

# **ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK**

## **FISCAL YEAR 2008 January 1 – December 31, 2008**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

In an effort to protect, restore and improve the soil and water resources within the Cottonwood Soil and Water Conservation District, this annual plan has been developed. The purpose of this plan is to provide guidance to supervisors and staff to efficiently carry out annual objectives.

The Cottonwood Soil and Water Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital or family status.

### **II. OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS**

#### **A. REDUCE WATER AND WIND EROSION TO “T” OR LESS THAN “T”**

1. Encourage conservation tillage on an additional 2,000 acres through the use of the AgBMP Revolving Loan Fund from the MN Department of Agriculture.
2. Install 10 acres of waterways.
3. Install one water and sediment control basin.
4. Construct 1,000 feet of terraces and diversions.
5. Install one farm pond.
6. Install 50 alternative intakes replacing open intakes.
7. Install 3 miles of field windbreaks.
8. Install 1 mile of living snowfence.
9. Install 10 acres of farmstead windbreaks.
10. Install 30 acres of wildlife habitat (tree cover).
11. The SWCD staff will give 2,080 hours toward an intensified effort to enroll landowners into the Continuous CRP Program.
12. Work with the Local Work Group to institute criteria for the 2008 EQIP sign-up and work with local landowners to enroll.
14. Enroll one wetland restoration easements/contracts.
15. Continue the implementation of the conservation provisions of the current Farm Bill and work toward the implementation of the new Conservation Security Program.
16. Review DNR water permit applications and to discourage the permitting of watercourse straightening that would result in downstream flooding.

17. Implement the 1991 Wetlands Conservation Act in cooperation with the County Environmental Officer. The SWCD will house the Wetlands Inventory Maps as well as serve on the County Technical panel.

## **B. IMPROVE WATER QUALITY**

The above mentioned conservation practices will improve water quality through reduction of stormwater runoff and wind erosion. In addition, the following is planned.

1. The Cottonwood SWCD will provide a half time Administrative Coordinator and half time Technical Coordinator for the Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance serving 9 counties in South Central Minnesota.
2. Implement treatment plans for the Cottonwood River, Little Cottonwood River, Watonwan River, and Des Moines River encouraging participation of landowners into available conservation programs. Best management practices will be stressed in these areas to reduce runoff. The implementation of these plans works in conjunction with the Clean Water Legacy funding opportunities.
3. Provide a representative to serve on the Cottonwood County Comprehensive Water Planning Committee.
4. Encourage the enrollment of land into the CRP continuous Sign-up through our Technical Assistance Grant with the Board of Water and Soil Resources.
5. Through special grants programs, Clean Water Partnerships and EQIP encourage landowners to utilize Nutrient and Pest Management Plans.
6. Encourage county livestock owners to investigate the benefits of rotational grazing.
7. The District will implement the Agricultural Best Management Practices Loan Program through the Department of Agriculture, AgStar Farm Credit Service of Southern Minnesota, ACA, Bank of the West and Bank Midwest.
8. The District will participate on the NPEA Southwest Prairie Joint Powers Board. The Board will be utilizing the technical assistance for the Agricultural Best Management Practices Loan Program and if time permits will assist with State Cost-Share Projects. The Joint Powers Board is comprised of 10 SWCDs in Southwestern Minnesota.
9. Cottonwood County and the Cottonwood SWCD are working with the Area II River Basins Projects, Inc. on downsizing culverts to assist in flood control efforts for Cottonwood County.
10. Work with landowners to attain improvements with agricultural waste runoff problems through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and State Cost-Share Program.
11. The District will participate in the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council Coteau Des Prairies for the southwestern nine counties in Minnesota.

## **C. INFORMATION AND EDUCATION**

1. The SWCD and NRCS staff will provide timely news releases to the local media and air a weekly radio program with the Farm Service Agency entitled "USDA UPDATE".

