



2004 Annual Plan
Freeborn County Soil & Water
Conservation District (SWCD)



*Native prairie planting of grasses and wildflowers
on a CREP easement near Freeborn Lake*

Mission Statement:

To serve the residents of Freeborn County by creating an awareness of soil and water resource concerns, by offering practical alternatives to manage these concerns, and by providing technical assistance (as local resources allow) to apply and maintain best management practices (BMPs) that impact water quality while sustaining soil productivity and land-user profits.

FREEBORN COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2004 ANNUAL PLAN

I. Introduction:

The purpose of this Annual Plan is to chart a course of action for the Freeborn County SWCD during calendar year 2004. The primary focus of these actions will be soil & water resource protection and improvement.

We will briefly describe several objectives and relevant action items we plan to concentrate on. The action items will identify specific work efforts aimed at accomplishing our objectives.

A workload analysis will compare projected staff days needed with those available from present staff.

High priority erosion areas will be identified and needed conservation practices will be discussed.

A summary of specific practices applied in 2003 will demonstrate which practices are in demand and give us an indication of potential workload for 2004. We'll close this section with a few comments on cost share policies and priorities.

In conclusion we'll present our proposed budget for 2004. This will include estimated revenues and expenditures.

II. Objectives and Action Items:

Objective #1

Reduce Soil Erosion caused by water or wind action by continued planning & application of erosion control & water quality improvement practices. This will insure continued soil productivity while reducing "off site" sedimentation damage.

Action Items:

1. Work with landowner/operators to develop 25 compliance plans or revisions on approximately 1000 acres of Highly Erodible Land (HEL).
2. Apply 150 structural practices on 100 tracts. These will be complemented with 100 cultural (vegetative) practices on the same tracts.
3. Seek Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) project applications from landowners.
4. Continue administration & implementation of the state cost share program.
5. Seek applicants from within the Minnesota River Watershed to apply for cost share funds available thru the Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance (GBERBA). These are funds from a National Watershed Initiative Grant administered by the Three Rivers RC&D. The usual Best Management Practices are eligible projects.
6. Seek applicants from the same watershed (Minnesota River) to apply for Phase II, Clean Water Partnership (CWP) 319 Implementation money administered by the Blue Earth River Basin Initiative (BERBI). These funds are primarily for accelerated implementation of Ag Best Management Practices and innovative easements.
7. Continue to provide clerical support to the Southern Minnesota/Northern Iowa Ridge Tillers Club as needed to help promote reduced tillage.
8. Communicate with national & state legislators as well as local county commissioners to keep them informed of our programs & services along with funding needs for staff and equipment etc.

Objective #2

Improve the quality of runoff water leaving cropland or related lands by reducing sediment delivery to streams, ditches, lakes and wetlands etc.

Action Items:

1. Promote landowner interest & participation in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Buffer Initiative. This provides attractive incentives for installing grass filter strips, grass waterways and farmstead or field windbreaks.
2. Promote landowner interest in and seek applicants for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).
3. Cooperate with the newly established Shellrock River Watershed, Board of Managers to acceleration land treatment (as our resources allow) within their jurisdiction.
4. Continue the partnership effort with Freeborn County Environmental Services and others to implement the Local Comprehensive Water Plan.
5. Provide technical assistance to help implement planned Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) wetland restorations on easements that have been finalized in the Minnesota River Watershed.
6. Provide technical assistance to help implement planned RIM/WRP Wetland Restorations on these partnership easements within our county.
7. Conduct an active information and education program aimed at creating an awareness of water quality concerns and alternative solutions.
8. Support efforts to gain approval for establishment of a new Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) for Southeast Minnesota (Cedar River Watershed in our county).

Objective #3

Continue to protect and/or enhance water quality, our ecosystem and wildlife habitat by assisting with implementation of the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA).

Action Items:

1. Assist landowners and/or operators seeking information regarding potential effects of WCA and other wetland regulations on their proposed project.
2. Continue to partner with local LGUs (City of Albert Lea & Freeborn County) to implement provisions of the Wetland Conservation Act.
3. Continue SWCD representation on the Technical Evaluation Panels (TEP). These panels are the local decision making authorities for the act.
4. Include wetland concerns in our education & information programs.

Objective #4

Maintain Current Programs to Enhance Local Wildlife Habitat.

Action Items:

1. Continue to provide a quality source of trees & shrubs for planting in farmstead & field windbreaks or other conservation plantings.
2. Provide planning assistance and rental of planting equipment to ensure proper design and installation of plantings for trees we sell.
3. Partner with other agencies, i.e.: U.S. Fish & Wildlife, MN DNR and others to prioritize wildlife areas and inform landowner of these decisions.
4. Use newsletters and local media to inform residents of various programs available.

