

## **INTRODUCTION**

Pine County Soil and Water Conservation District is a local unit of government that is governed by five publicly elected officials. Under their direction, the district staff carries out the goals and objectives of the district.

The 2006 Annual Plan of Operations sets up a plan of action for the Pine County Soil and Water Conservation District in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Pine County Water Management Plan Task Force, Pine County Commissioners and other cooperating agencies. This plan addresses specific goals from the long-range objectives of the Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan in addition to ongoing district activities.

The Plan purpose is to develop goals, objectives and a plan of action for the protection, management, and improvement of water and related land resources.

**2006**  
**PINE COUNTY SWCD WORKPLAN**

**Narrative:** The Pine SWCD office is located at 260 Morris Ave No, Hinckley, MN 55037. District staff include: Mary Kay Anderson, District Manager; Sam Martin, Water Management/GIS Specialist; Robin Poppe, Resource Conservationist/Wetland Specialist; and Jill Carlier, Office Assistant. NRCS staff include: Robert Korth, District Conservationist; Julie Lindner, Soil Conservation Technician; and Jennifer Mold, WAE employee/intern.

Pine County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), in addition to implementing district programs, is authorized by the Pine County Board of Commissioners through resolution to administer the county comprehensive Local Water Management plan (LWM) and the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) for the county.

Grant monies received, as well as local matching dollars are passed through to the Pine SWCD who is also the fiscal agent for these programs. Any grants and other funds donated by lake associations or local organizations are also deposited with Pine SWCD for their disbursement. In fiscal year 2005, WCA was at full state funding, while LWM was still only partially state funded again. The partial state funding for LWM is a result of the 2003 unallotment of state funds by the Governor. Full funding for WCA employs 1 ½ staff persons, and covers most operating expenses to administer and implement the WCA program.

The district continues to incorporate a fee schedule for WCA permitting. The district has the ability to be a Technical Service Provider (TSP) for NRCS. As a TSP, the district agrees to provide technical assistance for various NRCS practices and receives partial reimbursement in return. For 2006, NRCS did not have any practices available to coincide with our technical approval authority.

The district will cooperate and build on the strengths of other agencies and organizations to help carry out the district's goals and objectives whenever possible. A high priority is given to group or multi-agency efforts whenever possible. Pine SWCD will be placing a greater emphasis on watershed or basin efforts.

**OBJECTIVE 1. ADMINISTRATION/COORDINATION**

Carry out the district priorities as set by the district board, county board and water management plan task force.

**Action 1. Grant Writing for Project Funding:** Continue to look for alternative sources of funding for LWM priority projects. Apply for grants to implement high priority erosion/water quality problems.

Staffing: District Manager and Water Management Specialist, NRCS District Conservationist

Funding: Various agencies & organizations

**Action 2. Pine SWCD Legislative Representation:** Pine SWCD will attend various legislative days at the capitol to promote districts and their programs. Pine SWCD will also invite legislators to a district board meeting.

Staffing: Supervisors (2), District Manager

Funding: District, County

**Action 3. Pine SWCD County Representation:** Pine SWCD will invite each county commissioner to a district board meeting throughout the year.

Staffing: District Board & Staff, NRCS Staff

Funding: District, County

**Action 4. Snake River Watershed Management Board Participation:** Pine will continue to coordinate efforts with the Watershed Coordinator and support the activities of the SRWMB.

Staffing: Water Management Specialist will continue to serve as a technical member of the Citizen Advisory Committee. One SWCD supervisor will be an active voting member of the CAC.

Funding: District, County

**Action 5. Wetland Conservation Act:** To implement the Wetland Conservation Act, providing seamless coverage to all of Pine County with an emphasis on on-site service, as time permits.

Staffing: In Pine County, this takes one full-time wetland specialist to administer and implement the program properly. It also takes one part-time staff, the water management specialist, to assist the specialist with county road project delineations and minor subdivision applications.

Funding: Wetlands, County, Fees

**Action 6. Funding Programs:** Administer local and state grants, state cost-share programs and low interest loan programs.

Staffing: District Manager, Water Management Specialist, and District Board

Funding: BWSR Grants, PLA grants, District, County

**Action 7. State Revolving Fund (SRF):** Meetings will be held by the Joint Powers Board of the IMPACK6 counties to administer funds for SRF loans. District Manager handles local county administration of program.

Staffing: District Board and District Manager, IMPACK6

Funding: SRF loan dollars through Ag Star

**Action 8. Provide assistance to Sand, Sturgeon, and Island Lakes in seeking sewage treatment:** Work with the townships and lake associations by providing technical assistance and information in getting sewer systems around those lakes. Work with the U of M Regional Extension staff to sponsor meetings with members from these lake associations on finding solutions for their community wastewater issues.