2. The SWCD and NRCS staff will contribute to the publication of one newsletter during the year to all Cottonwood County landowners and operators and will publish the SWCD Annual Report in the county Shopper.
3. The District will prepare a display at the Cottonwood County Fair to publicize District programs and offer current natural resource conservation information. Supervisors and staff will be present to visit with the public and answer questions.
4. The District will prepare a display at the Windom Farm and Home Show in March 2008.
5. The SWCD will continue presentations to the Kindergarten on conservation and Third grades on the Enviroscape in the Cottonwood County schools.
6. During Soil and Water Stewardship Week, the District will offer free materials to churches.
7. Arbor Day will be celebrated by the fourth grade classes in Cottonwood County. A presentation on trees and the planting of a tree will be used.
8. During May the fifth grade classes from Windom, Mountain Lake, Mountain Lake Christian and Jackson County Central will participate in our conservation day to be held at Tegels Park, Windom, MN. This event has taken on an integration aspect with help of the participating school districts.
9. The District will sponsor a poster contest for 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. And a coloring contest will be held for Kindergarten – 2<sup>nd</sup> grades. All contests will use the theme designated by MASWCD.
10. Cash awards will be offered for soil and water related 4-H exhibits and outstanding project work in the 4-H Soil and Water Conservation Project.
11. Continue with educational displays at banks and libraries throughout Cottonwood County.
12. Promote conservation education throughout the county by giving talks and slide presentations to civic groups and to Shalom Hill Farm Seminary students.
13. The SWCD supervisors and staff will continue to keep local and state legislators informed on views concerning environmental issues that are important for Minnesota and Cottonwood County. Supervisors and staff will encouraged to attend the MASWCD Legislative Briefing held in St. Paul.
14. The Environmental Fair will be held at the Murray County Fairgrounds on September 22-24 with District staff participating.
15. The Area Envirothon will be held at Camden State Park on April 30.
16. The Children's Water Festival will be held on March 12 for all fourth graders in Brown, Cottonwood, and Nicollet counties. District personnel will be presenting at the event.
17. District staff will organize the MASWCD Area V Farmfest Booth and the District and NRCS staff will help work.
18. A Women's Day will be held during 2008.

### III. STATE COST-SHARE PROGRAM

When possible, eighty percent of State cost-share funds will be applied to high priority erosion and sediment areas.

#### **HIGH PRIORITY EROSION**

High priority erosion problems have been defined: "Areas where erosion from wind and water is occurring on Class I-IV soils equal to or in excess of 2 x T tons per acre per year or any area within 300 feet of a water course or within 1,000 feet of a water basin or wetland eroding by water in excess of T tons per acre per year. The water basin, wetland or water course must be classified by the Department of Natural Resources as protected water."

#### **HIGH PRIORITY SEDIMENTATION**

High priority sedimentation problems have been defined as: "Areas within 300 feet of a water course or 1,000 feet of a water basin or wetland where the water erosion rate exceeds three tons per acre per year or areas where the district can show that sediment delivery occurs from a watershed or direct conveyance structure such as a storm sewer or paved outlet channel discharging to these waters. The water basin, wetland, or water course must be classified by the Department of Natural Resources as protected water."

Practices used in Cottonwood County to address high priority erosion and high priority sedimentation are Erosion control structures, critical area stabilization, terraces, diversions, stormwater control systems, and field windbreaks. Special emphasis will be placed in the Cottonwood River Watershed, Little Cottonwood River Watershed and other areas where water quality is affected.

#### **HIGH PRIORITY FEEDLOTS**

"High priority feedlots" means feedlots where the pollution potential rating from the feedlot model is greater than or equal to one and which are discharging pollutants to Department of Natural Resources designated protected waters or to a sinkhole or shallow soils overlying fractured or cavernous bedrock or within 100 feet of a water well.

Discharge from feedlots continues to be a concern of the District. According to a feedlot inventory done in 1978 (the most recent inventory available) approximately 40-45 feedlots were identified as potential pollution problem areas (although this number is decreasing in the county). The Feedlot Inventory Map is located in the Appendix. The District is obtaining training on the installation of Agricultural Waste Management Systems, but will depend upon the assistance from the Area NRCS office, Southwest Prairie JPO staff and private consultants.

The Cottonwood SWCD has completed a Level II/III Feedlot Inventory for Cottonwood County.

Twenty percent of State cost-share funds are available to be used for administrative and technical costs. Listed below is the intended use of State cost-share funds:

#### **GENERAL COST-SHARE ALLOCATION**

**Grant FY07** (July 2006 - June 2008)

##### **High Priority BMP's**

Farmstead and Field Windbreaks	\$ 8,885.68
Critical Area Planting	675.00
Grass Waterway	11,501.72
Grade Stabilization	0.00
Unencumbered Funding	0.00
<b>Technical and administrative</b>	<b>5,265.60</b>

**Grant FY08** (July 2007 – June 2009)

**High Priority BMP's**

Farmstead and Field Windbreaks	\$ 1,627.68
Grass Waterway	3,400.00
Critical Area Planting	2,625.00
Unencumbered Funding	13,409.72
Unencumbered T & A	3,352.48
<b>Technical and administrative</b>	<b>1,913.37</b>

**TOTAL ALLOCATION      \$52,656.00**

**LOCATION OF HIGH PRIORITY EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION**

High priority areas are scattered throughout Cottonwood County. The maps (located in the Appendix) show critical sedimentation area in the county, high priority erosion and the combined water and wind high priority areas. These areas have been determined by using the USLE (Universal Soil Loss Equation) which was developed by NRCS.

