

**BIG STONE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT'S ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK**  
In Cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service

**January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the Big Stone Soil and Water Conservation District's Annual Plan is to provide a mechanism for implementing the comprehensive plan by identifying the actions that need to be performed each year. The annual plan provides specific statements about the actions to be achieved, the implementation of programs for the conservation of soil and water resources and the budget allocated to each program. The Annual Plan serves as a tool for guiding actions during the year and for measuring performance at the appropriate time intervals. The Annual Plan identifies and seeks out land occupiers with high priority erosion problems and encourages their participation in programs to control their erosion problems.

It is the policy of the Big Stone SWCD and NRCS to provide programs and activities without discrimination on the basis of race, color, nation origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.

**II. OBJECTIVES**

- A. Soil Erosion – to bring the amount of water and wind erosion occurring on land within tolerable soil loss limits.

In Big Stone County there are about 480 ag producers operating 452 farms for a total of 252,291 cropland acres. About 61,000 acres of cropland are eroding at a potential rate of 2T or greater.

1. Implement Food Security Act of 2008.
  - a. Work with 2008 farm program components to promote the best interests of the producers, SWCD and NRCS.
  - b. Develop and/or review conservation plans as required by the 2008 Farm Program.
  - c. Conduct status reviews on selected compliance plans as required.
  - d. Make HEL/NHEL determinations as requested through 1026's.
  - e. Develop plans on new CRP contracts and explore options to re-enroll expiring CRP contracts.
  - f. Plan 7500 and apply 4000 acres to a Resource Management System.
2. Design, install, and promote conservation practices.
  - a. 3500 acres of conservation tillage
  - b. 4 acres of waterways
  - c. 50 acres of filter strips
  - d. 10 well decommissioning
  - e. Pasture and range management
    1. Recommend improved grasses and legumes for pasture to encourage maximum production of high quality forage on land that is not suitable for cropland
    2. Encourage rotational grazing. Apply 250 ac of prescribed grazing.

3. Promote District Tree Program
  - a. Design and install 1 mile of field windbreaks, 10 acres of farmstead shelterbelts and 5 acres of wildlife plantings.
  - b. Encourage use of tree fabric. Use tubex only where needed for deer browse control.
  - c. Maintain contact with 70 landowners.
  - d. Promote living snow fences, utilizing available programs from MNDOT and NRCS.
4. Promote use of the District's grass drill.
  - a. Seed 125 acres with the grass drill.
  - b. Provide grass drill service to assist landowners with native and cool season seedings on program acres.
  - c. If time allows, provide seeding service on non-program lands (alfalfa, broken pasture, etc.)
5. Use available programs to provide independent assistance to farmers.
  - a. Encumber state cost-share monies to high priority areas of the county.
  - b. Utilize EQIP for large, high cost projects and/or where many practices are needed.
  - c. Promote WRP/RIM, WHIP, CRP and GRP programs.
  - d. Continue to request limited options for easement programs.
  - e. Offer alternatives and planning assistance to landowners whose CRP contracts are expiring.
  - f. Assist DNR in promoting Working Land Initiative projects with the Barry, Otre, Moonshine and Correll target areas; prepare agreements, handle funding, pay landowners with DNR funds.
  - g. Partner with NRCS, Pheasants Forever, BWSR, Big Stone County Water Plan and DNR to provide a FarmBill Biologist for Big Stone County.

B. Comprehensive Water Management – carry out duties specified in the Big Stone County Comprehensive Local Water Plan (CLWP).

Big Stone County has over 50,740 acres of water bodies/wetlands. The management of these lakes and wetlands to insure that the water quality of these areas is maintained or improved is a high priority of the SWCD.

1. Work with Big Stone County and cooperating agencies in implementing the CLWP and work with personnel from the Lake Traverse Improvement Project and Pomme de Terre River Association.
  - a. Provide reports, land use data, soils information, etc. to the proper agencies.
  - b. Provide personnel to collect data and evaluate information as staff time/funding allows.
2. Protect ground water resources in Big Stone County by administering available programs and working with cooperating agencies.
  - a. Promote well-sealing program when funding is available.
    1. Administer CLWP well-sealing.
    2. Utilize EQIP money for well-sealing when possible.
    3. Utilize CLWP funding for well-sealing with available funds in 2010.
    4. Maintain a listing of Big Stone County residents with wells to be sealed.
  - b. Read and record DNR observation wells in Big Stone County on a monthly basis.
  - c. Work with cities as they develop their wellhead protection plans.
    1. Provide data from our office, agencies' names, etc., to city planners for assistance in plan development.

