



2008

ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK

ROOT RIVER

SOIL & WATER

CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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INTRODUCTION

This annual plan of work is provided to assist in the implementation of the 2008 activities of the Root River Soil and Water Conservation District. This document is intended to provide guidance in planning and scheduling in a manner consistent with district policy, in order to achieve the long range goals of the district.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Root River Soil and Water Conservation District's purpose is to provide assistance to cooperators in managing the natural resources on their land. In addition the district will continue to educate people on local conservation issues and concerns, in order to fortify and perpetuate the conservation movement.

AUTHORITY

Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103C.201 authorized the formation of the Root River SWCD.

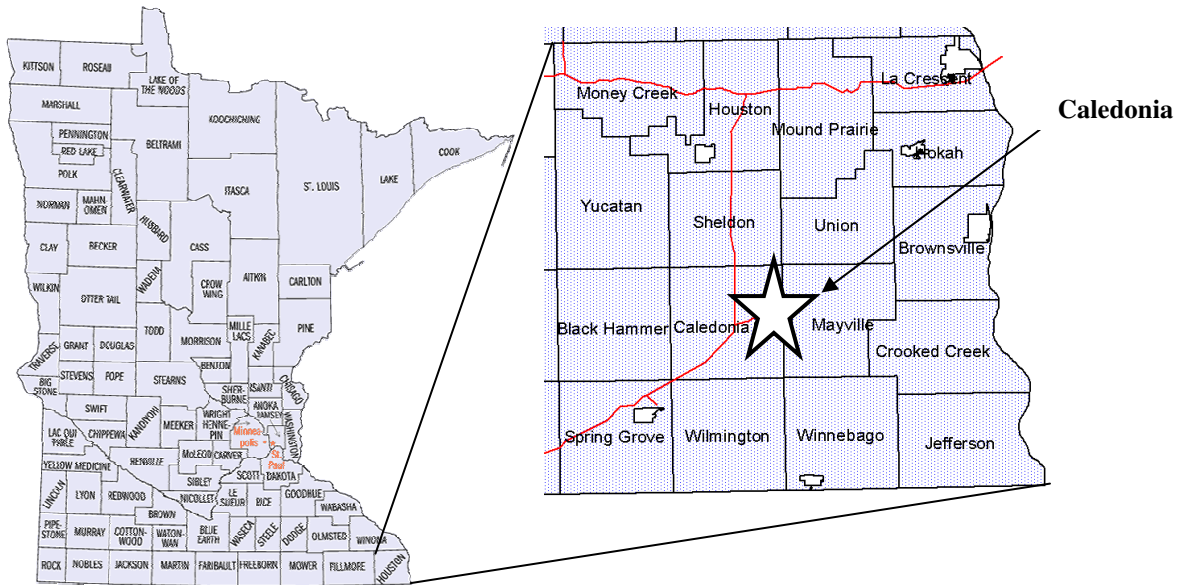
Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103C.005, soil and water conservation policy states:

"to encourage land occupiers to conserve the soil and water resources through implementation of practices that effectively reduce or prevent erosion, sedimentation, siltation and agriculturally related pollution in order to preserve natural resources, ensure continued soil productivity, control floods, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, assist in maintaining the navigability of rivers and harbors, preserve wildlife, protect the tax base and protect public lands."

