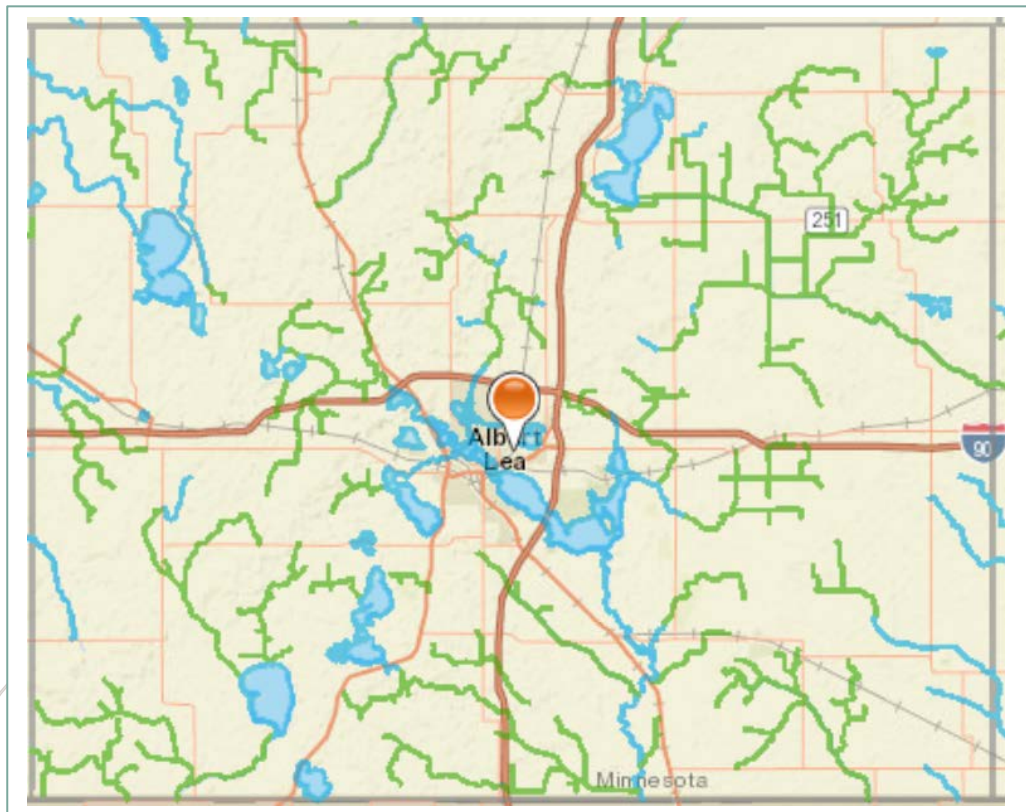




2017

# *Freeborn County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Annual Plan of Work*



*Minnesota Buffer Protection Map*

*Freeborn County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD)  
is organized under provisions of MN Statue Chapter 103C  
and is governed by a board of five elected supervisors*

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## ***Our 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**

**2017 ANNUAL PLAN**

**I. Introduction:**

*The purpose of this Annual Plan is to identify a course of action for 2017 that will help guide supervisor policy decisions and resulting staff initiatives. Because Freeborn County SWCD has adopted the Freeborn County “Local Water Management Plan” as our Long Range Comprehensive Plan, we will address those areas of concern in the water plan that apply to our roles & responsibilities as directed by state statues 103c. Please note that references to the county water plan are based on the 2006 plan. Goal #'s will change with the 2016 plan amendment when it is approved.*

*We will briefly describe several objectives and supporting action items that we plan to concentrate on. The action items will identify specific work efforts aimed at accomplishing the objective described.*

*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 Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be discussed.*

*A summary of specific practices applied in 2016 will illustrate which practices are in demand and give us an indication of potential workload for 2017. This will include estimated revenues and expenditures.*

**II. Objectives and Action Items:**

**Objective #1**

*Protect surface waters from storm water drainage of sediment, nutrients and chemicals (Goal 15 of 20 in County Water Plan) by reducing sediment transport to surface waters or offsite by planning and implementing a variety of conservation practices. Practices will include Water & Sediment Control Basins, Terraces, Waterways, and Grade Stabilizing Structures etc. Vegetative seeding will help protect the structural integrity of these practices.*