Staffing: Water Management Specialist, District Manager, Extension, Zoning

Funding: Extension

**Action 9. Provide assistance to the 14 cities in Pine County by informing them of alternative sewer management options:** Work with the cities by coordinating a workshop with the U of M Regional Extension staff to provide education and information on city growth issues and alternative sewer management options.

Staffing: Water Management Specialist, District Manager, Extension, Zoning

Funding: Extension

**Action 10. Provide assistance to the City of Sturgeon Lake in seeking sewage treatment:** Work with the city by providing technical assistance and information in getting city sewer.

Staffing: Water Management Specialist

Funding: Water Plan

**Action 11. Provide assistance to the City of Askov by helping locate funding for new sewer ponds:** Work with the City of Askov by providing technical assistance and information on grant dollars for their municipal sewer system. Research applying for an LCMR grant since the sinkhole area is considered to be a sensitive area. Also look into possible EQIP funding.

Staffing: Water Management Specialist

Funding: LCMR, EQIP

**Action 12. Accountability:** Maintain financial records according to generally accepted accounting principles and progress reporting as directed by BWSR.

Staffing: District Manager and Office Assistant

Funding: District, County

**Action 13. Training Opportunities:** Provide opportunities for ongoing and specialized training for staff as needed and requested.

Staffing: District Board, District Staff

Funding: Water Plan, Wetlands, District, County

## **OBJECTIVE 2. LAND AND WATER TREATMENT**

Implement Best Management Practices (BMP's), with an emphasis on priority areas of the county, by providing services and technical assistance to landowners and other government agencies.

**Action 1. Beaver Damage Control:** Apply for a Beaver Damage Control grant through BWSR to provide cost-share assistance to the county and townships to remove beaver dams and to provide other beaver dam control measures.

Staffing: District Manager, County, Townships

Funding: Grant, County, Townships

**Action 2. Tree Program:** Make available for sale 40,000+ tree seedlings and wildflower seed in small quantities and provide technical assistance to landowners to establish windbreaks, wildlife habitat and tree plantings on private lands. Also make available a butterfly garden seed mix to sell this year.

Staffing: District staff, NRCS, DNR Forestry

Funding: District, landowners

**Action 3. State Cost-Share:** Utilize state cost-share dollars in high priority areas by completing one large streambank erosion project on the Kettle River and one lakeshore stabilization project on Sturgeon Island. There are also 3 - 4 streambank erosion projects in the Snake River Watershed to apply partial cost-share funding towards. Abandoned well sealing is now an allowable practice for 50% state cost-share funding. Abandoned well sealing can also be applied for through NRCS EQIP at 50% cost-share funding.

Staffing: District Manager, Water Management Specialist, IMPACK Engineer and Technician

Funding: State Cost-Share, District

**Action 4. Pokegama Creek Watershed:** Continue to work on the recommendations of the Pokegama Lake CWP Phase I Diagnostic Study to improve water quality in the Pokegama Creek Watershed. This will include feedlot runoff control and pasture management practices. A combination of federal, state, Snake River Watershed, and PLA (Pokegama Lake Association) funds may provide up to 90% cost-sharing.

Staffing: NRCS staff, District staff, IMPACK6 engineer

Funding: Federal, State, Snake River Watershed, PLA

**Action 5. Technical Service Provider:** Continue to work as a Technical Service Provider (TSP) in cooperation with NRCS, providing technical assistance for federal conservation programs when they have projects available.

Staffing: District staff, NRCS staff

Funding: Federal

### **OBJECTIVE 3. EDUCATION AND INFORMATION**

Educate all Pine County resource users by providing a variety of educational materials and opportunities in addition to assistance and referrals to other agencies.

**Action 1. County Newsletter:** Edit and publish two editions of the “Pine County Waters” newsletter, incorporating articles from county departments and local agencies. Distribution will be to all households in the county, as well as non-residents who own land in Pine County.

Staffing: District staff, cooperating agencies and individuals

Funding: Water Plan, Wetlands, District, County

**Action 2. Pine SWCD Web Site:** Maintain internet web site with current information on district programs, activities and accomplishments.

Staffing: District Manager

Funding: District

**Action 3. Wetland Update Information:** Attend and provide wetland updates at the Zoning office’s spring contractors meeting. Send letters to townships letting them know we are available to provide wetland updates by attending their meetings. Wetland updates will be published in the two issues of the “Pine County Waters” newsletter.

Staffing: Wetland Specialist, Zoning

Funding: Wetlands

**Action 4. Wetland/Zoning Workshop for Realtors and Developers:** Sponsor and coordinate a one-day workshop to educate realtors and developers on the Wetland Conservation Act, 7080 Septic Ordinance, and Shoreland Ordinance. Also develop a brochure or flyer to be sent to realtors and developers on the Wetland Conservation Act.