3. Improve and protect surface water quality by controlling runoff from feedlots with a high priority pollution hazard and controlling runoff from fields to limit the amount of sediment, nutrients, and pesticides leaving the field.
  - a. Work with MPCA and Big Stone County/NRCS/TSA II to assist landowners to comply with feedlot regulations.
    1. Do 10 site inspections for the County Feedlot Inspector
  - b. Help plan feedlot runoff control systems as needed. Apply 4000 acres of nutrient management plans and 4000 acres of pest management plans.
  - c. Information
    1. Comment on DNR water permits.
    2. Educate the landowners to the importance of filter strips along ditches and bodies of water.
    3. Promote awareness of technical and financial help. Plan 1 ag waste system.
  - d. Encourage use of SRF funds and utilize NRCS for feedlot designs and other erosion control needs.
4. Improve the water quality of Big Stone Lake and maintain/improve the water quality of other water bodies in the county.
  - a. Work with other organizations and government agencies (Upper MN River Watershed District, Concerned Citizens for Big Stone Lake, EPA, SD GFP, MPCA, MN DNR, Big Stone FSA COS, etc.) to coordinate programs and activities. Attend at least three meetings with other agencies to discuss needs.
  - b. Recommend the USF & WS Upland Easement program to obtain easements on highly erodible pasture land within the Big Stone Lake Watershed to control runoff and sediment for these areas.
  - c. Utilize RIM/WRP and Continuous CRP filter strip programs to restore wetlands and filter pollutants that would enter water bodies. Utilize EQIP and Continuous CRP for the development of livestock fencing plans and programs for tributary areas.
  - d. Promote the CRP FWP program to enroll cropped wetlands and buffers into CRP FWP contracts.
5. Dedicated Funding – be involved with Districts in common Watersheds in planning and applying for funding through the 3/8ths % sales tax dedicated funding.

#### C. Wetlands and Regulatory Programs

1. Preserve and restore wetlands in regards to the Wetlands Conservation Act of 1991
  - a. Act as a clearing house of information for the Act.
  - b. Provide a member to the technical review committee who is trained in wetland delineation.
  - c. Assist the County Engineer's Office with wetland delineation adjacent to county road projects.
  - d. Technician remains active member of the WCA TEP.
2. Wetlands and FSA/FACTA compliance
  - a. Complete determinations in remaining undetermined tracts in the county on a request basis
  - b. Conduct wetland delineations as requested on ag lands.

#### D. Recreation, Fish and Wildlife Beautification

1. Reduce sedimentation and pollution of our lakes and streams.
  - a. Design and restore 350 acres of wetlands and upland using WRP/RIM, USFWS and or available program funds.
2. Develop or improve wildlife habitat.
  - a. Utilize CRP program sign-ups to take marginal land out of production and establish cover.
  - b. Promote the WRP/RIM.
  - c. Work with Pheasants Forever and other sportsmen's groups.
  - d. Seek funding for cost-share for wildlife tree plantings.
  - e. Work with DNR and USF & WS on programs they have available to improve wildlife habitat (pheasant and duck stamp funds, easement programs, etc.)
  - f. Encourage continued wildlife land use on non-cropped idle land.
  - g. Apply 500 acres of wildlife habitat management (prescribed burning, native grass seeding, food-plots)
3. Develop a tree maintenance program
  - a. Educate on the effects of well-kept trees through newspaper articles, newsletter and handouts.
  - b. Work with Pheasants Forever and Sportsmans' Groups to provide cost-share on the use of tree fabric for new wildlife plantings.
  - c. Promote tree fabric as an option for weed control.
  - d. Inform past & future users of tree fabric of the importance to "cut-away" and eventually remove the fabric as trees grow larger.

#### E. Education-Provide information and assistance to the public.

All of the people in Big Stone County are landusers. Information programs keep the public aware of changing programs, cost-share and technical assistance available to them.