**SPECIAL PROJECTS**

**1. GREATER BLUE EARTH RIVER BASIN ALLIANCE**

The Cottonwood SWCD has been hired to provide the Administrative Coordinator (Kay Clark) and Technical Coordinator (Dave Bucklin) for the Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance. These duties include Executive/Policy/Technical Meeting; Grant Writing; and all day-to-day operations of the group. Financial support provided by the Bookkeeper (Darlene Kukuczka), Waseca SWCD.

Through the 2007 Clean Water Legacy Grant Allocation a Nutrient Management Specialist has been hired and housed in the Cottonwood SWCD Office. Annalie Plaetz will complete her Nutrient Management Certification and start the process of meeting landowner in the immediate area (Cottonwood, Jackson and Watonwan counties) to offer Nutrient Management Planning.

**2. COTTONWOOD RIVER WATERSHED**

The Cottonwood SWCD and NRCS Field Office are included in the Cottonwood River Watershed Clean Water Partnership planning process. We are also working with the Redwood/Cottonwood SWCDs and the Redwood SWCD, as the Administrative Coordinator, of the Clean Water Legacy Grant allotments focusing on AgBMPs. Funding has been received through the Clean Water Legacy for cost-share projects in both 2007 and 2008.

**3. WATONWAN RIVER WATERSHED**

The Watonwan River Watershed Clean Water Partnership has completed its first four years and has applied for and received additional funding to continue to provide cost-share opportunities in the basin.

**4. DES MOINES RIVER WATERSHED**

Awaiting the publication of the Des Moines River TMDL Report by Barr Engineering.

**5. RC&D**

The Cottonwood SWCD will be a member of the Coteau des Prairie Resource Conservation and Development Council in southwest Minnesota.

#### IV. DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

**STAFF:** The District will continue to employ one full-time Administrator, one full-time Technician and one full-time Program Assistant (grant position through BWSR) and a Nutrient Management Specialist (grant position through GBERBA). Job descriptions will be revised as needed for the staff. Annual evaluations will take place in December.

District staff will attend training sessions and area meetings as they are offered. This will enable them to carry out their responsibilities more efficiently. The District will reimburse expenses incurred for registration, lodging and travel.

**SUPERVISORS:** The Board of Supervisors will hold regular monthly meetings on the fourth Thursday of the month at the District office located at 339 9th Street in Windom, MN. The public is invited.

Supervisors will make an effort to take part in area meetings, workshops and the annual convention to keep informed of current administration changes, new programs and current business of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

The following committees are formed to handle preliminary research and discussion. The purpose of these committees is to evenly distribute the supervisors' responsibilities and to expedite discussion and decisions at board meetings.

Personnel	Full Board
Education	Tom Muller and Verlyn Nickel
Planning and Budget	Ron Tibodeau
Weed Badger Joint Powers	Ron Tibodeau and Jim Bloch
Mound Creek Watershed	Clark Lingbeek
Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area	Clark Lingbeek
Alternate	Jim Bloch
GBERBA	Clark Lingbeek
Alternate	Verlyn Nickel
Southwest Prairie Joint Powers	Jim Bloch
Alternate	Verlyn Nickel
Comprehensive Water Plan	Verlyn Nickel
RC&D	Jim Bloch
Alternate	Ron Tibodeau
Reinvest in Minnesota	Ron Tibodeau and Tom Muller

#### V. RESOURCES

**DISTRICT:** The District office is located at 339 9th Street in Windom, MN. Office space rent is shared with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the District's rental agreement is with the Minn-Kota Construction Incorporated.

Revenue generated from the District Tree and Weed-Badger Programs are used for District operations, equipment purchases, equipment maintenance, field supplies, publicity and educational programs. Volunteers are used to assist the District with several projects during the year and are obtained through the Retired Senior Volunteer Program in Cottonwood County. Advisor of the program is Mary Jensen of Windom, MN.

**COUNTY:** Cottonwood County provides annual funding for the District. Budget requests are presented each year in September. Cottonwood County pays for the following insurance for the District; public officials' liability; general liability; office, equipment and vehicle insurance coverage. SWCD staff is also included in the County employee group medical and life insurance.

