

# HUBBARD COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## 2009 ANNUAL WORK PLAN

### INTRODUCTION:

The Hubbard County Soil and Water Conservation District is committed to accomplishing the goals of this work plan in order to assist Hubbard County in maintaining a high quality natural resource base. The Hubbard County Soil and Water Conservation District will utilize all of its resources, both technical and financial, in protecting the natural resource base of Hubbard County. The issues addressed herein are identified as a priority in the Hubbard County Local Water Plan which also has been adopted as the Hubbard County SWCD's Comprehensive Plan.

### I. WATER QUALITY

**GOAL:** TO ASSIST LAND USERS AND LAND-USE DECISION MAKERS BY INITIATING AND PARTICIPATING IN ACTIONS THAT WILL HELP PROTECT SURFACE AND GROUNDWATER QUALITY.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** To implement research, collect and store water quality information and provide Best Management Practices to protect water quality in Hubbard County.

Actions:

1. To pursue entering into a contract with MPCA to conduct TMDL studies on 1<sup>st</sup> Crow Wing, 8<sup>th</sup> Crow Wing and Portage lakes.
2. Continue Agricultural Irrigation Management Initiatives.
  - A. Offer the **Evapotranspiration Hotline**.
    - (1) Maintain Evapotranspiration Hotline (E.T.) daily during growing season.
    - (2) Advertise the availability of services.
  - B. Offer irrigators our assistance in irrigation uniformity tests.
    - (1) Provide staff and equipment to assist U of MN and NRCS.
    - (2) Provide data analysis and assessment to assist U of MN and NRCS.
  - C. NRCS will develop conservation plans on all new permitted irrigation systems.
3. Initiate and/or participate in various water quality protection projects.
  - A. **Wellhead Protection Plans**
    - (1) Assist community and non-community public water suppliers in the development and implementation of wellhead protection plans.
    - (2) Serve on the Park Rapids Wellhead Protection Plan committee. Research any possible funding and provide technical input in the implementation of this plan.
    - (3) Assist in public education efforts in wellhead protection.
  - B. **Abandoned Well Sealing Program**
    - (1) Work towards securing a grant to properly abandon unused monitoring wells in Hubbard County.
    - (2) Promote the sealing of abandoned wells in Hubbard County and provide cost share from Local Water Plan funds or State Cost Share Program.

**C. Lake Monitoring Program**

- (1) Monitor 4-5 lakes from May-September as a Local Water Plan (LWP) initiative.
- (2) Work with MPCA on interpretation of water quality data and storage of data into the appropriate database.

**D. Nitrate Monitoring**

- (1) Offer a nitrate testing clinic in cooperation with MDA as a LWP initiative.
- (2) Address impacted groundwater supplies in Hubbard County through educational programs.
- (3) Cooperate with all agencies involved in this concerted effort.
- (4) Seek funding for nitrate testing if it becomes available.

**E. Address impacted groundwater supplies in Hubbard County through educational programs.**

- (1) Target two lakes per year in identifying erosion sites.

F. Play a major role in the Healthy Lakes and Rivers Project by assisting lake associations in developing, reviewing and implementing lake management plans.

G. Natural Resources Conservation Service will provide erosion control plans as requested by Hubbard County for proposed plats, planned unit developments and conservation design developments. (NRCS/SWCD)

H. Track progress of the Governor's Clean Water Initiative in the Central Lakes Area and how it may impact Hubbard County.

(Manager, 162 hours; Secretary, 100 hours)

**OBJECTIVE 2: Implement the **Wetland Conservation Act.****

Actions:

1. Soil maps, National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps and aerial photos are available for review from the NRCS, SWCD and Hubbard County.
2. Discuss avoidance, minimization and replacement, if applicable, with the applicant.
3. Work with applicants on potential exemptions, Combined Project Application (CPA) or other requirements.
4. Staff may request additional information from the landowner at the landowner's expense as per WCA rules.
5. Certify wetland habitat improvement.
6. Write restoration plans and replacement orders with input from the Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP).
7. Certify restoration is completed and issue Certificate of Completion.
8. Develop replacement plans as part of the Technical Evaluation Panel.
9. Inform applicant of other potential required permits, such as Department of Natural Resources (DNR), zoning, township zoning, Corps of Engineers, etc.

