil health partner
	Pinnacle Foods	Soil health partner
	Seneca Foods	Soil health partner
	Winona State/Utah State	Root River Sediment Budget
	SE MN Forage Council	Soil health partner
	U of M Extension	Grazing Gazette, Ag in the Classroom, women landowner workshops, Root River Civic Engagement, nutrient management/N BMP outreach
	Conservation Corps MN	Apprenticeship program, crew project
	MN DOT	Living Snow Fence Program
Regional	SE MN Water Resources Board	Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network, 319 Feedlot Grants, SE MN Wastewater Initiative
	SE SWCD Technical JPB	Nutrient Management Specialist grant, N BMP Outreach Grant, BWSR SE MN Soil Health grant, BWSR LCCMR SE MN Cover Crop and Soil Health Initiative, engineering assistance
	BALMM	Network for sharing information and regional thinktank

	Hiawatha Valley RC&D	Cover crops, grazing, civic engagement support
Local	Fillmore County	Root River One Watershed, One Plan, Local Water Management delegation, Wetland Conservation Act delegation, Feedlot Program technical support, Soil loss Ordinance, Sinkhole Ordinance, Decorah Shale Overlay District, Frac Sand Technical Evaluation Panel, Household Hazardous Waste collections, East Willow Creek flood control structures
	Watershed projects	Root River One Watershed, One Plan coordination, Rush-Pine Farmer Led Council, The Nature Conservancy (TNC): Root River Healthy Forsts for Healthy Water grant, Upper Iowa River Watershed: Water quality monitoring and SWAG
	Land Stewardship Project (LSP):	Soil health, women landowner workshops
	National Wildlife Federation	Cover Crop Champion Grants
	National Trout Center	Nitrate clinic, education
	4-H	Sponsor County Fair awards
	Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center	Friends of the Root River educational activities; promote Land Ethic workshops
	Bluff Country Hiking Club	Lost Creek Hiking Trail interpretive signs and brochure
	CPS-Harmony	Soil health partners
	Friends of the Root River	Citizen group

2016 Annual Plan Outline

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- 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

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- Field days, workshops
- Grazing Gazette
- No-till web page
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- 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

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- MN Wetland Conservation Act and associated activities
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- Request legislators to restore funding for Wetland Preservation Areas

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- 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: 6th 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