Staffing: Wetland Specialist, Zoning

Funding: Wetlands

**Action 5. County Resource Tour:** Hold a one day tour of a selected area of the county for county officials and landowners, with several stops highlighting county resources and best management practices.

Staffing: District Board and staff, NRCS, FSA, DNR

Funding: District

**Action 6. Envirothon:** Coordinate the Area III Envirothon, an outdoor environmental competition for high school students.

Staffing: Pine SWCD District Manager and Office Assistant to coordinate with assistance from the Resource Conservationist/Wetland Specialist. Event staff: Area III SWCD staff and numerous cooperating agencies.

Funding: SWCD’s, cooperating agencies and businesses

**Action 7. Pokegama Lake Association 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Waters Festival:** Present one learning station at the “Waters Festival” for all Pine County 5<sup>th</sup> grade students and some students from Carlton, Chisago, and Kanabec counties.

Staffing: District Manager and Resource Conservationist/Wetland Specialist, PLA members, various agencies and organizations.

Funding: PLA

**Action 8. PICKM Water Quality Team:** Continue to participate with the five-county PICKM group to develop one multi-county water quality education project each year.

Staffing: District Manager and Water Management Specialist

Funding: PICKM Water Quality Team

**Action 9. Fair Booth:** Develop and staff a display in the Conservation Building at the Pine County Fair in August, providing conservation information, education, and assistance to fair-goers.

Staffing: District Board, District Staff

Funding: District

**Action 10. Booth at local Home Show/Expo:** Develop and staff a display at a local Home Show, providing conservation information, education, and assistance to consumers.

Staffing: District Board, District Staff

Funding: District

**Action 11. Update “A Guide for Rural Living” Book:** Look into having the book “A Guide to Rural Living” updated and re-published. Work with Extension, NRCS, and RC&D about updating this book, and to also seek funding or applying for grants. Add a soil testing section.

Staffing: District Manager and Office Assistant, NRCS, RC&D Coordinator, MASWCD

Funding: RC&D, Extension, EQIP, Grants

**Action 12. Nitrate Testing Clinic:** Sponsor a free nitrate testing clinic by using the MN Department of Agriculture’s testing equipment. Clinic to be held either at the Fair Booth or specific locations throughout the county. Order or purchase brochures and publications to have available at each location.

Staffing: District Staff and Supervisors

Funding: District, Water Plan

**Action 13. Pine SWCD Annual Spring Brunch/Workshop:** In coordination with the Pine SWCD Annual Meeting, sponsor a workshop to educate landowners on conservation issues.

Staffing: District Staff and Supervisors, DNR, NRCS

Funding: District, Water Plan

**Action 14. Boron Publication.** Send out an educational flyer or publication about Boron, why to have well water tested for it, and the effects it can have, to all of the residents located in the area east of Hinckley where Boron was found in some well water.

Staffing: District Staff

Funding: Water Plan

#### **OBJECTIVE 4. MONITORING/DATA COLLECTION**

Continue to develop a database for surface and groundwater quality in order to identify water quality problems, prioritize areas for additional monitoring and track progress toward improvement.

**Action 1. Snake River Watershed Network Monitoring:** Continue to cooperate with the SRWMB, by coordinating volunteers to take lake samples, collect samples from volunteers and send samples to lab. The District will conduct stream monitoring every year through 2006.

Staffing: Water Management Specialist, SRWMB Coordinator, Volunteers

Funding: SRWMB

**Action 2. Volunteer Stream & Lake Monitoring Program:** Continue to work with MPCA and volunteers providing equipment, training, and recruitment to maintain a volunteer network on major streams and lakes in Pine County. Approximately 35 volunteers participating (18 stream & 17 lake).

Staffing: Water Management Specialist, MPCA staff, Volunteers

Funding: District, County

**Action 3. Rainfall Monitoring Network:** Maintain existing volunteers and recruit additional volunteers in townships without a monitor, by providing a rain gauge to the volunteers to monitor rainfall. Approximately 58 volunteers participating.

Staffing: Office Assistant, Volunteers

Funding: BWSR, District

**Action 4. Study to Determine/Type the Trophic Status of Wetlands in the Pokegama Creek Watershed:** Conduct a scientific study to determine different wetland types and their ability to contribute phosphorous to surface waters of Pokegama Creek. Grant to be written in 2006 to fund this project in 2007.

Staffing: Water Management Specialist, Blue Water Science

Funding: Special grant

**Action 5. County Well Index (CWI):** Use the on-line CWI program by the Minnesota Department of Health to provide landowners with up-to-date well and depth information



in the county as requested. Publish articles in newsletter stating that landowners can also access the CWI on-line themselves.