10. Conduct onsite investigations.
11. Provide two supervisors for the WCA Appeals Board.
12. Serve on the Technical Evaluation Panel.
13. Monitor banking sites.
14. Provide engineering support, if available.
15. Do annual reporting to BWSR on all WCA issues.
16. Assist with Natural Resources Block Grant application in conjunction with the Environmental Services Department.
17. Receive training for professional development and provide the public with education on WCA.

(Manager, 740 hours; Secretary, 10 hours)

OBJECTIVE 3: Participate in various watershed projects.

Actions:

1. Partner with other agencies in watershed protection projects.
2. Provide information and education on Best Management Practices within lake watersheds.
3. Encourage lakeshore owners to form associations and participate in Citizens Lake Monitoring Program and join Lake Watch or similar programs.
4. Assist lake associations with appropriate projects and activities.
5. Gather watershed data for lakes going into assessment programs.

(Manager, 35 hours; Secretary, 16 hours)

OBJECTIVE 4: Review irrigation permits and permits to work in beds of public water.

Actions:

1. Staff will conduct field investigations on permit applications and report findings to the SWCD board.
2. Recommendations for the protection of surface and groundwater quality will be made to the DNR.
3. Increase communication between state and local agencies on permit issuance process.  
(NRCS/SWCD)

(Manager, 8 hours; Secretary, 5 hours)

**OBJECTIVE 5: Administer the County **Local Water Plan.****

Actions:

1. Assist in the preparation of the Natural Resources Block Grant application.
2. Maintain one staff position as the Local Water Plan Coordinator.
3. Maintain one supervisor and one staff person on the Water Management Task Force
4. Keep informed of local water plan activities and state mandates concerning base and challenge grants.
5. Develop water plan implementation projects for 2010.
6. Initiate and/or participate in grant writing for special projects.
7. Prepare budgets and reports as required.

(Manager, 530 hours; Secretary, 60 hours)

**OBJECTIVE 6: Participate in the **State Revolving Fund Program** and other non-point source pollution programs.**

Actions:

1. Maintain one supervisor on the North Central Joint Powers Board.
2. Utilize staff hired through the JPA for non-point source pollution abatement projects.
3. Identify and select Ag-BMPs and assist Environmental Services in developing the loan application to MDA for revolving loan funds.
  - A. Evaluate and certify proposed projects as to local water plan priorities and standards compliance.
  - B. Provide technical assistance, designs and sign-off through the JPB engineer.

(Manager, 2 hours)

## **II. WATER QUANTITY**

**GOAL: TO CONTINUE WATER QUANTITY DATA COLLECTION AND PROVIDE INFORMATION AND EDUCATION TO ALL WATER USERS ON THE WISE USE OF OUR WATER RESOURCES.**

**OBJECTIVE 1: To monitor and maintain a static water level monitoring system.**

Actions:

1. Conduct monthly state water level checks on 30 observation wells throughout Hubbard County (except January and February) for the **DNR Observation Well Program.**

2. Provide information to appropriate agencies and the public to keep everyone informed of static water level trends.

(Manager, 108 hours; Secretary, 8 hours)

OBJECTIVE 2: To monitor precipitation throughout Hubbard County.

Actions:

1. Maintain adequate level of volunteer monitoring sites in the county for the **Rural Rainfall Program**. Report data monthly to the Minnesota State Climatology Office.
2. Correlate this information with the observation well program and related land use by developing graphs, a cohesive data base, public news releases, etc.

(Manager, 2 hours; Secretary, 40 hours)

### **III. CONSERVATION PRACTICES/PROGRAMS OF THE FEDERAL FARM BILL**

**GOAL:** TO ADDRESS SOIL LOSS THROUGH EROSION CONTROL METHODOLOGIES.

OBJECTIVE 1: To work with land users in implementing best management practices to protect and enhance the natural resource base.

Actions:

1. Assist landowners in the development of Resource Management Systems that utilize conservation practices to reduce soil loss and protect water quality. (NRCS)
2. Assist NRCS, as needed, with provisions of the Federal Farm Bill.
3. Promote local NRCS/SWCD conservation partnership via workload analysis process and EQIP work.
4. Provide staff for field assistance to NRCS in the design, inspection and layout of conservation practices.
5. Work with the County and other agencies to provide support for MPCA's NPDES (national pollutant discharge elimination system) program.
6. Assist landowners in the development of nutrient, soil erosion, and sediment control plans. (NRCS)
7. Stay current with new technologies to prevent soil loss on cropland with high priority on rotations that leave little residue after harvest. (NRCS/SWCD)

(Manager, 10 hours; Secretary, 50 hours)

#### **IV. FORESTRY**

**GOAL:** TO ENCOURAGE PRIVATE FOREST LAND OWNERS TO MANAGE THEIR TIMBER FOR PRODUCTION, WILDLIFE AND RECREATION BENEFITS.