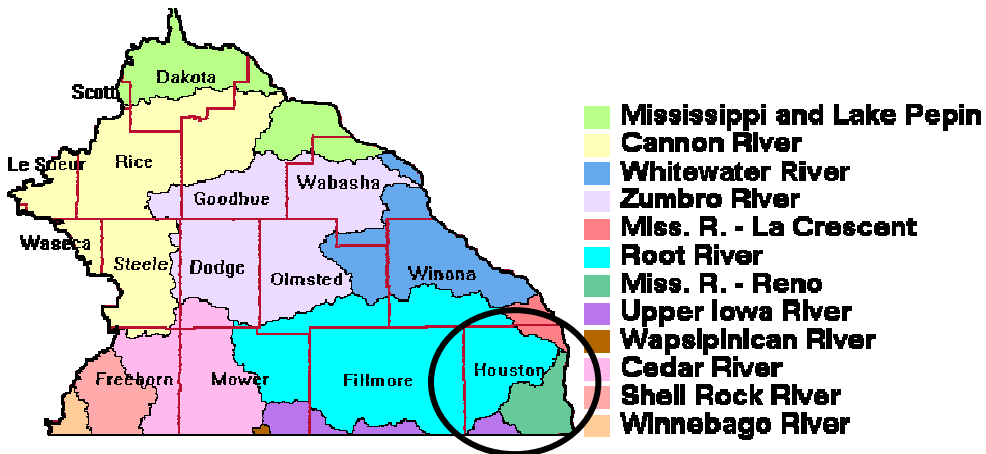
In order to assist land users the Root River SWCD will carry out all district programs in accordance with the powers and duties outlined in Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103C.331.

ORGANIZATIONAL BOUNDARIES

Houston County lies in the extreme southeastern corner of Minnesota bounded by the Mississippi River on the east, Iowa on the south, Fillmore County on the west and Winona County on the north. The County consists of seventeen townships.



The Root River flows through the northern half of the county. There are four smaller watersheds which flow directly into the Mississippi River and a portion along the south and southwest flows into the Upper Iowa Watershed. The topography of the district is very irregular with elevation extremes of over 600 feet. Many of the hilltops are over 400 feet above the flood plains and are within a fraction of a mile in distance.



ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

The Root River SWCD was organized in 1939, encompassing all of Houston County and the eastern portion of Fillmore County. In the 1960s the boundaries were revised, with the Fillmore County portion of the District merging with West Fillmore SWCD and leaving Root River SWCD with our own present boundary.

The district was formed because people in the valleys were concerned about flooding. Also upland users had their problems with erosion which was causing ditches and lower yields on cropland. These problems and concerns caused incomes to fall therefore survival of the family farm units were threatened.

In many instances land users accepted conservation practices on the land as an alternative to abandoning the farm. The results which these land operators obtained were recognized and adopted by their neighbors. Since the district was formed conservation practices have been installed on over 90% of the farms.

Some land users have only treated part of their land. Change of land users have seen many of the practices removed. At first, the new land users did not recognize the need for practices until they developed problems. This indicates that the district has a critical role in maintaining the practices installed and continues to strive to have all resources used according to their capabilities for continued production.

SWCD & NRCS Staff 2008



**Bottom Row: Gary Larson - NRCS, Ron Meiners – SWCD
Back Row: Dave Walter – SWCD, Jason Rochester – SWCD, Rich Stemper – SWCD,
Tim Weisbrod – NRCS, Mary Staggemeier – NRCS, Janice Messner – SWCD, Rocky
Danielson – SWCD. Not pictured – Tim Amberg – SWCD and Ralph Tuck - SWCD**

ROOT RIVER SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
SUPERVISORS



**Back Row: Douglas W. Meyer, Tony Becker, & Glenn Kinneberg,
Front Row: Joe McManimon & Vernon Fruechte**

Supervisor District #1 -- Douglas W. Meyer
Term Expires December 31, 2010

Supervisor for:
La Crescent Township & Village--Hokah Township & Village
Mound Prairie Township--Union Township

Supervisor District #2 -- Tony Becker
Term Expires December 31, 2010

Supervisor for:
Brownsville Township & Village--Crooked Creek Township--Jefferson Township

Supervisor District #3 -- Glenn Kinneberg
Term Expires December 31, 2008

Supervisor for:
Black Hammer Township--Spring Grove Township & Village--Wilmington Township