Staffing: District Manager and Office Assistant

Funding: District

## **OBJECTIVE 5. INVENTORY/MAPPING**

Continue to inventory and map resources of the county in order to assist landowners, agencies and organizations in making better planning and implementation decisions.

**Action 1. Pine County Soil Survey:** Partner with NRCS and Pine County to start work on the Pine County Soil Survey project. NRCS Soil Survey Project Leader and two staff were hired in 2005. Soil survey team will do some investigative soils probing and will also work on establishing a soils mapping legend. Pine SWCD will apply for continuing funding from LCMR every biennium. This project is anticipated to take a total of 12 years to complete, with cooperation from all participating agencies.

Staffing: District staff, NRCS staff

Funding: NRCS, LCMR, Water Plan, along with county and local in-kind

**Action 2. Wetland Information on Minor Subdivisions:** Continue to review minor subdivision requests for wetlands and provide wetland information and recommendations to the Pine County Planning Commission.

Staffing: Water Management Specialist and Wetland Specialist

Funding: Wetlands, Fees

**Action 3. County Ditch Wetland Inventory:** Identify the beneficial wetlands currently located within county ditches. Create a GIS layer using a GPS to map the wetland coordinates.

Staffing: Wetland Specialist and Water Management Specialist

Funding: Water Plan, Wetlands, Fees

**Action 4. County Geologic Atlas:** Continue to utilize the Geologic Atlas (also on-line) and incorporate it by assisting Pine County Zoning regarding land use concerns.

Staffing: District staff, DNR, landowners

Funding: Water Plan, DNR

**Action 5. Utilization of GIS Data Layers:** Continue to utilize GIS layers created, as well as other layers available, to assist in project planning and implementation. Continue to create maps for landowners and governmental agencies as requested.

Staffing: Water Management/GIS Specialist and Resource Conservationist/Wetland Specialist

Funding: District, Wetlands, Fees from landowners

## **OBJECTIVE 6. REGULATIONS, ORDINANCES, AND PLANNING**

Support and assist in the development of county ordinances and planning that involve District programs and the natural resources of Pine County.

**Action 1. County-wide Septic Ordinance:** Continue to support Pine County Zoning by providing information on low-interest septic loans to help bring failing septic systems into compliance.

Staffing: District Board, District Manager, Zoning

Funding: Ag BMP Loan Program

**Action 2. Pine County Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan:** Continue to implement the Local Water Management Plan as directed by the Water Management Plan Task Force and the Pine County Board. Approve a resolution adopting the Local Water Management Plan as the District Comprehensive Plan. Explore the possibility of combining the Local Water Management Plan with the county comprehensive plan.

Staffing: District Board, District staff, BWSR staff, County Zoning staff

Funding: Water Plan, County

**Action 3. Erosion Control Plans:** Continue to write required erosion control plans for all grading and filling permits within the shore impact zone. A \$25 fee has been incorporated for these plans.

Staffing: Water Management Specialist, Zoning staff

Funding: District, County, Fees

## **OBJECTIVE 7. EQUIPMENT/SUPPLIES**

Purchase equipment and supplies as needed to operate effectively and efficiently.

**Action 1. Office Supplies:** Necessary office supplies will need to be purchased by the district if NRCS is unable to provide.

Staffing: District Manager and Office Assistant, NRCS District Conservationist

Funding: All funds

**Action 2. Floor Mats:** Pine SWCD plans to purchase adequate floor mats for each workstation.

Staffing: District Manager and Office Assistant

Funding: District, Fund Balance

**Action 3. Vehicle:** Pine SWCD will look into purchasing a new 4-door pick-up truck for the District.

Staffing: District Manager

Funding: Fund Balance

## **OBJECTIVE 8. DEDICATED FUNDS**

Dedicate funds for future district obligations and needs.

**Action 1. Compensated Absences:** Employee compensated absences.

Staffing: District Board

Funding: Fund Balance

**Action 2. Water Plan Funds for Pine County Soil Survey:** \$10,000 from Water Plan funds will be designated each year to help fund the 12-year Pine County Soil Survey project.

Staffing: District Manager

Funding: Water Plan

**Action 3. 2007 Pine County Platbook:** \$20,000 from the district's fund balance will be designated for the 1<sup>st</sup> half installment to be paid in 2006 for starting a new platbook, to be published in 2007. The 1<sup>st</sup> ½ installment cost of \$20,000 will be offset by approximately \$10,000 in revenue due to staff selling platbook ads in 2006.

Staffing: District Manager and Office Assistant

Funding: Fund Balance, District