**Action Items:**

- 1. Work with landowners/operators with high priority erosion problems to identify their needs, discuss conservation practice alternatives and then provide design and construction supervision assistance to install 25 structural practices on 20 tracts.*
- 2. Use all available information and education methods to promote conservation practice installations. Inform them of cost sharing opportunities that may exist and technical assistance available from our local SWCD/NRCS Office.*
- 3. Spot check and monitor existing cost shared practices during the contract lifespan to insure continued function and effectiveness in erosion control and water quality protection.*
- 4. Communicate with State and Federal legislators, County Commissioners and local agency officials to keep them aware of our programs, services and funding needs.*
  - a. Attend and Participate in MASWCD Legislative Day at the Capitol.*
  - b. Keep County Commissioners informed of our programs, services and financial needs through our Annual Plan, Annual Report, and Web Site.*
- 5. Participate in soil health team to promote use of soil health practices on working lands.*
- 6. Assist landowners to effectively plan native grasses, native wildflowers, pasture mixes, and no-till soybeans by having a no-till drill available for use.*

## **Objective #2**

*Protect surface waters from storm water drainage of sediment, nutrients and chemicals (Goal 15 in our County Water Plan) by working cooperatively with the Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance (GBERBA) and local landowners.*

### **Action Items:**

- 1. Provide information to GBERBA staff for future Clean Water Fund Implementation Grant and other grant applications.*
- 2. Use local news media and our SWCD Newsletter, etc. to inform and educate landowners about current and future expected assistance opportunities.*

## **Objective #3**

*Improve storm water runoff quality (Goal 15 in County Water Plan); reduce sediment delivery to water bodies; increase surface water storage capacity and enhance wildlife habitat by enrolling 200 acres in long-term easements for wetland restoration and riparian buffers.*

### **Action Items:**

- 1. Work with NRCS, Ducks Unlimited, FSA, and other local partners to promote and implement ReInvest in Minnesota (RIM), Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), and Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) program.*
- 2. Encourage landowners to enroll in easements in high priority areas such as Grass Lake, historic Upper Twin Lake Marsh, historic Lake George in Bath Twp., historic Lake George in Freeborn Twp., and Cobb Creek wetland restoration in Freeborn Twp., Sec. 35.*
- 3. Encourage landowners to enroll in easements in high priority areas for buffers as identified in the "Other Waters" list. List is to be completed by July 1, 2017.*
- 4. Work with NRCS in monitoring existing easements for compliance and effectiveness.*
- 5. Include the above mentioned program opportunities in all ongoing informational and educational programs.*

## **Objective #4**

*Protect and maintain existing wetlands (Goal 9 in County Water Plan) by assisting with the implementation of the state's goal to achieve a no net loss in the quantity, quality and biological diversity of existing wetlands.*

### **Action Items:**

- 1. Continue to partner with Freeborn County Environmental Services, The City of Albert Lea and the MN Board of Water & Soil Resources to implement the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) Rules, Chapter 8420 of state statutes by continued representation on the local Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP) for WCA.*

2. *Assist local landowners by keeping them informed of Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act rules and direct them to NRCS for USDA – “Swampbuster” rules that may apply.*
3. *Include wetland concerns in our educational and informational programs.*

#### **Objective #5**

*Control soil erosion (Goal 8, page 15 of County Water Plan) by maintaining our existing Tree Planting Program.*

#### **Action Items:**

1. *Continue to provide a source for landowners/operators to access quality tree & shrub planting stock for conservation purposes at reasonable prices.*
2. *Continue to offer Windbreak and Shelterbelt design assistance to those requesting it.*
3. *Continue to provide planting equipment for rent at reasonable rates.*
4. *Use local newsletter and media to inform residents of tree programs & services available.*

#### **Objective #6**

*Maintain an effective informational and educational program.*

#### **Action Items:**

1. *Publish an annual newsletter highlighting programs, services and current events.*
2. *Use our SWCD Web Site to keep the public informed and provide access to our services.*
3. *Continue to provide timely educational initiatives for presentation in our County Fair Booth.*
4. *Write periodic newspaper articles on events, new programs and services.*
5. *Use the local Shopper or Newspaper to purchase advertising as needed for local projects.*

#### **Objective #7**

*Protect surface waters from storm water drainage of sediment, nutrients and chemicals (Goal 15 in our County Water Plan) by working cooperatively with the LeSueur River Watershed Project, Winnebago Watershed Project, MPCA, Freeborn County Environmental Services, and involved local landowners to implement BMP's in Priority Management Zones (PMZ).*

#### **Action Items:**

1. *Review information for LeSueur River Watershed, Winnebago Watershed, and Cedar River Watershed.*
2. *Contact landowners and operators in watersheds to discuss BMP options.*
3. *Inform landowners of existing conservation programs and identify sites for future grant applications.*