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

Fillmore County Soil and Water Conservation District: 2016 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 2015 Results: Total acres planned in 2015: 7855.	Ongoing	AK, CF / NRCS, MDA
2. Assist landowners with enrollment into CRP or to re-enroll expiring CRP contracts 2015 Results: 1191 acres in 71 contracts (FBA grant) + 45 contracts completed under MASWCD agreement	Ongoing	CF / NRCS, FSA
3. Assist landowners with establishment of practices through the State Cost Program and NRCS EQIP 2015 Results: State Programs- Rick's time 52%, Doug's time 26% Federal Programs- Rick's time 13%, Doug's time 48% State cost share projects completed: FY15: 12,530' grassed waterway, 1 well decommissioning FY14: 625' terrace, 5814" grassed waterway; FY13: 3494' grassed waterways; FY12: 575' Terrace	Ongoing	RG, DK, DT, AK
4. Assist Fillmore County with enforcement of the county's Soil Loss Control Ordinance 2015 Results: none referred from the county	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 2015 Results: FSP project analysis and walkovers for BMP implementation completed; practices prioritized; Federal MRBI-EQIP and state CWF awarded. One EQIP waterway project was completed in 2015; one was approved for funding. Two farmers installed waterways on their own; one funded with 50% cost share from MDA funds.	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. 2015: EQIP acres 3653, additional acres seeded w/o EQIP=6668	Ongoing	DT / NRCS, Extension
7. Provide SWCD funds for set aside acres for summer construction of grassed waterways and other practices 2015 Results: No summer construction set aside projects in 2015	Annually	RG, DK
8. Assist with establishing and maintaining vegetative buffers in sensitive areas such as shoreland, sinkholes and HEL, utilizing existing conservation programs including RIM and CRP; provide technical assistance for state buffer law compliance 2015: preliminary site investigations done; staff attended trainings	Ongoing	RG, DK, CF
9. Assist NRCS or other partners with tillage transects surveys as needed; consider completing surveys in targeted watersheds 2015 Results: NA	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 2015 Results: 6 issues published and distributed to 1381 recipients	Every 2 months	DT / NRCS, Extension
2. Support Cover Crop Champion Grant activities if awarded 2015 Results: Mower Cover Crop Field Day held September 16. A second application submitted for 2016 was not funded.	Annually	DT
3. Provide Soil Stewardship information to area churches 2015 Results: information emailed to about 60 churches; news releases in local papers	April 2016	DK, DR
4. Co-sponsor a workshop for adding conservation language into lease agreements for absentee landowners; focus on women landowners 2015 Results: Not completed	Summer 2016	DR / NRCS
5. Maintain and update the no-till web page 2015 Results: No updates in 2015	Summer 2016	DR, DT, JB / NRCS
6. Assist with soil health (including grazing and minimum/no till) field days, workshops, studies and soil health information programs with NRCS and Extension 2015 Results: Organized and presented information at 9 field days and 15 meetings	Summer/Fall 2016	DT / NRCS, GLCA, Extension
7. Investigate methods for seeding cover crops on commodity crop acres in partnership with BWSR utilizing LCCMR grant. 2015 Results: Winter workshop dates set for 2016; producer contacts begun; fact sheet finalized; cost share contract drafted	Fall/Winter 2016	DT, DR
8. Conduct side-by-side comparisons of various tillage practices and N practices (SE MN N BMP Outreach) 2015 Results: 19 plots installed and monitored.	Spring-Fall 2016	JB
9. Partner with Tour de Forage event with Midwest Forage Association. 2015 Results: Completed	Summer 2016	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. 2015 Results: 1 Clean Water Fund projects completed, 1 319 project completed	Ongoing	AK, CFO
2. Provide technical assistance to develop new and update existing nutrient and manure management plans. 2015 Results: 12 plans completed (8 new, 4 updates) for 10,809 acres and fees collected; 171 additional plans started for completion by the end of February 2016.	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. 2015 Results: Spring soil N and fall basal stalk nitrate test results shared with producers. Lysimeter data collection continued. Meeting held with MPCA and MDA to discuss future of the network. MSU workshop held with Watson Creek producers in July to introduce nitrogen and nutrient tools/models.	Ongoing	JB, DT / MDA, Extension
4. Promote no fall application of nitrogen fertilizer. 2015 Results: Not completed.	August 2016	JB, DR, Board
5. Promote practices, such as those that improve soil health, that reduce the need for pesticides. 2015 Results: included with other soil health education	Ongoing	DT
6. Provide information on the SWCD website about waste pesticide disposal. 2015 Results: Information on SWCD website	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. 2015 Results: EQIP and State Cost Share practices implemented	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. 2015 Results: Grant ended Dec. 31; 3 projects completed (Harmony Library, Eagle Bluff ELC, Friends of the Root River along with Kingsland Courtyard completed in 2014.	Ongoing	JR, DR
2. Administer the SWCD rain barrel program. 2015 Results: 24 sold	Ongoing	JR
3. Pursue funding for community assessments and outreach and demonstrations for reducing volume of and contaminants in urban stormwater, including the designs developed by the Center for Changing Landscapes. 2015 Results: Not completed.	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. 2015 Results: Project in Greenleafton reached completion in 2015	As needed	JR, DR
2. Assist with the semi-annual Fillmore County Household Hazardous Waste Collections. 2015 Results: Staff helped at both events in May and October	May, Oct 2016	Staff
3. Promote the use of farm fuel tank spill containment and automatic shutoff nozzles including setbacks from wells. 2015 Results: No activity	July 2016	Staff / Public Health
4. Provide assistance to the county for inspections of new septic systems as needed. 2015 Results: No requests (Staff licensure expires in March 2016—no renewal)	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. 2015 Results: Yes, inquiries addressed	Ongoing	DK, RG
2. Assist Fillmore County with investigating sites for development in the Decorah Shale Overlay District. 2015 Results: no requests	Ongoing	JR, CF
3. Provide cost share for sealing abandoned wells. 2015 Results: 1 well sealed with cost share funds	Ongoing	DR, RG, DK
4. Assist with dye trace studies and ground water research. 2015 Results: no traces, baseline nitrate grabs	Ongoing	CF, JR, intern, DNR
5. Participate in the Technical Evaluation Panel for frac sand mining permit application reviews. 2015 Results: No permit applications in 2015	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 implementation phase in Bridge and Crystal Creek watersheds. 2015 Results: Water quality monitoring continues. Walkovers completed with 30 of 31 farmers. EQIP and CWF funds available for cost share. EQIP applications begun for 11 producers. In addition, one waterway completed, one approved, and two installed, one with MDA funds and the other by the producer on their own.	Ongoing	CF, JR, DR, RG, DK, AK / MDA
2. Continue partnership with MPCA to monitor WPLMN. 2015 Results: WPLMN monitoring goals met; maintained Cont. N stations, grab samples at Lanesboro Hatchery; processed invoices from WSU	Ongoing	CF, JR, intern / MPCA
3. Support civic engagement efforts in the Root River watershed (Friends of the Root River , Rush-Pine Farmer Led Council, Watson Creek nutrient management BMP implementation, MDA FSP, etc.) 2015 Results: MSU meeting with Watson Creek producers in July; NMP specialist attended Rush-Pine meeting; Friends of the Root River forms non-profit and implements Community Partners stormwater mini-grant for rain barrel promotion.	Ongoing	JR, DR, JB, Extension, MPCA, Winona Co.
4. Assist with water quality monitoring in the Upper Iowa Watershed; SWAG sites will continue in 2015 2015 Results: First Tuesday of every month (April-October); monitor 3 sites: 2 SWAG sites monitored per schedule	April -Oct 2016	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 2015 Results: No immediate maintenance needs in 2015	Spring 2016	RG, DR / Fillmore Co./ NRCS
6. Assist with completion of the Root River One Watershed, One Plan; coordinate 1W1P committee meetings and complete grant reporting; initiate pre-implementation activities, assessments, civic engagement and education/outreach to prepare for beginning full implementation of the watershed plan in 2017. 2015 Results: Root River 1W1P process begun; 4 of 5 sections of draft plan completed by the end of the year. SWCD staff provide 1W1P coordination.	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. 2015 Results: >100 Samples analyzed; Internal audit begun in preparation for external audit in 2016; LWM grant subsidizing lab costs. Analysis of SWAG bacteria samples in 2015. Bacteria testing and disinfection information now printed on the back of the water test report form.	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. 2015 Results: Ongoing	Ongoing	DR, JR / Zoning
3. Continue to coordinate Fillmore County's participation in the SE MN Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network. 2015 Results: Mailing list updated for the lab.	August 2016	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. 2015 Results: No new developments in 2015	Spring 2016	DR / Public Health
5. Conduct at least two nitrate testing clinics 2015 Results: 3 clinics in Feb. (2 at implement dealers, 1 at NTC) with Public Health radon clinics	Summer 2016	JR / Public Health
6. Provide information on water treatment systems as requested. 2015 Results: As needed	As needed	JR
7. Review Wellhead Protection Plans and provide assistance as needed 2015 Results: Notice of plans received in 2015 from Canton, Rushford and Spring Valley; plans in progress: Preston, Harmony, Chatfield, Wykoff, Fountain and Lanesboro	As needed	DR, JR / 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. 2015 Results: Successful year: 11,772 trees sold; profit of \$11,333	Ongoing	JS, RG, AK
2. Administer District Windbreak Program. 2015 Results: 3 contracts paid; \$863 total.	Ongoing	RG
3. Oversee grant for development of Forest Stewardship Plans and Conservation Practice Plans in Riceford Creek and Rush-Pine Creek watersheds for the Healthy Forests for Healthy Water project, which implements strategies in the Root River Landscape Stewardship Plan. 2015 Results: Contracts established with the Outreach Leads for both watersheds; 17 contracts approved with 13 landowners for 21 practices; 7 practices completed and paid	Ongoing	DR