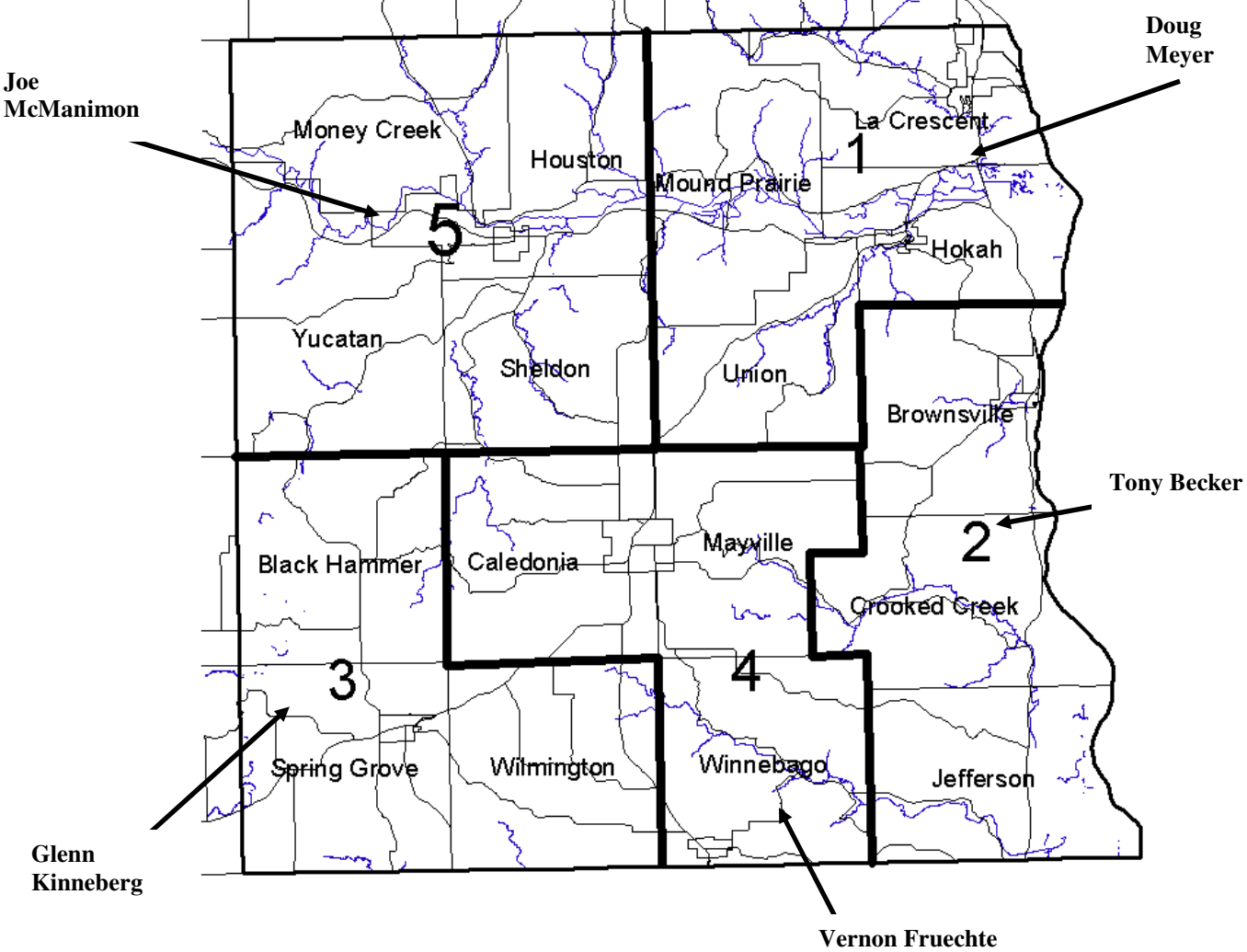
Supervisor District #4 -- Vernon Fruechte
Term Expires December 31, 2008

Supervisor for:
Caledonia Township & Village--Eaten Village--Mayville Township
Winnebago Township

Supervisor District #5 -- Joseph McManimon
Term Expires December 31, 2008

Supervisor for:
Houston Township & Village--Money Creek Township--Sheldon Township
Yucatan Township

SUPERVISORS NOMINATION DISTRICT



Houston County, Minnesota

PLAN OF ACTION – 2008

I. SOIL EROSION

Objective A. Practice application will continue to be our #1 objective for 2008.

