

INTRODUCTION

Pine County Soil and Water Conservation District is a local unit of government that is governed by five publicly elected officials. Under their direction, the district staff carries out the goals and objectives of the district.

The 2009 Annual Plan of Operations sets up a plan of action for the Pine County Soil and Water Conservation District in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Pine County Water Management Plan Task Force, Pine County Commissioners and other cooperating agencies. This plan addresses specific goals from the long-range objectives of the Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan in addition to ongoing district activities.

The Plan purpose is to develop goals, objectives and a plan of action for the protection, management, and improvement of water and related land resources.

2009
PINE COUNTY SWCD WORKPLAN

Narrative: The Pine SWCD office is located at 260 Morris Ave, Hinckley, MN 55037. District staff include: Jill Carlier, District Manager; Sam Martin, Water Management/ GIS Specialist; Robin Poppe, Resource Conservationist/Wetland Specialist; and Tim Olson, Office Assistant. NRCS staff include: Robert Korth, District Conservationist; Matt Waterworth, Soil Conservationist; and Mike Yrjo, Soil Conservation Technician.

Pine County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), in addition to implementing district programs, is authorized by the Pine County Board of Commissioners through resolution to administer the county comprehensive Local Water Management plan (LWM) and the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) for the county.

Grant monies received, as well as local matching dollars are passed through to the Pine SWCD who is also the fiscal agent for these programs. Any grants and other funds donated by lake associations or local organizations are also deposited with Pine SWCD for their disbursement. In fiscal year 2007, WCA was at full state funding, while LWM was still only partially state funded again. The partial state funding for LWM is a result of the 2003 unallotment of state funds by the Governor. Full funding for WCA employs 1 ½ staff persons, and covers most operating expenses to administer and implement the WCA program.

The district continues to incorporate a fee schedule for WCA permitting. The district has the ability to be a Technical Service Provider (TSP) for NRCS. As a TSP, the district agrees to provide technical assistance for various NRCS practices and receives partial reimbursement in return. In 2008, NRCS did have some engineering practices available for us to contract with IMPACK6 on.

The district will cooperate and build on the strengths of other agencies and organizations to help carry out the district's goals and objectives whenever possible. A high priority is given to group or multi-agency efforts whenever possible. Pine SWCD will be placing a greater emphasis on watershed or basin efforts.

OBJECTIVE 1. ADMINISTRATION/COORDINATION

Carry out the district priorities as set by the district board.

Action 1. Grant Writing for Project Funding: Continue to look for alternative sources of funding for LWM priority projects. Apply for grants to implement high priority erosion/water quality problems.

Staffing: District Manager and Water Management Specialist, NRCS District Conservationist

Funding: Various agencies & organizations

Action 2. Pine SWCD Legislative Representation: Pine SWCD will attend various legislative days at the Capitol to promote districts and their programs. Pine SWCD will also invite legislators to a district board meeting.

Staffing: Supervisors (2), District Manager

Funding: District, County

Action 3. Pine SWCD County Representation: Pine SWCD will invite each county commissioner to a district board meeting throughout the year. Provide regular updates detailing activities the district conducted and other items of interest. District Manager will attend county board meetings as able.

Staffing: District Board & Manager

Funding: District, County

Action 4. Snake River Watershed Management Board Participation: Pine will continue to coordinate efforts with the Watershed Coordinator and support the activities of the SRWMB.

Staffing: Water Management Specialist will continue to serve as a technical member of the Citizen Advisory Committee. One SWCD supervisor will be an active voting member of the CAC.

Funding: District, County

Action 5. Wetland Conservation Act: To implement the Wetland Conservation Act, providing seamless coverage to all of Pine County.

Staffing: In Pine County, this takes one full-time wetland specialist to administer and implement the program properly. It also takes one part-time staff, the water management specialist, to assist the specialist with county road project delineations. Because of the increased workload in Pine County, we hired an additional wetland specialist, out of the district fund balance, on a seasonal, part-time basis (if necessary) to assist with inquiries, applications, and violations. The district plans to continue this position.

Funding: Wetlands, County, Fees

Action 6. Funding Programs: Administer local and state grants, state cost-share programs and low interest loan programs.