1. Information
  - a. Utilize newspaper and radio to inform landusers on conservation and regulatory programs.
  - b. Utilize SWCD website as a joint newsletter with Big Stone County Environmental Office, NRCS and UMRWD for public information as news and funding allows.
  - c. Write at least 20 news articles for Big Stone County newspapers.
  - d. Utilize radio monthly for program promotion through "Conservation Connection".
2. Update Information
  - a. Monitor rainfall monthly
  - b. Attend informational meetings
  - c. Conduct a tillage transect survey in 2011 if information is requested.
3. Promotion
  - a. Offer poster and video contests to all schools in Big Stone County.
  - b. Contact all churches with material for Soil Stewardship Week. Promote use among educational facilities through Bonanza Educational Center.
  - c. Be available at request to speak at meetings, give presentations at schools.
  - d. Promote attendance at educational opportunities in Area II.
  - e. Big Stone County will continue to offer its educational and conservation promotional activities including Beautiful Farmstead Award, Conservation Awards, Conservation Camp Scholarship, and the Goodyear Award.
  - f. Promote Arbor Day by giving the 4<sup>th</sup> Graders in Big Stone County a tree to plant.
  - g. Have displays at the Big Stone County Fair.
  - h. Promote participation in Area II Envirothon
  - i. Have booth and promotional displays at the Sports & Leisure Show in Ortonville.
  - j. Promote CWMA with brochures, booth displays, radio spots, newspaper articles
  - k. Promote the MN Walk-On Access Program through the SWCD & FBB.

4. State Convention
  - a. Promote the State Convention and encourage supervisor and staff attendance (funds allowing).
5. Cooperation
  - a. NRCS for technical assistance and related programs
  - b. TSA II for technical assistance
  - c. FSA on related programs
  - d. Extension Agency for education
  - e. UMRWD, Pomme de Terre, and Bois de Sioux Watersheds for related programs.
  - f. DNR wildlife interests and protected water/WCA issues
  - g. USF & WS wildlife interests
  - h. Big Stone County Environmental Office on WCA & CLWP
  - i. RC & D to sponsor projects
  - j. BWSR for WCA and state program assistance.
6. Website
  - a. Maintain a website to keep all information on programs and data as current as possible.

**The annual objectives for the Big Stone Soil and Water Conservation and NRCS are important because they are statements of what the District plans to do in the fiscal year 2011, and their impact on landowners, landusers and all county residents.**

### **III. COST-SHARE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

- A. 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 waters as identified in a comprehensive plan, or discharge to a sinkhole or groundwater. The pollutant delivery rate to the water source is in amounts that will impair the quality or usefulness of the water resource.

High priority sediment areas are shown on the Critical Sedimentation Map. Big Stone County has 35,000 acres of land in high priority sedimentation areas. Although the watershed of Big Stone Lake remains a high priority area, the Pomme de Terre Watershed, including Artichoke Lake will be an area of concern if the Pomme de Terre River Association begins their TMDL study. Stoney Run has been added to the impaired waters list and this watershed will be considered a high priority area.

Practices that will alleviate sedimentation are streambank and shoreline stabilization, critical area seeding, conservation tillage, sediment control structures, dams, grassed waterways, diversions, CREP, filter strips, CRP and terraces.

It has been determined that \$2,537.20 of cost-share money will be needed for high priority sedimentation projects.

- B. High Priority Erosion – High priority erosion problems means areas where erosion from wind or water is occurring equal to, or in excess of, 2 tons per acre per year or is occurring on any area that exhibits active gully erosion or is identified as high priority in the comprehensive plan. Cropland in Big Stone County which is eroding at a rate of 2T per acre per year or over T per acre per year within 1000 feet of a water body or 300 feet of a stream is shown on the high priority erosion area map. There are 405 water basins and 37 watercourses designated as protected waters by DNR in Big Stone County.

There are about 112,000 acres in Big Stone County that are subject to combined wind and water erosion at rates higher than 2T and about 35,000 acres subject to combined wind and water erosion at rates of T or more and near streams and lakes.

Practices that are used to control erosion are field windbreaks, farmstead shelterbelts, grassed waterways, terraces, conservation tillage and seeding the land to a grass cover under CRP, RIM, WRP.

Special emphasis will be placed on replacing field windbreaks that were planted to Siberian Elm, especially where 30% or more of the Siberian Elm in the field windbreak are dead.

It has been determined that \$2,537.20 of cost-share money will be needed for projects on this high priority erosion area.