4. Sponsor annual Forestry Field Day. 2015 Results: Field day held July 29 at Chatfield Fish and Game Club; about 60 attended	July 2016	DR, RG, Intern, Forestry Committee
5. Promote the use of a plants and CSP/EQIP pollinator species habitat plantings. Post a list of available vendors on the SWCD website along with pictures of successful plantings. Investigate the use of native plants on mound systems. 2015 Results: No activity	Ongoing	JR, JS,CF
6. Promote invasive species control, such as buckthorn control. Investigate forming a Cooperative Weed Management Area with other local partners and accessing BWSR grants for implementation. 2015 Results: 2015 Forestry Field Day topics; CWMA topic at Forestry Committee meeting in August more discussion planned for January 2016 meeting with partners	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. 2015 Results: None State does the promotion.	As needed	CF, RG, DK
8. Investigate permaculture practices and post information on the SWCD website about permaculture. 2015 Results: No activity		
9. Provide resources/vendor lists for landowners for seeding CRP and buffers.	Ongoing	DR, JS, CF, DT
10. 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 2015 results: Prairie cordgrass plugs planted and seeding completed using locally collected seed. Site visit completed in July to survey site to evaluate slumping before and after planting.	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.); pursue shared staffing for WCA with neighboring counties 2015 Results: See WCA annual report to BWSR	Ongoing	CF, JR, , DR
2. Identify areas lacking a vegetative buffer in the shoreland impact zone and promote establishment of buffers; bring those areas into compliance with the state buffer law providing assistance to the landowners utilizing CRP, RIM or other programs. 2015 Results: Staff attended meetings regarding the new Buffer Law; request for funding submitted to BWSR.	Ongoing	CF, RG, DK