**STATE:** The District operates under the guidance of the Board of Water and Soil Resources. Assistance from the BWSR is brought to the District through the Board Conservationist located in Marshall, MN.

State grants received by the District will be used for employee salaries and supervisor compensation, education programs, office rent and cost-sharing assistance to landowners in applying conservation practices. The District expects to receive the following allocation in September 2008:

Cost-Share Grant	\$26,328.00
Easement and General Services Grants	\$36,292.00

These allocations are based on the Fiscal Year 2008 grants the Cottonwood SWCD received. The Cost-Share Grant period now extends two years from July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2009.

In addition to the above BWSR grants, the District cooperates with the Department of Natural Resources in the observation well monitoring program. The DNR compensates the District \$15 per well reading, totaling \$480.00 per year.

**FEDERAL:** Assistance from the federal government comes through a Memorandum of Understanding with the USDA and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The NRCS provides staff of one District Conservationist and one Soil Conservation Technician position.

The District has at this time entered into a Contribution Agreement between the Cottonwood SWCD and the USDA NRCS for Technical Assistance to landowners.

Some of the office equipment, one vehicle and numerous clerical supplies are provided by the NRCS. The current NRCS computer system consists of two PCs with Windows NT operating system and two printers (HP laser and a HP ink jet) also the NRCS has purchased a new high end computer for District use. The District has three high-end computers and two laptops for networking within NRCS.

During 2008 new computer options will be explored, with a decision by July 1, 2008 as to what system will be utilized by the District. The NRCS is going through a system change and will be offering their services to the District on a per computer basis.

All NRCS training is available for District staff.

**OTHER AGENCIES:** The District works cooperatively with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Cottonwood County Commissioners, Minnesota Extension Service, USDA Farm Service Agency and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**COTTONWOOD SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
FY 08 BUDGET**

**REVENUE:**

Intergovernmental Revenues	
Federal – Contribution Agreement	\$ 2,000.00
State – BWSR Service Grant	23,152.00
State – BWSR Service – Farm Bill Assist. Grant	14,000.00
State – BWSR Services - RIM	13,140.00
State - BWSR Cost-Share Grant	26,328.00
State – DNR Wells	480.00
County – Base Grant	77,264.32
County – Water Plan	1,500.00
County – WCA	5,000.00
Local – GBERBA	41,800.00
Local – GBERBA Nutrient Position	10,400.00
Local – GBERBA Nutrient Position	36,767.32
Local – Pheasants Forever	1,500.00
Charges for Services	29,750.00
Miscellaneous Revenue – Interest	2,000.00
Finance Charge	<u>100.00</u>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$285,181.64</b>

**EXPENDITURES:**

District Operations	
Personal Services	\$ 195,831.11
Other Services and Charges	47,900.00
Supplies	3,500.00
Capital Outlay	1,200.00
Project Expenses	
District	18,600.00
State Cost-Share Projects	<u>21,063.00</u>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$288,094.11</b>

<b>WORKLOAD ANALYSIS WORKSHEET</b>			
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>STAFF YEARS</b>		
	<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>TECHNICAL</b>	<b>CLERICAL</b>
County Water Plan and Wetlands Act	.01	.01	.01
Tree and Weed Badger Programs	.01	.30	.05
Financial	.15	.00	.20
GBERBA Coordinators	.80	.20	.00
Conservation Practices Surveying, Design and Layout	.50	.40	.25
Conservation/Nutrient Management Planning and Implementation	.50	1.60	1.65
RIM, CREP and Continuous CRP Programs	.10	.30	.03
Watersheds – Cottonwood, Little Cottonwood, Des Moines	.05	.02	.55
Education, Promotion and Informational Programs	.02	.02	.05
Training	.01	.01	.01
Administrative Operations – Reports, Grants, Meetings, and Financial Affairs	.25	.04	.05
<b>TOTAL TIME NEEDED EQUALS 8.0 STAFF YEARS FOR 2008</b>	2.40	2.90	2.70
<b>PERSONNEL AVAILABLE</b>			
<b>District</b>			
Administrator	.80		.20
Technician	.50	.40	.10
Program Assistant		.60	.40
Nutrient Management Position		.75	.25
Seasonal Tree Employee*		.00	
Season Weed-Badger Employee*		.00	
<b>NRCS</b>			
District Conservationist	.50	.50	
Soil Conservationist Technician		1.00	
<b>TOTAL TIME AVAILABLE EQUALS 6.00 STAFF YEARS FOR 2008</b>	1.80	3.25	.95

\*The Tree and Weed Badger Seasonal Employee positions are at this time being done by the Program Assistant.