- C. High Priority Feedlots – High priority feedlots are defined as: “Those feedlots where the pollution potential rating (from the ag waste model) is greater than or equal to one and is discharging pollutants to DNR designated protected water or wetlands; to a sinkhole; to shallow soils overlying fractured or cavernous bedrock; or within 100 feet of a water well.”

As of December 31, 2010, there were 90 registered feedlots in Big Stone County.

Big Stone County has 405 waterbasins and 37 water courses within it boundaries as designated by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Some of the bodies of water affected by feedlot and/or pesticide and nutrient runoff in the county include: Big Stone Lake, Artichoke Lake, Long Tom Lake, Toqua Lake, Otrey Lake, and Marsh Lake, along with a portion of the Minnesota River and the Mustinka River.

The practices needed to help solve ag waste pollution include: holding ponds, diversions, waste storage and disposal systems, holding tanks and pits, roof structures, animal and manure composting structures.

Because most animal waste systems are rather expensive and the SWCD’s yearly cost-share allotment, after T & A money is subtracted, is \$5,074.40, the SWCD Board has specified that no state cost-share dollars will be used for feedlot projects. Animal waste cost-share requests will be directed to federal money, such as EQIP.

- D. Shelterbelts – Because funding for shelterbelts on non-crop land, or for individuals with no FSA Farm Number, is extremely limited, the District Board has determined that requests for these shelterbelts will be high priority.

## COST-SHARE PROGRAM SUMMARY

A. Cost-Share Services	\$1268.60
B. High Priority Erosion	\$2537.20
C. High Priority Sedimentation	\$2537.20
D. High Priority Feedlots	\$ 0.00

### E. Cost-Share Fiscal Year 2011

The Big Stone Soil and Water Conservation District only considers high priority projects for cost-share. The District cost-shares up to 75% of the total cost of a project. The District received \$6,343.00 for the state cost-share program. Of the \$6,343.00, up to 20% of the amount cost-shared on completed projects can be taken for T & A costs. The money to be encumbered will be for high priority projects: erosion control structures, storm water control systems, terraces, field windbreak, farmstead shelterbelts, critical area stabilization, riparian buffer strips and feedlot pollution control systems, and well decommissioning.

It is the responsibility of the Big Stone SWCD to administer the State Cost-Share Program to establish sound conservation practices that eliminate, or greatly reduce, an erosion or water quality problem during their effective life. According to their job approval authority, Darrin Welle, SWCD, Krecia Leddy, NRCS Representative, NRCS Area Office Engineering Staff, and TSA II Staff have been appointed as the technical representatives for the State Cost-Share Program.

### F. Special Projects

The District anticipates applying for 1 Lessard/Sams Grant.

### G. Comprehensive Water Plan Programs

The District plans to use the Clean Water Fund through the Mustinka (Bois de Sioux) Watershed to promote buffering, waterways, ditches and wetland restoration.

**BIG STONE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
**ORTONVILLE MINNESOTA**  
**2011**

**WORKLOAD ANALYSIS WORKSHEET**

<b><u>OBJECTIVES</u></b>	<b><u>MAN YEARS</u></b>		
	<b><u>ADMINISTER</u></b>	<b><u>TECHNICAL</u></b>	<b><u>RECORD</u></b>
Engineering	.15	.35	.30
Soil Erosion	.175	.215	.11
Comprehensive Water Mgmt	0	.05	0
Wetlands	.30	.30	.05
Recreation, Fish, Wildlife & Beautification	.875	.92	.41
Education	.40	.315	.08
<b>TOTAL TIME NEEDED</b>	<b>1.90</b>	<b>2.15</b>	<b>.95</b>
<b>EQUAL 5.0 MAN YEARS FOR 2011</b>			

**PERSONNEL AVAILABLE**

<b><u>District</u></b>			
Admin. Asst.	.50	.25	.25
Technician	.40	.50	.10
<b><u>Pheasants Forever</u></b>			
Biologist	.30	.60	.10
<b><u>NRCS</u></b>			
Conservationist	.60	.30	.10
Technician	.10	.50	.40
<b>TIME AVAILABLE</b>	<b>1.90</b>	<b>2.15</b>	<b>.95</b>
<b>EQUAL 5.0 MAN YEARS FOR 2011</b>			