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. 2015 Results: Yes	Ongoing	JS, DR, Staff
2. Hold meetings of the Local Water Management Plan Technical Committee & Citizens' Advisory Committee to transition to the 1W1P structure; 2015 Results: 2 meetings held to gather input for the Root River 1W1P	Ongoing	JR

3. Submit periodic 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 2015 Results: 3 submitted	Ongoing	DR, Board
4. Publish annual newspaper insert and at least two online newsletters. 2015 Results: Newspaper insert published in February in the Fillmore County Journal; 2 online newsletters completed in 2015	Annually	DR, JS, Staff
5. Select and promote a county Outstanding Conservationist (from District 3 in 2016) and other award candidates. Hold annual recognition event. 2015 Results: January event at the Branding Iron; Goldsmith Brothers selected; Area and State winners	Annually	Staff, Board
6. Sponsor the annual 6th Grade Conservation Day. 2015 Results: Yes, held Sept 23rd	Annually	RG, Staff
7. Assist with annual Farm Safety Day Camp. 2015 Results: One staff assisted in 2015.	Annually	DT, Staff
8. Support and assist with the Area 7 Envirothon. 2015 Results: Yes, Rick was on the planning committee	Annually	RG
9. Promote and provide two \$500 scholarships, one to a graduating senior and one to a returning college student. 2015 Results: Both scholarships awarded.	Annually	JS, DR, Board
10. Provide information on natural resources conservation at the county fair. 2015 Results: Yes in the Commercial Building; also held a nitrate clinic—12 samples analyzed; held Kids Day with soil activities and spin the wheel game.	Annually	JS, AK, Staff, Board
11. Participate in Ag in the Classroom, Earth Day and other activities in the schools and communities. Contact the schools twice a year to encourage them to utilize SWCD staff as presenters and plan other activities. 2015 Results: Groundwater model presentation for Kingsland ag class	Annually	JR, DR, Staff
12. Promote the MPCA Citizen Stream Monitoring Program. 2015 Results: No activity	Annually	JR, DR
13. Coordinate the Volunteer Precipitation Monitoring Network. 2015 Results: Yes, volunteer data collected and submitted to the state.	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 and Board meetings (establish email list for FFA and 4-H). 2015 Results: Contacts with Fillmore Central FFA advisor by Board member; new Vo-Ag teacher at Fillmore Central attended Board meeting	Spring/Fall 2016	Staff
15. Provide opportunities for Board members to visit or tour sites where conservation practices are being implemented. Create a list of practices/projects of interest.	Spring-Fall 2016	Staff
16. Distribute information to hunter safety classes about how to reduce tree damage from tree stands. 2015 Results: Yes, information provided at both locations	Spring 2016	DR, DNR
17. Communicate with state and federal legislators about conservation programs and their effectiveness. 2015 Results: Day at the Capitol attended by Administrator	Spring 2016	DR, Staff, Board
18. Schedule a canoe trip/streambank tour for Board and staff on the Root River to view areas of special interest for specific educational purposes. 2015 Results: None	Summer 2016	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. 2015 Results: Yes	July 2016	Board
20. Coordinate efforts with the Bluff Country Hiking Club to maintain interpretive information for the Lost Creek Hiking Trail. 2015 Results: No activities	Summer 2016	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.) 2015 Results: Co-sponsored showing of Mysteries of the Driftless in January at Eagle Bluff; picture with Emmy Award in local papers; Sponsored soil biology presentation in April	As needed	Staff, Board
22. Provide scholarships or incentives to attend local or regional educational events that are consistent with the SWCD's mission. 2015 Results: No activity	As needed	Staff, Board
24. Assist MDA with AWQCP 2015 Results: A meeting was held on December 14, 2015, for ag leaders in the county. It was attended by 15 farmers and four LGU staff and the AWQCP certification technician. Several who attended indicated intentions to submit applications for the program.	Jan. – May 2016	AK, RG