1. Continue technical and administrative duties of the following programs to provide assistance to land users.
 - a. Provide technical assistance to landowners
 - b. Provide financial assistance on high priority practices
 - c. Provide administrative assistance on local conservation programs (Water Plan, Feedlot, WCA, etc.)
 - d. Participate in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
2. Work with NRCS to administer the provisions of the Conservation Programs in Houston County.
 - a. Provide assistance to landowners who sustained damage resulting from August 2007 and subsequent rainfall event.
 - b. Provide technical assistance to landowners with scheduling and implementing of sound conservation practices as outlined in the landowners' farm plans.
 - c. Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)
 1. Participate in the local work group.
 2. Assist NRCS with providing technical assistance to landowners to assure full benefits of program dollars to Houston County.
 - d. Assist with Conservation Reserve Program
 1. Provide information on availability of Continuous CRP to landowners, targeting Winnebago and Crooked Creek Watershed.
 2. Assist with design and installation of grassed waterways, field windbreaks, buffers, and other practices on Continuous CRP.
 - e. Assist with implementation of the Conservation Security Program, WHIP, PL566, and other cost share programs as available.
3. Develop or revise resource management plans as requested.
 - a. Report implementation of conservation practices.
 - b. Support buffer strips and other components of the Houston County's shore land regulations.

Objective B. Work with local and county road authorities to reduce roadside erosion.

1. Educate road authorities on methods and techniques of erosion control applicable to roadsides.
 - a. County
 1. Assist Houston County DOT to utilize watershed district projects in conjunction with county roads where applicable.
 2. Actively pursue water plan issues related to Houston County DOT.
 - b. Townships
 1. Meet with Houston County Township Officers Association.
2. Provide technical assistance to local road authorities on erosion control practices.
3. Provide financial assistance.
 - a. Inform all local governments of state and local programs.
 - b. Assist with application process.
 - c. Solicit applications when problem sites become apparent.
4. Make mulching equipment and supplies available to road authorities at affordable rates.

Objective C: Implement cost effective methods of stream bank protection and market these concepts to landowners.

1. Encourage landowners to implement cost effective practices on their own.
2. Provide technical assistance on stream bank protection.
3. Seek funding for debris removal and stream bank protection for areas damaged by 2007 flood.

Objective D: Urban storm water control.

1. Assist with storm water control.
2. Provide cities with alternatives for reducing sedimentation on storm water runoff.
3. Assist rural landowners to develop home site construction plans in conjunction with Houston County Zoning.
4. Attend applicable training sessions as recommended.
5. Assist cities with developing (on-site) erosion control plans.
6. Assist Houston County to develop and implement a plan to emphasize roles and responsibilities of the Phase II Storm Water Control Requirements.

II. WATER MANAGEMENT

Objective A: Provide assistance to Houston County on all water management issues through coordination of the Houston County Comprehensive Water Management Plan.

1. Maintain accurate financial records of water resources block grant.
2. Hold six joint Citizens / Technical Committee meetings to coordinate implementation efforts.
3. Represent Houston County in regional and state water planning efforts.
4. Process necessary plans, reports, and correspondence for Natural Resources Block Grant and Challenge Grants.
5. Provide administrative oversight of updating the Houston County Comprehensive Water Management Plan.

Objective B: Update and incorporate water management concerns as part of all resource management systems.