Staffing: District Manager, Water Management Specialist, and District Board

Funding: BWSR Grants, PLA grants, District, County

Action 7. State Revolving Fund (SRF): Meetings will be held by the Joint Powers Board of the IMPACK6 counties to administer funds for SRF loans. District Manager handles local county administration of program.

Staffing: District Board and District Manager, IMPACK6

Funding: SRF loan dollars through Ag Star

Action 8. Provide assistance to Sand, Sturgeon, and Island Lakes in seeking sewage treatment: Work with the townships and lake associations by providing technical assistance and information in getting sewer systems around those lakes. Work with the public facilities authority to locate local funding for sewage and underwater treatment centers.

Staffing: Water Management Specialist, District Manager, Zoning, RC&D

Funding: Extension

Action 9. Provide assistance to the 14 cities in Pine County by informing them of alternative sewer management options: Work with the cities by coordinating a workshop with the U of M Regional Extension staff to provide education and information on city growth issues and alternative sewer management options. Work with the public facilities authority to locate funding for sewage and wastewater treatment centers.

Staffing: Water Management Specialist, District Manager, Extension, Zoning

Funding: Extension

Action 10. Provide assistance to the City of Askov and the City of Finlayson in implementing a well-head protection plan: Work with the City of Askov and the City of Finlayson by assisting with the implementation of their well-head protection plans. Also look into possibly funding sources.

Staffing: Water Management Specialist

Funding: Water Plan, Wetlands, District

Action 11. Accountability: Maintain financial records according to generally accepted accounting principles and progress reporting as directed by BWSR.

Staffing: District Manager and Office Assistant

Funding: District, County

Action 12. Training Opportunities: Provide opportunities and budget for ongoing and specialized training for staff as needed and requested and approved by the District Manager.

Staffing: District Board, District Staff

Funding: Water Plan, Wetlands, District, County

OBJECTIVE 2. LAND AND WATER TREATMENT

Implement Best Management Practices (BMP's), with an emphasis on priority areas of the county, by providing services and technical assistance to landowners and other government agencies.

Action 1. Tree Program: Make available for sale 40,000+ tree seedlings and native flower and grass seed in small quantities and provide technical assistance to landowners to establish windbreaks, wildlife habitat and tree plantings on private lands.

Staffing: District staff, NRCS, DNR Forestry

Funding: District, landowners

Action 2. State Cost-Share: Utilize state cost-share dollars in high priority areas by completing one feedlot run-off project and one grass waterway. Abandoned well sealing is now an allowable practice for 50% state cost-share funding. Abandoned well sealing can also be applied for through NRCS EQIP at 50% cost-share funding.

Staffing: District Manager, Water Management Specialist, IMPACK Engineer and Technician

Funding: State Cost-Share, District

Action 3. Technical Service Provider: Continue to work as a Technical Service Provider (TSP) in cooperation with NRCS, providing technical assistance for federal conservation programs when they have projects available.

Staffing: District staff, NRCS staff

Funding: Federal

Action 4. 4 Corners Pilot Project – Royalton Township: Work with landowners in Royalton Township to promote healthy forests, improve and protect water quality, and produce a full range of forest products.

Staffing: District Staff, NRC Staff

Funding: Federal

OBJECTIVE 3. EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

Educate Pine County resource users by providing a variety of educational materials and opportunities in addition to assistance and referrals to other agencies.

Action 1. County Newsletter: Edit and publish two editions of the “Pine County Waters” newsletter, incorporating articles from county departments and local agencies. Distribution will be to all households in the county, as well as non-residents who own land in Pine County.

Staffing: District staff, cooperating agencies and individuals

Funding: Water Plan, Wetlands, District, County

Action 2. Pine SWCD Web Site: Maintain internet web site with current information on district programs, activities and accomplishments.

Staffing: District Manager

Funding: District

Action 3. Wetland Update Information: Send letters to townships letting them know we are available to provide wetland updates by attending their meetings. Wetland updates will be published in the two issues of the “Pine County Waters” newsletter. Also work with BWSR staff and others to provide information on how the wetland conservation acts is implemented in Pine County. Provide information to county residents on which agency is involved in wetland preservation and/or restoration.