III. High Priority Erosion Problems:

Areas needing conservation practices installed:

- The computer map on page 4 shows high priority areas of combined wind and water erosion by 40's. (See page 4)

Practices needed to control high priority erosion problems:

- Waterways, terraces, water and sediment control basins, conservation tillage systems, grade stabilizing structures, and windbreaks.

IV. High Priority Sediment Problems:

Areas needing conservation practice application:

- The computer map shown on page 4 shows areas within 1000 feet of a lake or 300 feet from a stream where erosion exceeds 3 tons per acre per year and where sediment delivery for a watershed outletting to these waters exceeds 2 tons per acre per year. (See page 4)

Practices needed to control high priority sedimentation areas:

- Terraces, water and sediment control basins, waterways, grade stabilizing structures, conservation tillage systems and grass buffer strips.

V. High Priority Feedlots:

Number Existing:

- We feel that approximately 55 high priority feedlots exist at this time. Locations have not been identified specifically.

VI. State Cost-Share Allocation and Implementation Policies:

- Our 2004 state cost-share allocation for project use is \$21,478.00. Freeborn County S.W.C.D.'s policy is to reserve all of its available contract money for high priority erosion problems. The cost-share rate remains at 75% of project cost. Each project is considered individually on its own merits and no maximum dollar limit per landowner exists. If applications exceed funds available, the supervisors prioritize the projects according to cost effectiveness and location, etc.
- Landowners can be paid based on invoices or paid receipts received from contractors. The landowner or operator selects his or her own contractor, and bids are not required. The maximum time frame between SWCD Board of Supervisors approval of the project and the start of construction is 18 months. The entire project must be completed within 24 months.

State Cost Share Program (2003 calendar year) Summary (contracts finalized – payments made)

<u>Practice</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Dollar Amounts</u>
Water & Sediment Basins	12	\$ 13,141.76
Terraces	2	\$ 2,475.00
Total		\$ 15,616.76

Federal EQIP Approved for Fiscal year 2003

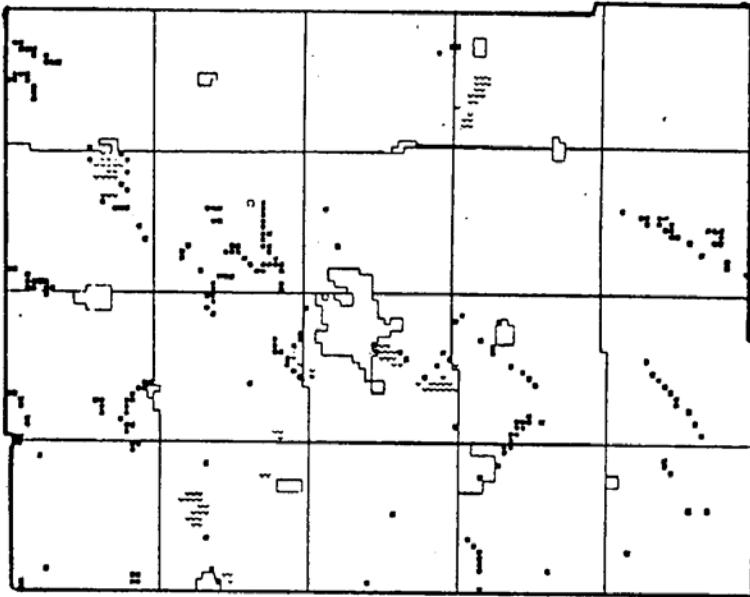
Total Dollar Amount \$100,000.00

HIGH PRIORITY TOTAL EROSION AREAS IN FREEBORN COUNTY (COMBINED WATER AND WIND EROSION)

High priority areas for combined water and wind erosion are defined as shoreland with a potential soil loss due to water erosion between soil loss tolerance (T) and double the T value. Cultivated land with a potential soil loss due to water and wind erosion greater than double the T value, or non-cultivated land with a potential soil loss due to water erosion greater than double the T value.