Objective C: Feedlots

1. Assist Houston County with feedlot program by providing assistance on “Open Lot Agreement”
2. Provide administrative assistance to SE MN Technical Support Joint Power Board by hosting Feedlot Technician for Houston and surrounding counties.
3. Provide technical assistance on at least 16 pollution abatement systems. Coordinate engineering assistance between NRCS / SRF engineers and the landowners.
4. Assist county as requested to develop and implement the Ag Best Management Loan Program (State Revolving Loan Fund, SRF).
5. Provide follow-up with landowners who have completed plans for “Open Lot Agreement”.
6. Assist Houston County with development of Nutrient Management Plans.

Objective D: Push-Up Ponds

1. Plan and assist with construction of 10-12 push-up ponds in 2008.
2. Assist landowners for the needs and location of push-up ponds.
3. Promote push-up ponds through one newsletter and news articles in local newspapers in Houston County.
4. Train and keep staff updated on the program.
5. Maintain accurate records of location, drainage area, and landowners.
6. Perform spot checks on 10% of the ponds per year.
7. Keep data records on the Conservation Assistance Notes form.

Objective E: Pesticides

1. Recommendations will be based on state, federal, and local regulations.
2. Encourage landowners to read and follow label instructions.
3. Provide information to urban and residential land users on pesticides and fertilizer management.

Objective F: Provide assistance to county on water management issues within the Root River SWCD.

1. Provide technical and administrative services to Crooked Creek Watershed Board on contract basis.
2. Provide technical and administrative services to Bear Creek Watershed through county allocation.
 - a. Accelerate implementation of practices.
 - b. Target technical assistance.
3. Pursue opportunities for technical assistance and erosion control measures in other watersheds.
4. Implement mechanism for long term maintenance/repair of PL 566 and ACP structures.

III. FORESTRY

Objective A: Incorporate forest management on all resource management systems developed in 2008.

1. Maintain a referral system on private forestlands with the DNR.
2. Continue to provide training to field staff on forest management planning.
3. Assist with development and implementation of erosion control components for all forest management plans.

Objective B: Develop private forest management programs with the district.

1. Seek funding for district forester position.
 - a. Forest Stewardship funds.
 - b. Other funds.
2. Develop woodland stewardship plans on private forestlands and for RIM participants.
3. Promote the District tree program with all landowners.
4. Assist with forestry education
 - a. Assist with tours.
 - b. Assist with Woodland Council

IV. COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Objective A. Expand public awareness of District Services beyond program participants to a constituent wide target audience.

1. Develop mechanisms for communication of district issues to public.
2. Provide Public Service Announcements Public Interest Articles, and Issue Awareness to local newspapers weekly targeting:
 - a. Financial services provided annually
 - b. Resource benefits of conservation
 - c. Technical assistance provided
 - d. Progress/Accomplishments recognition
3. Provide District representation at public events
 - a. Conditional Use Hearings regarding Erosion Control Plans
 - b. Township Officers Annual Meeting
 - c. Annual SWCD Banquet
 - d. Special Events

Objective B. Provide information to public officials regarding SWCD services, Conservation Issues.

1. Regular attendance with monthly reports to Houston County Land Use Committee on SWCD activities/accomplishments.
2. Quarterly written reports to Commissioners on Feedlots
3. Annual slide presentation to County Board on financial and technical services, accomplishments, services provided, and Natural Resource Benefits.
4. Provide advance copies of Newsletter & Articles to Commissioners.
5. Hold joint SWCD & County Board Meeting annually to review programs & services.
6. Hold conservation tour for Commissioners & Legislators.
7. Inform Legislators of conservation issues important to our district.