### **Objective #8**

*Protect surface waters from storm water drainage of sediment, nutrients and chemicals (Goal 15, page 23 of County Water Plan) by implementing the MN Buffer Law as directed in MN statute 103F.48.*

#### **Action Items:**

- 1. Inform landowners, producers, and partners of law requirements and provide conservation technical and financial assistance.*
- 2. Provide comments on Buffer Protection Map created by MN DNR.*
- 3. Assist landowners in implementation.*
- 4. Develop, adopt and submit to each local water management authority within its boundary a summary of watercourses for inclusion in the local water management authority's plan by July 1, 2017.*
- 5. Develop or adopt a procedure for violations of compliance when requested by landowner.*

### **Objective #9**

*Protect surface waters from storm water drainage of sediment, nutrients and chemicals (Goal 15 in the County Water Plan) by assisting landowners in applying to and being certified in Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP).*

#### **Action Items:**

- 1. Inform landowners and partners about the program through newsletter, website, and informational meetings.*
- 2. Assist landowners through the application and certification process.*
- 3. Assist landowners with implementation of new BMPs to achieve certification and inform them about technical and financial assistance opportunities.*

### **Objective #10**

*Control Soil Erosion (Goal 8 in County Water Plan) by implementing the soil loss ordinance as directed in MN statute 103F.400.*

#### **Action Items:**

- 1. Inform landowners, producers, partners, and citizens of the ordinance.*
- 2. Field complaints and work with BWSR as identified in the statute.*
- 3. Assist landowners to become compliant and inform them of technical and financial assistance opportunities.*

## Objective #11

Protect surface waters from storm water drainage of sediment, nutrients and chemicals (Goal 15 of 20 in County Water Plan) by participating in One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) for the Cedar River Watershed.

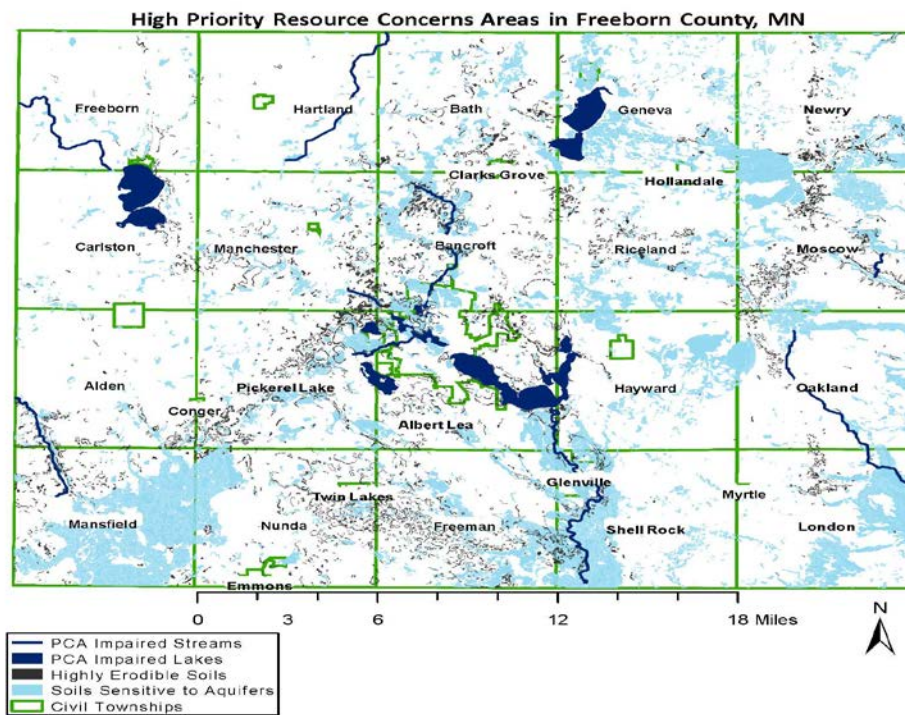
### Action Items:

1. Have a Supervisor represent Freeborn SWCD on Policy Board.
2. Have staff represent Freeborn SWCD on Planning Work Group and Advisory Board.
3. Communicate priorities and needs of Freeborn SWCD so that they can be included in the Cedar River Watershed 1W1P.

## III. High Priority Resource Concerns:

Areas needing conservation practices installed: As shown in map below

Practices needed to control high priority erosion problems: Waterways, terraces, water and sediment control basins, conservation tillage systems, grade stabilizing structures, and windbreaks.



The MN Pollution Control Agency has determined through Total Maximum Daily Load (TDML) studies that the streams and lakes shown above are impaired for aquatic life and aquatic recreation.

