

HUBBARD COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2015 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 continue the contract with MPCA to conduct TMDL studies on the Leech Lake Watershed and the Upper Mississippi River Watershed.
2. Continue Agricultural Irrigation Management Initiatives.
 - A. Continue to partner with Wadena SWCD to work with irrigation specialist.
 - (1) Assist irrigation specialist in signing up new fields for irrigation monitoring.
 - 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. Partner with NRCS to 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 Community Wellhead Protection Plan committees. 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) Promote the sealing of abandoned wells in Hubbard County and provide cost share from the State Cost Share Program.
 - C. Lake Monitoring Program
 - (1) Work with MPCA on interpretation of water quality data and storage of data into the appropriate database.
 - (2) Support the COLA lake monitoring program with LWP funds.

- (3) Offer Hydrolab services.
- D. Nitrate Monitoring
 - (1) Offer free nitrate testing clinic monthly 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) Identifying and prioritize erosion sites within the county.
- F. Play a major role in 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. (NRCS/SWCD)

(Manager, 62 hours; Water Quality Spec., 80 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, 804 hours; Admin Assist, 30 hours; Water Quality Spec, 20 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 or similar programs.
4. Assist lake associations with appropriate projects and activities.
5. Gather watershed data for lakes going into assessment programs.
6. Maintain a supervisor on the Mississippi Headwaters Board.

(Manager, 41 hours; Admin Assist, 50 hours, Water Quality Spec, 250 hours)

OBJECTIVE 4: 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 and implement water plan implementation projects for 2015.
 - A. Community Partner's Grant.
6. Initiate and/or participate in grant writing for special projects.
7. Prepare budgets and reports as required.

(Manager, 367 hours; Admin Assist, 100 hours; Water Quality Spec, 100 hours)

OBJECTIVE 5: 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 JPB 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)

OBJECTIVE 6: Assist lakeshore owners & lake users by participating in programs to combat AIS.

Actions:

1. Collaborate with lake associations on development of grants for boat inspection program.
2. Administration and supervision of the boat inspection program.
3. Serve on the Hubbard County AIS Task Force & Sub-committees.
4. Maintain a supervisor on the Hubbard County AIS Task Force Program, Planning and Implementation Sub-committee.
5. Be the fiscal agent for the State Hubbard County AIS funds.

(Manager, 165 hours, Admin Assistant 250 hours, Water Quality Spec 1,280 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 33 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.

3. Serve on the DNR Straight River Groundwater Management Team.

(Manager, 98 hours; Admin Assistant, 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.
3. Locate and ground truth Hubbard County wells in partnership with the U of M, DNR, and Geologic Survey to determine where the aquifers are under Hubbard County.

(Manager 50 hours, Admin Assist, 200 hours, Water Quality Spec, 100 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 EQUIP 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 residue after harvest. (NRCS/SWCD)

(Manager, 10 hours; Admin Assist, 25 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.
4. Promote the continuous CRP Program offered by USDA. (NRCS/SWCD)
5. Support ongoing Tullibee Forest Stewardship Programs.(DNR/SWCD)
5. Maintain one supervisor on the SWCD Area 8 Forestry Association.
6. Promote & recruit forestry easements through the Leech Lake Foundation & DNR for habitat, water quality, and groundwater.

(Manager, 44 hours; Admin Assist, 145 hours, Water Quality Spec, 30 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 Programs and the Permanent Wetland Preserves programs in the county.

Actions:

1. Provide technical field support required for easement maintenance.

(Manager, 3 hours; Admin Assist, 2 hours)

VI. STATE COST-SHARE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

GOAL: UTILIZE THE STATE COST-SHARE PROGRAM, SPECIAL PROJECTS FUNDS, 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 strip cropping, 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 collaborate with NRCS and MPCA to 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, 30 hours; Admin Assist, 150 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	\$ 5,000.00
Windbreaks	\$ 500.00	\$ 200.00
Erosion Control Systems	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
Unused Well Program	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 561.00
Ag Waste Systems	\$ 10,000.00	0 (SRF)

Fiscal year 2015 State Cost-Share Allocation:		\$ 7,761.00

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 and junior high students by helping to obtain presenters, assisting with promotion and funding, supervising the competition, and sending follow-up information.
4. Provide support for the 2015 Envirothon.
5. Promote SWCD/NRCS programs at the Hubbard County Fair.
6. Remain associated with the Giziibii RC&D Council.
 - A. Name a SWCD supervisor to attend the council meetings when designated.
 - B. Propose pertinent RC&D projects to benefit Hubbard County as well as the Council area.
7. Administer the Freshwater Festival as a LWP initiative.
8. Provide information/education seminars on environmental issues, etc., as a LWP initiative.
9. Maintain and update the District's website.
10. Build presentations in appropriate formats (PowerPoint, etc.) for various projects and programs of the District.
11. Notify area teachers in writing that staff members are available to make presentations on various conservation topics and include a list of suggestions.

12. Participate in 5th Grade Conservation Education Day. (NRCS/SWCD)
13. Educate local government boards regarding natural resource issues.
14. Work with MDA on water quality education projects.
15. Promote programs through news articles. (SWCD/NRCS).
16. Publish a biannual newsletter.
17. Seek environmental educational grants for new activities.
18. Help organize and promote the Annual Grazing Workshop in cooperation with NRCS.
19. Host Area 8 Fall Tour.
(Manager, 78 hours; Admin Assist, 130 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. Administrative Assistant will assist the NRCS field office staff.
3. Administrative Assistant will prepare monthly and annual financial reports and maintain Quickbooks data.

(Manager, 46 hours; Admin Assist, 250 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, 70 hours; Admin Assist, 40 hours, Water Quality Spec, 30 hours)

X. NEW INITIATIVES

GOAL: TO DEVELOP INITIATIVES 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, Admin Assist, 30 hours, Water Quality Spec, 30 hours)

XI. PLAT BOOKS

GOAL: PROVIDE A CURRENT AND ACCURATE HUBBARD COUNTY PLAT BOOK FOR SALE TO THE PUBLIC.

Action:

1. Work with the Hubbard County GIS department and a map publishing company to produce a plat book and updates as needed.
2. Program is profitable for the district.
(Manager, 10 hours; Admin Assist, 30 hours)

**2015 ANNUAL WORK PLAN
PROJECTS AND STAFF HOURS SUMMARY**

ACTIVITY	<u>Staff Hours</u>		
	<u>MANAGER</u>	<u>ADMIN ASSIST</u>	<u>WATER QLTY SP.</u>
I. Water Quality			
1. Implement Research	62	0	80
2. Wetland Conservation Act	804	30	20
3. Watershed Projects	41	50	250
4. Local Water Plan coordination	367	100	100
5. State Revolving Fund	2	0	0
6. Combat AIS	165	250	1280
II. Water Quantity			
1. Observation Well Program	98	8	0
2. Rural Rainfall Program	0	40	0
3. Geologic Survey	50	200	100
III. Conservation	10	25	0
IV. Forestry/Tree Program	44	145	30
V. RIM/PWP	3	2	0
VI. State Cost-Share Program	30	150	0
VII. Education/Information	78	130	0
VIII. Office Adm/Records/Financial	46	250	0
IX. Training	70	40	30
X. New Initiatives	40	30	30
XI. Plat Books	10	30	0
Subtotal staff hours projected	1920	1480	1920

Total staff hours projected:5320

Total staff hours available:

Manager	1920
Administrative Assistant	1480
Water Quality/Resource Specialist	1920

2080 staff hours equal one staff year in 2015. Deductions for holidays and annual leave were made when stating total staff hours available.