Objective C. Encourage Supervisor/Staff Communication

1. Staff Reports monthly to Board.
2. Provide before & after photos on projects.

V. EDUCATION

Objective A: Youth Education

1. Schools
 - a. Conduct 6th grade conservation tour/field day.
 - b. Provide poster/essay contest information for all schools in the district.
 - c. Conduct tour/demonstration with high school agriculture departments.
 - d. Promote and make available the conservation model.
 - e. Promote and make available the Karst Trunk.
 - f. Envirothon
 - g. Participate in high school career day.
2. Civic Youth Groups.
 - a. Individual conservation projects.
 - b. 4-H, Scouts, and other Civic Group projects

Objective B: Adult Education

1. Conservation Tour (Legislators and Commissioners)
2. Soil Stewardship Observance
3. Tree Program
4. Annual Conservation dinner
5. Ag Waste Education Workshop
6. Watershed Tour
7. Conservation Cooperator Award and other recognition opportunities
8. Host Area VII Conservation Tour

Objective C: Promote all district programs and activities.

1. Research opportunities for newsletter.
2. Monthly news articles as needed.
3. Annual reports.

Objective D: Work closely with Minnesota Extension Service on agriculture related educational activities.

1. Assist with hay sales.
2. Assist with other County Extension Service activities as approved by the District.

VI. WILDLIFE

Objective A: Address upland wildlife habitat as part of resource management system. In 2008 develop, protect, or improve a minimum of 100 acres of wildlife habitat.

1. Encourage enrollment into federal and state land retirement programs – Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM), Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP), Bobwhite Quail Initiative
2. Maintain and develop plans for wildlife habitat on these enrolled acres.
3. Assist in developing plans for wildlife habitat areas that would qualify for annual FSA set aside acres.
4. Assist in maintaining our district tree program. Targeted goal of selling 25,000 trees and shrubs annually.
5. Assist landowners with information and opportunities to receive cost share assistance on upland wildlife habitat projects.

Objective B: Address wetlands wildlife habitat management and development.

1. Review and discuss Fish and Wildlife Service cooperative agreement.
2. Encourage protection of existing wetlands and stream banks by:
 - a. Notification of 2002 Farm Bill Regulations on wetlands and subsequent farm bill regulations.
 - b. Provide information to landowners on Minnesota Wetlands Conservation Act (WCA) as requested.
 - c. Assist with implementation of county shore land ordinances.
 - d. Provide technical assistance to local government units to implement WCA.
 - e. Encourage participation in Permanent Wetland Preserve (PWP).

Objective C: Work with wildlife groups in coordinating projects in Houston County.

2. Assist wildlife organizations.
3. Assist wildlife organizations with wildlife habitat development.
4. Encourage staff participation in wildlife organizations.
5. Invite wildlife organizations to discuss resource needs in Houston County.
6. Assist wildlife organizations with education programs.

VII. POLITICAL AWARENESS AND ACTIVITY

Objective A: Congressional support of conservation issues.

Contact Person: Ralph Tuck

1. Offer letters to legislators that:
 - a. Voice concerns on local conservation issues as needed.
 - b. Recognize legislators for past and future support.
 - c. Participate in state legislative initiatives.
2. Host annual conservation tours for all elected officials and BWSR board and staff.

Objective B: Follow legislative issues as related to the district.

Contact Person: Ralph Tuck

1. Monitor development of 2008 Farm Bill and respond as needed.
2. Respond to MASWCD/BWSR legislative alerts as needed.
3. Review and discuss other legislative issues as they develop monthly through staff reports and board discussion.

VIII. ENERGY CONSERVATION

Objective A: Promote energy conservation by providing technical assistance.

Contact Person: Dave Walter

1. Farmstead shelterbelts.
2. Conservation tillage.
3. Provide technical service and financial assistance through state cost share on windbreaks.

STATE COST-SHARE PROGRAM

In 2007 the following practices were installed with state cost-share funds to control high priority erosion problems.

4 Pond Maintenance - \$6,398.44
3 Critical Area Planting - \$3,881.25
2 Diversions - \$4,387.50
1 Grade Stabilization - \$1,189.08
2 Grassed Waterways - \$1,714.38
1 Windbreak - \$335.00
1 Waste Storage Structure - \$45,500.00
1 Relocation - \$50,000.00
5 Push-Up Ponds - \$1,700.00

Sub total \$ 115,105.65

In August 2007 southeast MN was devastated by severe rainfall, exceeding 15 inches in a 24 hour period. Severe flash flooding and massive landslide erosion resulted in seven deaths and hundreds of homes being destroyed. In Houston County \$10,412,630 in FEMA funds for public aide has been requested. In addition, we have received \$500,000 in debris removal and burial funds.

