About

The Soil & Water Conservation District Guidebook

Maps created by the Remote Sensing and Geospatial Analysis Laboratory, University of Minnesota in cooperation with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Available at: http://www.land.umn.edu/maps/impervious/landbrowse.php

Minnesota County Land Cover Maps

- Agricultural
- Forest
- Grass/Shrub/Wetland
- Water
- Impervious

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) have prepared this guidebook as a component of requirements in Minnesota Statutes 103C.401.

Each SWCD has provided content to BWSR on the following subjects:

- Top 5 Natural Resource Concerns
- Board of Supervisors Contact Information
- Recent Projects / Accomplishments and photos
- Future Projects

The "2005 Expenditures by category" are based on a 2006 survey of SWCDs that was completed by the Office of the Legislative Auditor. For more detailed financial information please contact the appropriate SWCD.

Cover photos (top row, left): Privately owned land with a Forest Stewardship Plan-Wadena SWCD, Shoreline restoration project on Loon Lake-Waseca SWCD, Field Windbreak-Isanti SWCD, (2nd row) Native Vegetation Buffer-Grant SWCD, Wetland Restoration-Blue Earth SWCD, (3rd row) Gully Repair Project-Douglas SWCD.

The following summary of SWCDs is from the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (www.maswcd.org):

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are political subdivisions of the State established under Minnesota Statute 103C. Each SWCD is governed by a board of elected supervisors.

There are 91 SWCDs in Minnesota, providing 100% coverage of the state. There is at least one SWCD in each of the 87 counties, and a few of the larger counties have more than one: East and West Otter Tail SWCDs; East and West Polk SWCDs; North and South St. Louis SWCDs; and Marshall-Beltrami SWCD which consists of the northwestern most portion of Beltrami County, and a portion of eastern Marshall County.

The first SWCD in Minnesota was created in 1938 to encourage landowners to conserve soil and water resources. Statewide, 75% of Minnesota lands are in private ownership. In agricultural regions, the number is quite often 95%.

SWCDs fill the crucial niche of providing land and water conservation services to owners of private lands. Managing private lands in a way that promotes a sound economy and sustains and enhances natural resources is key to Minnesota's environmental health. Private landowners trust SWCDs to provide needed technology, funding and educational services because they are established in each community, governed by local leaders and focused on conservation of local soil and water resources.

SWCDs work to reduce non-point source pollution to make Minnesota's lakes and rivers fishable and swimmable. Non-point source (NPS) pollution is a term for polluted runoff. Water washing over the land, whether from rain, car washing, or the watering of crops or lawns, picks up an array of contaminants, including oil and sand from roadways, agricultural chemicals from farmland, and nutrients and toxic materials from urban and suburban areas. This runoff finds its way into our waterways, either directly or through storm drain collection systems. The term non-point is used to distinguish this type of diffuse pollution from point source pollution, which comes from specific sources, such as sewage treatment plants or industrial facilities.

Landowners across Minnesota count on SWCD technical assistance with conservation practices that protect the quality of Minnesota's greatest treasure - our natural resources.

MASWCD

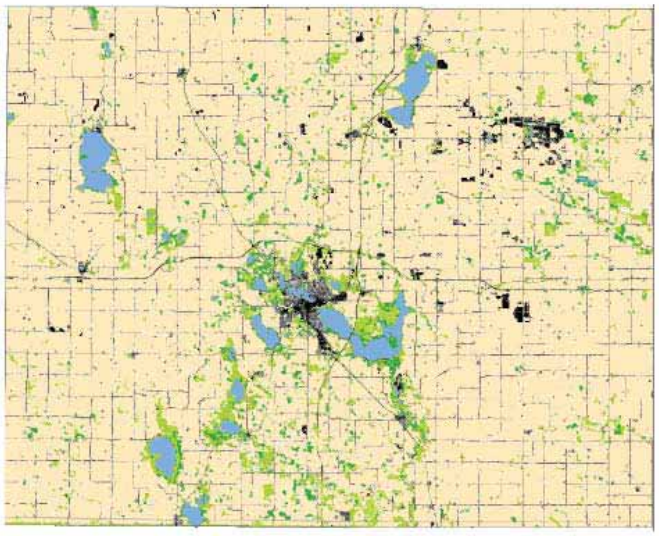
Freeborn

Soil & Water Conservation District

1400 West Main Street
Albert Lea, MN 56007
PHONE: (507) 373-5607
FAX: (507) 373-7654
www.freebornswcd.org

SWCD board meetings:
2nd Thursday of the month at

- *7:30 p.m. (April-November) or*
- *1:30 p.m. (December-March)*



Freeborn County Land Cover

- Agricultural
- Forest
- Grass/Shrub/Wetland
- Water
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Recent Projects / Accomplishments

A water and sediment control basin (pictured) was recently constructed that solved a critical gully erosion problem on the shoreline of one of our shallow lakes. The basin ridge (foreground) temporarily stores runoff water until the PVC inlet can remove it safely underground. This eliminated the gully problem keeping sediment out of the wetland. State Cost Share Funds helped pay for this installation.