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. 2015 Results: Yes	Ongoing	Staff, Board
2. Conduct annual performance evaluations and review staff work plans. 2015 Results: 7 completed, Conservation Corps Apprentice evaluations completed	Ongoing	DR
3. Support staff and supervisor attendance at meetings of regional organizations that help achieve SWCD goals (BALMM, SE MN Water Resources Board). 2015 Results: Yes	Ongoing	Staff, Board
4. Administer the Ag BMP Loan Program. 2015 Results: 3 ag waste (\$471,029), 2 manure equipment (\$133,000), 10 septic systems- 2 cancelled (\$106,968), , 1 well replacements (\$27,360),	Ongoing	AK, DR
6. Attend County Department Head and Technology Committee meetings when applicable. 2015 Results: None notified	Ongoing	DR
7. Annually review and approve the District By-Laws. 2015 Results: Yes	Annually	Board

8. Financially support the Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) including SE Area 7, the Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees (MACDE), including the SE Area 7, the SE MN SWCD Technical Support Joint Powers Board, Hiawatha Valley RC&D Council, and the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). 2015 Results: Yes	Annually	Board
9. Continue participation in the DNR Observation Well Network. 2015 Results: Yes	March-Nov 2016	DK
10. Participate in Local Work Group for federal programs (EQIP, CRP, etc.) 2015 Results: Yes, Supervisors and staff attended July meeting	Summer 2016	Staff, Board / NRCS
11. Conduct joint meetings with two new County Commissioners and neighboring SWCD's every two years. 2015 Results: Two new commissioners attended SWCD Board meeting.	Neighboring SWCD in 2016	DR, Board
12. Pursue funding to hire a summer intern to assist with SWCD projects and programs. 2015 Results: 1 Conservation Corps Apprentice	Nov. 2016	DR, Personnel Committee

Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District

Comprehensive Plan Addendum – 2016 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

Fillmore SWCD Programs:

- 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.
- Summer construction set aside funds are available to seed down areas where a conservation practice is to be installed in the summer months. The payment is \$163/acre for up to 10 acres of set aside.

Area 7 Soil Health Technician:

- Funded by FY2014 Clean Water Fund 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 and canning companies.
- The Soil Health Technician will provide technical assistance to cooperators for cover crop demonstration plots around Area 7 for the BWSR LCCMR SE MN Cover Crop and Soil Health Initiative.

USDA HEL Conservation Plan updates:

- Updates will continue by 0.55 FTE funded by the FY2014 BWSR Soil Erosion Compliance Grant.
- The BWSR grant goal is 40,000 acres by the end of 2016; due to new duties for staff related to the Buffer Law, staff time is being reduced to work on plan updates, so this grant may be extended into 2017.
- Planning assistance helps landowners identify conservation needs leading to implementation of practices.