Staffing: Wetland Specialist, Zoning

Funding: Wetlands

Action 4. Wetland/Zoning Workshop for Realtors and Developers: Sponsor and coordinate a one-day workshop to educate realtors and developers on the Wetland Conservation Act, 7080 Septic Ordinance, and Shoreland Ordinance. Also develop a brochure or flyer to be sent to realtors and developers on the Wetland Conservation Act.

Staffing: Wetland Specialist, Zoning

Funding: Wetlands

Action 5. County Resource Tour: Hold a one day tour of a selected area of the county for county officials and landowners, with several stops highlighting county resources and best management practices. Contact private bus companies for prices.

Staffing: District Board and staff, NRCS, FSA

Funding: District

Action 6. Envirothon: Coordinate the northern and southern Area III Envirothon, an outdoor environmental competition for high school students.

Staffing: Pine SWCD District Manager and Office Assistant, and St. Louis SWCD's to coordinate. Event staff: Area III SWCD staff and numerous cooperating agencies and volunteers.

Funding: SWCD's, cooperating agencies and businesses

Action 7. Pokegama Lake Association 5th Grade Waters Festival: Present one learning station at the "Waters Festival" for all Pine County 5th grade students and some students from Carlton, Chisago, and Kanabec counties.

Staffing: District Manager and Resource Conservationist/Wetland Specialist, PLA members, various agencies and organizations.

Funding: PLA

Action 8. PICKM Water Quality Team: Continue to participate with the five-county PICKM group to develop one multi-county water quality education project each year.

Staffing: District Manager and Water Management Specialist

Funding: PICKM Water Quality Team

Action 9. Fair Booth: Develop and staff a display in the Conservation Building at the Pine County Fair in August, providing conservation information, education, and assistance to fair-goers.

Staffing: District Board, District Staff

Funding: District

Action 10. Promote and Distribute "A Guide for Rural Living" Publication: Promote the publication "A Guide to Rural Living" by providing it on CDs, on-line and a few in print. Continue working with Extension, NRCS, and RC&D about holding "Guide for Rural Living" Expos to promote the guide.

Staffing: District Manager, NRCS, RC&D Coordinator, MASWCD

Funding: RC&D, Extension, EQIP, Grants, Kanabec County Extension Committee

Action 11. Pine SWCD Annual Spring Brunch/Workshop: In coordination with the Pine SWCD Annual Meeting, sponsor a workshop to educate landowners on conservation issues.

Staffing: District Staff and Supervisors, DNR, NRCS

Funding: District, Water Plan

Action 12. Boron Publication. Send out an educational flyer or publication about Boron, why to have well water tested for it, and the effects it can have, to all of the residents located in the area east of Hinckley where Boron was found in some well water.

Staffing: District Staff

Funding: Water Plan

OBJECTIVE 4. MONITORING/DATA COLLECTION

Continue to develop a database for surface and groundwater quality in order to identify water quality problems, prioritize areas for additional monitoring and track progress toward improvement.

Action 1. Snake River Watershed Network Monitoring: Continue to cooperate with the SRWMB, by coordinating volunteers to take lake samples, collect samples from volunteers and send samples to lab. The District will conduct stream monitoring every year through 2011.

Staffing: Water Management Specialist, SRWMB Coordinator, Volunteers

Funding: SRWMB

Action 2. Grindstone River Watershed Monitoring: Because the Grindstone River is on MPCA's Impaired Waters List, we will collect water samples in preparation for a future TMDL study and send samples to the lab. Samples will be tested for ammonia nitrogen, chloride, nitrite & nitrate nitrogen, ortho phosphorous, total phosphorus, and total suspended solids. We have applied for and received a Surface Water Monitoring Grant through MPCA for Pine, Big Pine, and Grindstone Lakes.

Staffing: Water Management Specialist

Funding: Water Plan, Fund Balance, MPCA

Action 3. Volunteer Stream & Lake Monitoring Program: Continue to work with MPCA and volunteers providing equipment, training, and recruitment to maintain a volunteer network on major streams and lakes in Pine County. Approximately 35 volunteers participating (18 stream & 24 lake).