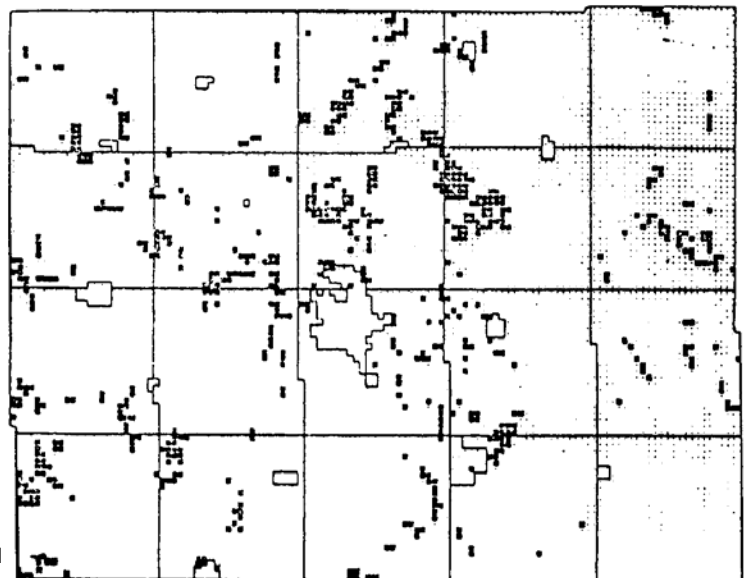
Shoreland is defined as any 40 acre parcel adjacent to a permanent or intermittent stream as shown on USGS Topographic Maps. Soil Tolerance values have been established by SCS, and range between 2 and 5 tons per acre per year.

This computer generated map displays high priority erosion areas in Freeborn County with each 40 acre parcel represented by an individual map symbol. Lines on the map represent boundaries of townships and cities. Potential soil loss estimated by USLE and WEE.



<u>SYMBOL</u>	<u>COUNT</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>LEGEND</u>
1	10,730	93.8	429,200	Low priority areas - Non shoreland with potential soil loss less than double T value or shoreland with potential soil loss less than T value.
2	6	0.1	240	High priority areas - Shoreland with potential soil loss greater than or equal to T but less than double T value.
3	705	6.2	28,200	High priority areas - Any land with potential soil loss greater than or equal to double T value.

CRITICAL SEDIMENTATION FREEBORN COUNTY (WINDOWED FROM STATE FILE)



<u>SYMBOL</u>	<u>COUNT</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>LEGEND</u>
1	232	2.0	9,280	Shoreland with
2	93	0.8	3,720	Water
3	111,116	97.2	444,640	Other

VIII. Staffing Needs: Workload Analysis, January 1 - December 31, 2004

Staffing Days Needed, 2004

Staffing Days Currently Available, 2004

ACTIVITY	STAFFING DAYS NEEDED, 2004			SOURCE	STAFFING DAYS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE, 2004		
	ADMIN	TECH	CLERICAL		ADMIN	TECH	CLERICAL
Annual Work Plan Development	3		2	**District Board			
Annual Report Preparation	3		4	Members	10		
Annual Budget Preparation	2		1				
Audit Preparation	2		2	District Manager	80	180	
Bookkeeping System	1		48				
Cost-Share Program Admin.	24		12	District Admin. Assist.	30		230
SWCD Board Meetings & Prep.	36		14				
Tree Sales Program	2	30	15	District Technician		260	
Service EQIP C/S Applications 20 @ 3 days each	10	40	10				
Service State C/S Applications 10 @ 3 days each	5	22	3	Ducks Unlimited Partnership Technicians	2	360	
Develop Conservation Plans		5	5				
Service Sod/Swampbuster		40	20	NRCS	80	180	
Design Conservation Practices 150 @ 1.5 days each		225		Dist. Conservationist			
Construction Staking & Survey 150 @ 1.5 days x 2 persons		450		NRCS	12	248	
Construction Checking 150 @ 1 day x 2 persons		300		Soil Conservationist			
Recording & Reporting	12			NRCS	12	248	
Information Program	12	12	20	Conservation Tech.			
Wetland Conservation Act	6	12	6	NRCS Area Engineering Tech.		12	
RIM & RIM/WRP Program	5	50	5	NRCS Area Engineer		6	
Photography	1	3					
Comprehensive Water Planning	2	6	2				
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	12	60	24	TOTAL	226	1494	230
Conservation Reserve Enhancement (CREP)	6	12	2				
Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)	30	80	10				
RC&D Meetings, etc.	2						
Training & Workshops	8	15	5				
SMNI Ridge Tillers			12				
Newsletter Preparation	3	5	18				
Envirothon			2				
Outstanding Conservation Farmer	1	1					
Annual Leave	25	65	15				
Sick Leave	10	32	5				
Holidays	15	40	15				
TOTAL	238	1505	277				
				DIFFERENCE (+ or -)	-12	-11	-47

SUMMARY

	<u>ADMIN</u>	<u>TECH</u>	<u>CLERICAL</u>
STAFFING DAYS NEEDED:	238	1505	277
STAFFING DAYS AVAILABLE:	226	1494	230

* 260 staff days = 1 work year

** Does NOT include SWCD Board meeting