2005 Expenditures by category

Monitoring / Research	$1,200
Education / Outreach	$2,000
Wetland Conservation Act	$5,500
Cost Share / project construction, implementation and maintenance	$45,646
Planning/ other local water management duties	$6,200
Conservation easement funding / assistance	--
Programs and Operations	$174,323
Total	$234,869

SWCD Board of Supervisors

Name	Position	Address	Phone	Elected
Don Kropp	Chairman	2005 Tower Road, Albert Lea	507-373-1925	1986
Cole Pestorious	Vice-Chair	20770 707 Avenue, Albert Lea	507-373-6758	2002
Obert Haldorson	Secretary	87861 170 Street, Austin	507-351-5094	1994
David Ausen	Treasurer	69128 260 Street, Alden	507-863-2165	2004
Chris Dahl	Member	27296 730 Avenue, Albert Lea	507-826-3463	2007 (Appointed)

13 water and sediment control basins

were installed on land owned by five different landowners working in partnership with the Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance (GBERBA). Just under $20,000 was paid to landowners as cost-share to encourage them to install needed erosion control measures. About 100,000 acres of the northwest corner of Freeborn County is part of the Minnesota River Watershed. The SWCD is a member of the alliance that seeks out and administers grants aimed at improving water quality and reducing soil erosion in the watershed. An SWCD staff member and supervisor meet regularly with its Technical and Executive Committees.

The black horizontal strip visible behind the orange tile inlet pipe is the ridge of a water and sediment control basin in this field. Parallel ridges are spaced 180 feet apart and help protect a CREP wetland restoration below.

A Clean Water Legacy Act grant

received by GBERBA has made an additional $19,000 in cost share dollars available to promote soil erosion abatement efforts in Freeborn County. The grant addresses a Turbidity TMDL in the Blue Earth River Basin. Landowners in the Cobb River Watershed of northwest Freeborn County can now receive cost share for a number of traditional conservation practice installations. A separate CWLA grant was received by SE Minnesota Technical Support JPB. This grant addresses a Fecal Coliform TMDL for the Cedar River Watershed. Cost share funds for small feedlot fixes and landowner assistance in Nutrient Management Planning is available as part of the SWCD's participation and partnership in this JPB.

A wetland restoration project

was completed with engineering assistance from the SE MN Technical Support JPB. The end of a deep open ditch was stabilized and a wetland adjacent to it was restored by installing an Aluminum Toe Wall Drop Structure. The landowner had a 10-acre wetland that was degrading because the outlet was eroding. The SE MN JPB Engineer provided technical support, designing a structure that controls the outlet for a 350-plus acre watershed. The water level in the wetland was raised and the outlet end was protected from further erosion and degradation. A number of wetland restorations have now been finished as a result of the CREP signup that ended in 2002 in the Minnesota River Watershed. Freeborn has 18 easements covering over 500 acres that have converted marginal ag land into productive wetlands from that sign-up. The native grasses and forbs planted on the fringe areas are now well established and depict the original prairie/pothole landscape that covered much of the county. CREP II ended in 2007, and Freeborn SWCD has applications from 12 landowners currently to enroll over 500 acres of marginal ag land. Five of these applications are contiguous and will produce a significant wetland restoration area.

Top 5 Natural Resource Concerns

1. Soil erosion caused by surface water run-off
2. Surface Water Quality
3. Ground Water Quality
4. Wildlife Habitat
5. Flood Mitigation

Future Projects

Five landowners in Riceland Township have enrolled over 300 acres of contiguous ag land into a single CREP II Wetland Restoration Project. Agreements for conservation easements have all been signed and the restoration work will begin in 2008.

Preliminary engineering plans have been completed for a large embankment structure complemented by several smaller ones. The large structure will probably have draw-down capabilities and thus provide some storage for flood mitigation in the Turtle Creek Watershed, and more specifically for the City of Hollandale. The smaller embankments will restore additional wetlands outside the pool area created by the large structure. When the easements are done, BWSR Engineers can finalize the plans for the restoration work. As with all CREP easements, the wetland restorations will feature native grass and forb seedings. Food plots and tree plantings are also being planned for this project. This project is being done in cooperation with the Turtle Creek Watershed Board of Managers, The local Farm Service Agency, NRCS and our SWCD. A portion of the construction cost may be paid by the watershed board.