The soils map unit is considered highly erodible (HEL) if the potential erodibility exceeds 8 times the Soil Loss Tolerance (T). T is the maximum amount of soil erosion that can occur on a soil type without decreasing long-term productivity. Most HEL soils have steep slopes.

Soils sensitive to aquifers are generally sandy or silt soils where water infiltration rates can be high and the potential exists for groundwater pollution. These soils are generally more vulnerable to wind and water erosion as well.

Data Sources: MN Pollution Control Agency  
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

## IV. High Priority Erosion Problems:

“High priority erosion problems” include areas where erosion from wind or water is occurring equal to or in excess of  $2 \times T$  tons per acre per year, areas that exhibit active gully erosion, is identified as high priority in the comprehensive local water plan, or is identified in the conservation district’s comprehensive plan. Soil loss tolerance (T) is the maximum amount of soil loss in tons per acre per year that can be tolerated and still permit a high level of crop productivity to be sustained economically and indefinitely.

## V. High Priority Water Quality Problems:

“High priority water quality problems” means areas where sediment, nutrients, chemicals, or other pollutants discharge to Department of Natural Resources designated protected waters or to any high priority water as identified in a comprehensive local water plan or the conservation district’s comprehensive plan, or discharge to a sinkhole or groundwater. The delivery rate of pollutants to the water source is in amounts that will impair the quality or usefulness of the water resource.

## VI. High Priority Feedlots:

- Freeborn County considers every site over 10 animal units a feedlot, the State of Minnesota considers a feedlot 50 animal units or more unless in shore land, then the threshold is 10. The following numbers reflect all livestock sites in Freeborn County over 10 AU; 281 total feedlots.

## VII. State Cost-Share Allocation and Implementation Policies:

- Freeborn County SWCD’s policy is to reserve all of its available contract money for high priority erosion and/or water quality problems. Primarily gully control in Highly Erodible Land (HEL) or near sensitive surface water bodies (see map on Page 4). However, because soil inclusions can make it possible to find small highly erodible areas in Non-HEL soil types, the evidence of gullies is used to determine eligibility.
- The maximum cost share rate is 75% of project cost for standard cost share. The storm events of 2014 brought an additional cost share source named Disaster Recovery Assistance Program (DRAP) and cost share assistance may be up to 100%. However, the district may limit cost share to a smaller percentage when deemed appropriate by the board of supervisors. Occasionally, state and federal cost share is “piggy-backed” on large scale projects. This may provide the incentive needed to encourage a landowner to install a high priority project. When cost share requests exceed funds available, the district board prioritizes according to location to sensitive resources and cost effectiveness etc.
- Our State Cost Share standard allocation for Fiscal Year 2016 was \$16,482. After deducting the allowable 20% for Technical and Administrative Expenses, the balance available for projects is \$13,186. Applicants are paid based on invoices or receipts from the contractor after the project is satisfactorily completed. A Non-structural Land Management Plan was adopted for 2017 that allows a flat rate to be paid on buffers, cover crops, and no-till.
- The DRAP allocation came in two different funding cycles. For Fiscal Year 2015, \$44,000 was allocated and for Fiscal Year 2016, \$42,240 was allocated with a possibility of a third round of funding in 2016, \$55,010. Technical and Administrative is also an allowable expense under these grants of 20%.

### State Cost Share Program (2016 calendar year) Summary contracts finalized – payments made from FY14, FY15, and DRAP2-FY16 funds

<u>Practices</u>	<u>Dollar Amount</u>
1 – Grade Stabilization Structure and 1 – Water & Sediment Control Basin and 1 Field Windbreak	\$2,750
<b>Federal Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) \$’s</b>	
<u>Practices</u>	<u>Dollar Amount</u>
Cover crops, residue and tillage management (no-till/strip till), prescribed grazing, grassed waterways, grade stabilization structures, water & sediment control basins, forage and biomass planting, fencing, water facilities, pipeline, heavy use protection area, critical area planting, underground outlets, subsurface drain, roofs and covers, and seasonal high tunnel for crops.	\$194,532 – EQIP
	\$194,532 – CSP
	\$730,830 – CRP