For conservation work Houston County has requested the following additional funding:

State Cost-Share = \$ 684,147
Emergency Water Shed Protection = \$ 350,840
ECP = \$ 300,000
EQIP = \$680,347

We anticipate over 100 projects to be completed addressing high priority erosion control needs. Two projects addressing high priority water quality concerns are scheduled.

STAFFING NEEDS

Staff Time Available		10,400 hours
Staff time available (District)	9,360 hours	
Projected increase in staffing	1,040 hours	

Goal I	Soil Erosion	10,400 hours
Goal II	Water Management	3,000 hours
Goal III	Forestry	1,000 hours
Goal IV	Communication	500 hours
Goal V	Education	500 hours
Goal VI	Wildlife	1,000 hours
Goal VII	Political Awareness	750 hours
Goal VIII	Energy Conservation	<u>500 hours</u>
	Total	17,650 hours

Other Sources

MCC	2,000 hours
District Overtime	1,000 hours
Consulting Engineer	250 hours
JPB	500 hours
Workforce Center	<u>1,500 hours</u>
Total	5,250 hours

Shortfall **2,000 hours**

BUDGET 2008

Revenues

County		2008
76-605-5564	County Appropriations	\$158,588.00
76-605-5386	Wetlands Conservation Act	\$ 14,793.00
76-605-5885	Feedlot Grant	\$ 22,640.00
76-605-501-5385	County 319 Grant - Joint Powers Board	\$ 28,000.00
76-605-5565	County Revenues for Bear Creek Watershed	\$ 2,000.00
State		
76-605-5394	BWSR Projects - Cost Share	\$ 36,104.00
76-605-5395	BWSR Service Grant tech/adm funds	\$ 27,363.00
76-605-5826	RIM / PWP funds	\$ 3,400.00
76-605-5885	BWSR Feedlot Grant	\$ 50,000.00
76-605-5882	Forestry Stewardship	\$ 12,000.00
District		
76-605-5538	Tree Sales	\$ 15,000.00
76-605-5537	Other Sales—flags, rental of crimper	\$ 700.00
76-605-5818	Banquet Tickets	
76-605-5819	Water Testing Kits	
76-605-5816	Manure Testing	
76-605-5829	Refunds/Reimbursements	\$ 3,200.00
76-605-5705 (Des.)		
76-605-5706 (other)	Interest Income	\$ 1,100.00
76-605-5825	Sales Tax Collected	\$ 1,200.00
Federal		
76-605-5308	Contribution Agreement	
76-605-5824	Bear Creek Project Reimbursement	
76-605-5310	Other Grants	\$ 20,000.00
Total Revenue		\$396,088.00
Total Expense		\$396,088.00