Staffing: Water Management Specialist, MPCA staff, Volunteers

Funding: District, County

Action 4. Rainfall Monitoring Network: Maintain existing volunteers and recruit additional volunteers in townships without a monitor, by providing a rain gauge to the volunteers to monitor rainfall. Approximately 38 volunteers participating.

Staffing: Office Assistant, Volunteers

Funding: BWSR, District

Action 5. Study to Determine/Type the Trophic Status of Wetlands in the Pokegama Creek Watershed: Continue to look for grant funds to conduct a scientific study to determine different wetland types and their ability to contribute phosphorous to surface waters of Pokegama Creek.

Staffing: Water Management Specialist, Wetland Technician

Funding: Special grant

Action 6. County Well Index (CWI): Use the on-line CWI program by the Minnesota Department of Health to provide landowners with up-to-date well and depth information in the county as requested. Publish articles in newsletter stating that landowners can also access the CWI on-line themselves.

Staffing: District Manager and Office Assistant

Funding: District

OBJECTIVE 5. INVENTORY/MAPPING

Continue to inventory and map resources of the county in order to assist landowners, agencies and organizations in making better planning and implementation decisions.

Action 1. Pine County Soil Survey: Partner with NRCS and Pine County to continue to work on the Pine County Soil Survey project. NRCS Soil Survey Project Leader is employed by NRCS. Soil survey team did some investigative soils probing and established a soils mapping legend. They will continue to soils map Pine County until completed. Pine SWCD will apply for continuing funding from LCMR every biennium. This project is anticipated to take a total of 6 more years to complete, with cooperation from all participating agencies.

Staffing: District staff, NRCS staff

Funding: NRCS, LCMR, Water Plan, along with county and local in-kind

Action 2. County Geologic Atlas: Continue to utilize the Geologic Atlas (also on-line) and incorporate it by assisting Pine County Zoning regarding land use concerns.

Staffing: District staff, DNR, landowners

Funding: Water Plan, DNR

Action 3. Utilization of GIS Data Layers: Continue to utilize GIS layers created, as well as other layers available, to assist in project planning and implementation. Continue to create maps for landowners and governmental agencies as requested.

Staffing: Water Management/GIS Specialist and Resource Conservationist/Wetland Specialist

Funding: District, Wetlands, Fees from landowners

OBJECTIVE 6. REGULATIONS, ORDINANCES, AND PLANNING

Support and assist in the development of county ordinances and planning that involve District programs and the natural resources of Pine County.

Action 1. County-wide Septic Ordinance: Continue to support Pine County Zoning by providing information on low-interest septic loans to help bring failing septic systems into compliance.

Staffing: District Board, District Manager, Zoning

Funding: Ag BMP Loan Program

Action 2. Pine County Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan: Continue to implement the Local Water Management Plan as directed by BWSR. Approve a resolution adopting the Local Water Management Plan as the District Comprehensive Plan. Adoption of the plan is done in even numbered years.

Staffing: District Board, District staff, BWSR staff, County Zoning staff

Funding: Water Plan, County

Action 3. Erosion Control Plans: Continue to write required erosion control plans for all grading and filling permits within the shore impact zone. A \$25 fee has been incorporated for these plans. Also provide information on the NPDES permitting requirements.

Staffing: Water Management Specialist, Zoning staff

Funding: District, County, Fees

OBJECTIVE 7. EQUIPMENT/SUPPLIES

Purchase equipment and supplies as needed to operate effectively and efficiently.

Action 1. Office Supplies: Necessary office supplies will need to be purchased by the district if NRCS is unable to provide.

Staffing: District Manager and Office Assistant, NRCS District Conservationist

Funding: All funds

Action 2. Floor Mats: Pine SWCD plans to purchase adequate floor mats for each workstation.

Staffing: District Manager and Office Assistant

Funding: District, Fund Balance

OBJECTIVE 8. DEDICATED FUNDS

Dedicate funds for future district obligations and needs.

Action 1. Compensated Absences: Employee compensated absences.

Staffing: District Board

Funding: Fund Balance

Action 2. Water Plan Funds for Pine County Soil Survey: \$10,000 from Water Plan funds will be designated each year to help fund the remaining 6 year Pine County Soil Survey project.

Staffing: District Manager

Funding: Water Plan