OBJECTIVE 1: Pursue programs and projects to benefit forest land.

Actions:

1. Work with the DNR Forestry and private forestry consultants to provide soil and water input into private forest management plans. (NRCS/SWCD)
2. Actively promote forest stewardship program efforts. (NRCS/SWCD)
3. Maintain the **District Tree Program** for conservation purposes. Provide a tree planter for rent.
4. Follow the new federal **Healthy Forests** initiative and prepare to participate in the program by partnering with other agencies to achieve the goals of this new law. (NRCS/SWCD)
5. Promote the continuous CRP Program offered by USDA. (NRCS/SWCD)

(Manager, 44 hours; Secretary, 120 hours)

#### **V. RIM RESERVE AND PERMANENT WETLAND PRESERVES PROGRAMS.**

**GOAL:** PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS/PROJECTS TO FURTHER THE PROTECTION OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCE BASE.

OBJECTIVE 1: Implement the MN RIM Reserve and the Permanent Wetland Preserves programs in the county.

Actions:

1. Provide technical field support required for easement maintenance.

(Manager, 3 hours; Secretary, 2 hour)

#### **VI. STATE COST-SHARE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

**GOAL:** UTILIZE THE STATE COST-SHARE PROGRAM, SPECIAL PROJECTS FUNDS, CHALLENGE GRANT PROCESS AND OTHER COST-SHARE PROGRAMS AS NEEDED IN THE COUNTY.

OBJECTIVE 1: Offer landowners the opportunity to receive cost-share funds to implement erosion control practices, water control structures and other practices to reduce erosion and protect water quality. Priority will be given to control high priority problems as identified in the District's Comprehensive Plan (pages 10-13).

Assess loading of nutrients and chemicals to protected waters. Areas of Hubbard County where sediment, nutrients, chemicals or other pollutants discharge to protected waters or ground water so as to impair their quality or usefulness are considered “high priority.”

Actions:

1. High Priority Erosion Problems

Lands in Hubbard County that are eroding at a rate of over 2T include soil classes 2-4 (the areas are targeted on the high priority and erosion map, shown in the Long-Range Comprehensive Plan). About 71,180 acres of the 82,422 acres of cropland in the county are in the classes 2-4 soils area. Wind erosion occurs primarily on the southern one-third of the county that is heavily farmed and may be bare during critical time periods. Wind and water conservation practices include conservation cropping systems, crop residue use, diversions, field stripcropping, sod waterways, field windbreaks, and conservation tillage.

2. High Priority Water Quality Problems

Areas of the county where sediment, nutrients, chemicals, or other pollutants discharge to DNR designated protected waters, groundwater, or any high priority waters (as identified in the district’s Comprehensive Plan or the Hubbard County Comprehensive Water Plan) are eligible for cost-share program funds if the pollutant delivery rate to the water source will impair the quality or usefulness of the water resource.

Sealing unused wells that are identified as “high priority” is one of the District’s goals to protect the groundwater resources in the county from contamination. The district would like to see unused wells in the county sealed.

The District will update the inventory of animal waste holding ponds and pits in the county and attempt to secure funding for closing unused facilities.

Practices needed to solve water resource problems are: holding ponds; sediment basins; diversions; waste storage areas; waste disposal systems; closing of inactive systems; and nutrient management plans.

Hubbard County has many lakes (313) and other protected water areas. The SWCD/NRCS has been expanding the workload to provide assistance to landowners in solving shoreland problems. Cost-share assistance is offered for eligible projects under State Cost-Share from BWSR.

The estimated funds needed to install the above-mentioned water quality and erosion control practices are listed on Table I.

(Manager, 40 hours; Secretary, 55 hours)

## TABLE 1

The estimated funds needed to install the practices to control the high priority problems are listed below:

<u>PRACTICES</u>	<u>COST ESTIMATE</u>	<u>COST SHARE \$</u>
Lakeshore erosion	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 9,000.00
Windbreaks	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 500.00
Erosion Control Systems	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 3,500.00
Unused Well Program	\$ 2,400.00	\$ 1,500.00
Ag Waste Systems	\$ 10,000.00	0 (SRF)
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Fiscal year 2009 State Cost-Share Allocation:		\$14,500.00

### **VII. EDUCATION-INFORMATION**

**GOAL:** TO INFORM AND EDUCATE THE PUBLIC AND SERVE AS A RESOURCE TO LOCAL UNITS OF GOVERNMENT CONCERNING SOIL, WATER AND LAND USE INFORMATION.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** Provide educational materials and sponsor activities that promote conservation.