Expenses

EXPENDITURES		2008
76-605-6115	Supervisors Comp.	\$ 7,500.00
76-605-6105	Employee Salary	\$172,000.00
76-605-6151	Employer Pd Med Insurance-BCBS	\$ 38,295.00
76-605-6171	Employer Pd FICA (6.20%)	\$ 10,665.00
76-605-6161	Employer Pd PERA (6.25% in 2007)	\$ 11,180.00
76-605-6178	Employer Pd Medicare (1.45%)	\$ 2,495.00
76-605-6152	Employer Pd Life Insurance	\$ 1,465.00
76-605-6376	Forestry Stewardship Position	\$ 15,000.00
76-605-6172	Workman's Comp	\$ 1,350.00
76-605-6356	Liability, Bond, Property Insurance	\$ 3,500.00
76-605-6377	Property Insurance	
76-605-6331	Mileage EMPLOYEE/SUPERVISORS	\$ 1,000.00
76-605-6333	Meals EMPLOYEE/SUPERVISORS	\$ 500.00
76-605-6332	Lodging EMPLOYEE/SUPERVISORS	\$ 1,200.00
76-605-6452	Uniforms	
76-605-6243	Registration Fees & Training	\$ 1,200.00
76-605-6242	Dues	\$ 3,600.00
76-605-6811	Education, Awards and Tours	\$ 1,000.00
76-605-6241	Advertising, Publishing	\$ 300.00
76-605-6202	Telephone	\$ 700.00
76-605-6346	Rent	\$ 14,560.00
76-605-6351	Bonds	
76-605-6204	Postage	\$ 1,100.00
76-605-6234	Publication, Brochures, Newsletters	
76-605-6401	Office Supplies	\$ 500.00
76-605-6411	General Supplies	\$ 300.00
76-605-6418	Field Supplies (Flags)	\$ 600.00
76-605-6301	Office Machines, Equipment	\$ 1,278.00
76-605-6271	Audit	\$ 800.00
76-605-6378	Water Testing	
76-605-6610	Long Term Capital Expenditures	
76-605-6611	Computer Hardware	
76-605-6805	Misc Expenses	\$ 300.00
76-605-6812	Projects-Winnebago Watershed	
76-605-6813	Projects- Bear Creek Watershed	\$ 2,000.00
76-605-6814	State Cost Share Projects	\$ 29,000.00
76-605-6837	BWSR Feedlot Grant	\$ 50,000.00
76-605-6836	T&A Landowner Payment & JPB	
76-605-6821	JPB Expenses	\$ 2,000.00
76-605-6819	JPB Payments	
76-605-6844	JPB Cost-Share	
76-605-6809	District Tree Expenses	\$ 10,000.00
76-605-6379	Misc Charges & Recording Fees	\$ 200.00
76-605-6840	Banquet Expenses	
76-605-6979	Sales Tax	\$ 1,200.00
		\$386,788.00
76-605-6105	319 GRANT - WAGES	
76-605-6562	319 GRANT - VEHICLE MAINT.	\$ 3,300.00
76-605-6202	319 GRANT - TELEPHONE	
76-605-6816	319 & RCD - Cost Share for Small Fixes	\$ 6,000.00
		\$ 9,300.00
Total Expense		\$396,088.00

WATER PLAN BUDGET 2008

	<u>Water Plan Budget - Expenses</u>	2008
	Regular Salaries	\$ 10,700.00
	Health Insurance	\$ 600.00
	Life Insurance	\$ 95.00
	PERA (5.53%) - 6% is \$620	\$ 650.00
	FICA (6.2%)	\$ 700.00
	Medicare (1.45%)	\$ 175.00
76-606-6204	Postage	\$ 175.00
76-606-6234	Publications/Advertising	
76-606-6243	Registrations	\$ 200.00
76-606-6331	Mileage	\$ 375.00
76-606-6332	Lodging	\$ 150.00
76-606-6333	Meals	\$ 75.00
76-606-6357	Water Quality SE MN	\$ 3,200.00
76-606-6390	Citizens Advisory Comm.	\$ 200.00
76-606-6202	Phone	
76-606-6401	Office Expenses	\$ 500.00
76-606-6812	Projects	
	Infant water tests	\$ 500.00
	General	
	Education/Awards/Tours	\$ 400.00
	Push Up Pond	\$ 4,556.00
	Cover Crop	
	Newsletter	
	6 th Grade Environmental Day	
	Water Plan Update	
		\$ 23,251.00
	Water Plan Budget - Revenue	
	Levy	\$ 3,898.00
	State Grant	\$ 19,353.00
		\$ 23,251.00

**** Projects include: push up ponds, household hazardous waste, water testing for infants, educational projects, well sealing, environmental day for sixth grade, newsletters, 4-H water monitoring, no-till, cover crop, and manure test.**

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