Nutrient Management:

- Strategies will support 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.
- On-farm N BMP comparison study plots were installed with MDA and Extension on about 30 farms in five counties (N BMP Outreach).
- Nutrient Management Specialist position is funded by a BWSR CWF grant and a MDA grant through the SE MN Technical Support JPB.

Farm Bill Assistance:

- Expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract numbers remain high in 2016 because of the extension for re-enrollment from 2014 to 2015, a general sign up in January and February 2016, and increased interest in CRP filter strips due to the MN Buffer Law.
- Farm Bill Assistance Grant is funding a 0.5 FTE to do plans for re-enrollment; two staff working on plans.
- Maintaining CRP buffers, waterways and perennial cover in sensitive areas is a priority.

Feedlots:

- Complete runoff control projects utilizing 319 grants (one completed in 2015). Three projects submitted in a 2016 CWF grant application were not funded. BWSR submitted an application for federal funding for 2016 to combine with state funds for feedlot projects in SE MN.

Root River One Watershed:

- The Root River One Watershed, One Plan Pilot will be completed in 2016 with adoption of the watershed implementation plan.
 - Governance structure is still under discussion. It is anticipated that the Policy Committee, Advisory Committee and Planning Work Groups will continue to guide implementation activities.
 - Section 4, which is the implementation schedule (who, what, when, how), will be completed and reviewed in early 2016. The complete final draft will go to public hearing in spring of 2016.
 - Fillmore SWCD Water Management Coord. will begin pre-implementation assessment, outreach/education, and civic engagement.

- 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.
- SE MN Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network:
 - The Water Management Coordinator will assist with distribution of water test results and volunteer newsletters.
- MDA Root River Field to Stream Partnership:
 - Two SWCD staff are partially funded for monitoring activities.
 - A contractor will continue to work with the 31 farmers who completed the farm walkovers and have one or more practices identified, some of which will utilize cost share funding.
 - Federal EQIP funds from the Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI) were approved for all three study watersheds. A Clean Water Fund grant application was approved in December for \$804,385 for implementation of practices, some of which leverage the EQIP funds.
 - SWCD technicians surveyed and designed practices for implementation in 2016. Future monitoring will measure BMP effectiveness by comparing to baseline data collected in the first five years of the project.

Upper Iowa Watershed:

- A Surface Water Assessment Grant awarded to the Root River SWCD is funding Intensive Watershed Monitoring at six sites in the Upper Iowa Watershed in 2015 and 2016 preparation for developing a Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS)
- Fillmore SWCD will continue monitoring at two sites and analysis of bacteria samples under a subcontract with Root River SWCD.

Healthy Forests for Healthy Water:

- The SWCD entered into an agreement with the MN DNR to administer and coordinate the Healthy Forests for Healthy Water Grant to pay forestry consultants to assist landowners with developing Forest Stewardship Plans and implementing practices.
- The cost share portion of the grant was shifted to a BWSR grant to extend the implementation period to the end of 2018.
- Of \$50,000 available in cost share, over \$45,000 was encumbered in 2015 in 17 contracts with 12 landowners for 21 practices.

Summer Intern:

- Application was submitted to Conservation Corps Minnesota to be a worksite for an apprentice position which was approved for 2016.
- 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 27, 2016 at Forestville State Park.

Buffer Promotion and Technical Assistance:

- The passage of the state Buffer Law in June resulted in funding to SWCDs for promotion and technical assistance to landowners.
- Preliminary site reviews, aerial photo reviews and trainings have begun by two SWCD staff.
- Informational meetings about the program are planned for 2016 with Extension.
- SWCD staff will review the DNR buffer maps when they are available.

Ag Water Quality Certification Program (AWQCP):

- Funding was received to promote the AWQCP and to provide assistance to farmers working with MDA staff to get certification.
- Promotional meetings and outreach activities are planned for early 2016 with a goal of having at least 10 farmers enrolled from Fillmore County by the end of May 2016.