Actions:

1. Promote a **poster contest** through class presentations for grades 5-6.
2. Meet with individuals, groups and organizations regarding soil and water concerns, as requested.
3. Co-sponsor the **Envirothon** for senior high students by helping to obtain presenters, assisting with promotion and funding, supervising the competition, and sending follow-up information.
4. Maintain a booth at the **Hubbard County Fair** to promote SWCD/NRCS programs.
5. Remain closely associated with the **Giziibii RC&D Council**.
  - A. Name a SWCD supervisor to the council.
  - B. Propose pertinent RC&D projects to benefit Hubbard County as well as the RC&D Council area.
6. Administer the **Freshwater Festival** as a LWP initiative.
7. Provide information/education seminars on environmental issues, etc., as a LWP initiative.
8. Maintain and update the District's website.
9. Build presentations in appropriate formats (PowerPoint, etc.) for various projects and programs of the District.
10. Notify area teachers in writing that staff members are available to make presentations on various conservation topics and include a list of suggestions.

11. Participate in **5th Grade Conservation Education Day**. (NRCS/SWCD)
12. Educate local government boards regarding natural resource issues.
13. Work with MDA on water quality education projects.
14. Write a minimum of six news articles per year (SWCD/NRCS).
15. Publish a biannual newsletter.
16. Seek environmental educational grants for new activities.

(Manager, 38 hours; Secretary, 285 hours)

### **VIII. OFFICE ADMINISTRATION, RECORDS AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

**GOAL:** MANAGE WORKLOAD IN ADMINISTRATION, RECORDS AND FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF ALL PROJECTS, PROGRAMS AND GENERAL OPERATIONS.

OBJECTIVE 1: Maintain adequate staff to perform required duties for effective office administration.

Actions:

1. District Manager will supervise programs, projects and general office administration.
2. Secretary will assist the NRCS field office staff.
3. Secretary will prepare monthly and annual financial reports and maintain Quickbooks data.

(Manager, 86 hours; Secretary, 1025 hours)

### **IX. TRAINING**

**GOAL:** MAINTAIN AN ADEQUATELY TRAINED STAFF.

OBJECTIVE 1: Take advantage of training opportunities on various programs and issues.

Actions:

1. Develop and prioritize training needs to implement programs.
2. Seek additional funding for training activities.
3. Staff will attend priority training sessions.
4. Take advantage of various training opportunities that will increase district capabilities.

(Manager, 80 hours; Secretary, 32 hours)

## **X. NEW INITIATIVES**

**GOAL:** TO DEVELOP AT LEAST ONE NEW INITIATIVE THAT ENABLES THE SWCD TO ASSIST THE COUNTY IN MAINTAINING A HIGH QUALITY DATA BASE.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** Investigate potential funding available from the Clean Water Amendment.

Actions:

1. Develop a plan to inventory soil erosion sites on selected lakes.
2. Develop a plan of action for the TMDL studies with MPCA.

(Manager, 40 hours; Secretary, 40 hours)

2009 ANNUAL WORK PLAN  
**PROJECTS AND STAFF HOURS SUMMARY**

ACTIVITY	<u>Staff Hours</u>	
	<u>MANAGER</u>	<u>SECRETARY</u>
I. Water Quality		
1. Implement Research	162	100
2. Wetland Conservation Act	740	10
3. Watershed Projects	35	16
4. DNR Permit Review	8	5
5. Local Water Plan coordination	530	60
6. State Revolving Fund	2	0
II. Water Quantity		
1. Observation Well Program	108	8
2. Rural Rainfall Program	2	40
III. Conservation	10	50
IV. Forestry/Tree Program	44	120
V. RIM/PWP	3	2
VI. State Cost-Share Program	40	55
VII. Education/Information	38	285
VIII. Office Adm/Records/Financial	86	1025
IX. Training	80	32
X. New Initiatives	40	40
Subtotal staff hours projected	1928	1848

Total staff hours projected: 3776

Total staff hours available:

Manager	1928
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Secretary	1848
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2088 staff hours equal one staff year in 2009. Deductions for holidays and annual leave were made when stating total staff hours available.