### VIII. Staffing Needs:

#### Staffing Days Needed, 2017

Activity	Admin	Tech	Clerical
Annual Work Plan Development	7	0	7
Annual Report Preparation	5	1	10
Annual Budget Preparation	3	0	3
Audit Preparation	2	0	3
Bookkeeping System	2	0	48
Cost-Share Program Admin.	18	0	26
SWCD Board Meetings & Prep.	14	0	14
Trees Sales Program	10	60	25
Service EQIP C/S Applications & CSP 20 @ 5 days each	25	20	5
Service State Cost Share Appl. 10 @ 3 days each	5	22	3
Develop Conservation Plans	0	30	1
Service Sod/Swampbuster with NRCS	20	35	4
Design Conservation Practices 40 @ 2.0 days	0	80	0
Construction Staking & Survey 40 @ 2.0 days X 3 persons	0	200	0
Construction Checking 40 @ 1 day X 2 persons	0	80	0
Recording & Reporting	15	0	25
Information Program	6	6	15
Wetland Conservation Act	7	24	6
RIM & State Cost Share Spot Checks	12	25	3
Photography	1	4	1
Comprehensive Water Planning	4	1	2
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP & CCRP)	36	200	5
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CCRP) Wetland Restoration	5	5	1
Wetland Reserve Easement Program (WRE) and ReInvest in MN (RIM)	40	295	7
MN Ag Water Quality Cons. Program	2	22	1
Training and Workshops	10	46	5
Soil Health Team	5	25	1
DNR OBWELL Readings & Reporting	2	20	1
Rain Gauge Reporting	0	0	12
Web Page Development & Maintenance	0	0	15
Newsletter Preparation	5	6	9
Envirothon	1	1	3
Buffer Law Implementation	5	60	2
Outstanding Conservationist	3	1	1
Annual Leave	18	12	30
Sick Leave	8	12	8
Holidays	10	20	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>1313</b>	<b>311</b>

#### Staffing Days Currently Available, 2017

Source	Admin.	Tech.	Clerical
District Board Members	10	0	0
District Manager	80	180	0
District Office/Assist. Manager	30	10	220
District Technician 2	0	495	0
Ducks Unlimited Tech.	24	236	0
NRCS District Conservationist	140	70	50
NRCS Area Engineer	0	12	0
NRCS Area Engineering Tech.	0	12	0
District Technician 3	0	260	0
NRCS Soil Conservationist	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>1275</b>	<b>270</b>
<b>SUMMARY</b>			
	<b>Admin.</b>	<b>Tech.</b>	<b>Clerical</b>
<b>STAFFING DAYS NEEDED:</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>1313</b>	<b>311</b>
<b>STAFFING DAYS AVAILABLE:</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>1275</b>	<b>270</b>
<b>DIFFERENCE (+ or -)</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>41</b>

\*260 staff days = 1 work year

**IX. 2017 Approved Budget:**

**Freeborn County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD)  
2017 Budget**

<b>Expenditure Account</b>	<b>2017 Budget</b>
Audit Expense	\$3,000
Education & Promo	\$1,000
Employee Education & Training	\$7,000
Telephone/Internet Expenses	\$500
Fees & Dues (includes computers NRCS)	\$7,000
Insurance (MCIT)	\$4,800
Equipment Purchases	\$29,000
Misc. Other Services & Charges	\$200
Office Maintenance	\$100
Office Rent	\$9,000
Shed Rent	\$800
Postage	\$500
RIM/CREP Reimbursable Expenses	\$100
Supervisor Expense	\$2,700
Vehicle Gas & Maintenance	\$4,000
Employee Salary	\$184,584
Supervisor Compensation	\$6,500
SWCD Contribution PERA (7.25%)	\$13,843
Medical Insurance	\$41,560
Health Saving Account (SWCD cont.)	\$6,700
Dental Insurance	\$2,132
Life, Accidental Death, Disability	\$600
SWCD Contribution FICA (6.2%)	\$11,444
SWCD Contribution Medicare (1.45%)	\$2,677
Payroll Expense	\$1,000
Field Supplies	\$2,500
Office Supplies	\$500
Computer Supplies	\$100
Misc. Project Expense	\$100
Newsletter Expense	\$3,000
Tree Expense	\$17,238
State Project Expense	\$32,760
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$396,938</b>

<b>Income Account</b>	<b>2017 Budget</b>
County Grant	\$183,000
Wetland Conservation Act Grant	\$5,000
BWSR Conservation Delivery Grant	\$19,145
BWSR Easement Delivery Grant	\$5,555
BWSR CWF CD8	\$16,250
BWSR C/S Project Grant	\$13,186
BWSR C/S T and A	\$3,296
BWSR Capacity	\$118,000
Tree Sales	\$21,000
Planter Rental	\$300
Tree Mats, Fertilizer Pkts., Flags	\$1,100
Newsletter Ads	\$800
Other Charges for services (OBWELL)	\$780
Interest Earnings	\$1,700
Other Misc. Revenues	\$100
Possible C/A Funds from NRCS	\$2,500
T & A for other projects	\$5,226
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$396,938</b>