

LYON SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2013 ANNUAL REPORT



*Lyon Soil & Water Conservation District
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All programs and services of Lyon Soil & Water Conservation District are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or handicap.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Lyon Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a local unit of government defined by Minnesota Statute whose primary purpose is to protect the natural resource features within the county from human degradation. It is the responsibility of the SWCD to provide technical assistance and outreach in resource management programs along with ensuring wise stewardship by users of these resources. The District works closely and cooperatively with the local staff from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to implement programs and activities.

The Lyon SWCD Board of Supervisors provides professional insight and sound judgment in pursuing policies that will most effectively solve resource issues within the county. Through frequent meetings and straight forward direction to staff, the Board is able to maintain a clear understanding of the progress of the District as a whole. The Board is comprised of five supervisors who are elected county wide by general ballot.

Area 1 ~ Gary Crowley
Area 2 ~ Allen Deutz
Area 3 ~ Mark Meulebroeck
Area 4 ~ Otto Nyquist
Area 5 ~ Steve Prairie

Other staff:

John Biren ~ District/Zoning Administrator
Todd Hammer – Assistant Planning & Zoning Ditch Inspector
Luke Olson ~ Conservation Technician
Jordan Croatt ~ Farm Bill Pheasants Forever Biologist
Jeanette Sharp ~ Administrative Assistant

NRCS staff:

Jamie Thomazin ~ District Conservationist
~ Soil Conservationist
Bernie Louwagie ~ Administrative Assistant

Monthly Board Meetings ~ 4th Tuesday each month (10 am Nov. thru March, 7 pm April thru October)

Mission Statement of Lyon Soil & Water Conservation District

The mission of the Lyon SWCD is to:

1. Establish programs that assist in the protection of the public health, safety and welfare through Soil & Water Conservation and Protection.
 2. Encourage land occupiers to conserve and protect our water and soil resources, implement erosion, sediment control and water quality practices.
 3. Promote conservation through education, trained personnel and supervisors.
 4. Seek and implement conservation practices and programs that will benefit the landowner, the county, local watersheds, and the nation.
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Annual Reporting

The Annual Report is presented to show accomplishments in programs and projects that relate to what the SWCD has accomplished in relationship to the priorities set by the Board Supervisors which are:

1. Prevent Wind, Water and Soil Erosion
2. Improve Water Quality and Promote Water Conservation
3. Promote Conservation and Resource Programs
4. Promote Energy Conservation
5. Improve Wildlife Habitat

These priorities reflect the concerns described in the Lyon County Local Comprehensive Water Management Plan that serves as the Lyon SWCD Comprehensive five year work plan.

PROGRAMS that the Lyon Soil & Water Conservation District administers:

Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM)	Environmental Fair
State Cost Share program	Grant Applications
Rainfall Monitoring Program	Arbor Day Presentation
Farmfest Expo	Buffer cost share programs
Clean Water Legacy Grant Programs	DNR Well monitoring
Alternative Intake Conversion Cost Share	Wetland Conservation Act administration
DNR water permit reviews	Feedlot Inventory
Educational programs	AgBMP Loan Program
Lyon SWCD Website	Well DeCommissioning
Beginning Farmers	Assistance in Conservation Planning projects
Annual Plan and Reports for public information	

Assist Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) with programs

Water Quality Incentive Program	Environmental Quality Incentive Programs (EQIP)
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program
Conservation Plans	Status Reviews

The SWCD has incorporated the needs as addressed by our landowners and partner agencies through information gained in surveys and meetings.

II. Objectives/Concerns to be addressed:

1. Maintain efficient SWCD operations.
2. Provide assistance to land users in high priority wind, soil and water erosion areas of the county and watershed areas.
3. Provide assistance to land users in the high priority areas of the county and watersheds to improve the quality of water in areas that have been identified as impaired.
4. Provide information and education to the public on the benefits and need to protect and reduce use of our resources.
5. Implement EEO and Civil Rights Responsibilities.

The Lyon SWCD Board of Supervisors, have, under staff recommendation, agreed upon a focused set of conservation practices to ensure that objectives of the SWCD are met.

The following is a summary of some of the major workload and projects the SWCD staff have been involved with in 2013.

State Cost Share Program

In 2013 the District worked to finalize a shelterbelt utilizing 2011 cost share funds in the amount of \$1757. Projects encumbered utilizing the 2013 cost share include one basin, three waterways, one streambank project, an earthen diversion and a shelterbelt. Projects completed were the streambank and shelterbelt totaling \$8467.

Locally funded cost share projects for 2013 included six basins and a milk house drainfield. Of those projects, two were completed for a cost of \$13,438.33.

Lyon SWCD also works closely with RCRCA for funding and technical support.

Educational Promotion

Staff were part of a planning committee to conduct the 2013 Environmental Fair held at the Lyon County Fairgrounds. Attending were approximately 2100 students from southwestern Minnesota.

Arbor Day was recognized by a staff person doing tree presentations at local schools.

Local Water Plan funds were used to bring the Ecology Bus to four different county schools to talk about conservation and environment.

A few other areas of involvement included the AgBMP program of which one loan was processed in the amount of \$100,000, providing staff support for the SWCD Farmfest booth, DNR well-monitoring as well as rain gauge observer reporting to the MN Climatological Network.

Reorganization

Lyon SWCD, effective January 1st, 2013, became a department within Lyon County, MN. Staff positions as well as all financial responsibility is being paid through Lyon County. Grant funds are maintained and tracked through a designated fund within Lyon County. SWCD operations along with the County Planning and Zoning department are housed and maintained in

the same office at 1424 E. College Drive
~Ste 600, Marshall, MN.

As part of the County Planning and Zoning department staff are involved with approval of feedlot permits, as well as septic permitting.

All the feedlot regulation, inspection and education were completed by the SWCD staff. Inspections provided staff opportunities to update records, address potential pollution concerns and environmental threats and educate producers of the current feedlot regulations.

Septic System inspections were completed for verification of soil and system installation certification. Of the fifty-three permits approved six of them applied for the County Septic Loan Program funds and were granted approval for funds amounting to \$76,432.

USDA Programs

District staff provided administrative assistance support to the NRCS throughout the year and also assisted the USDA in implementation and producer signup as well as the development of plans for programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and EQIP. The SWCD continues with the NRCS contribution agreement and completed the wetland certified determinations on 183 AD1026 forms.

Shoreland Ordinance

The Shoreland Ordinance in conjunction with the Lyon County zoning ordinance provided assistance and education on best management practices in shoreland areas and reviewed proposed land use activities and permits. A total of eleven permits were issued. Also those with a 50' buffer violation were contacted by mail and followed up with program information for their problem.

Targeted Watershed Grant

In the fall of 2013 Lyon County/SWCD became involved with Lincoln and Yellow Medicine SWCDs and the Yellow Medicine Watershed along with Area II to apply for funds from a pilot program thru BWSR. This grant will focus on impairments of high nutrients and turbidity in the Upper Yellow Medicine River and the South Branch of the Yellow Medicine River.

Pheasants Forever

In cooperation with the Pheasants' Forever Farm Bill Biologist position, six perpetual Reinvest in Minnesota contracts were completed. The Farm Bill Biologist also actively promoted and enrolled marginal cropland into the Conservation Reserve Program. Landowner communication is the primary method used by the Biologist to promote various other programs, including the Minnesota Prairie Bank and the Walk-In access program. In addition the Biologist served as the Habitat Chair on the local Pheasants Forever Chapter.

Soil & Water Conservation District
Program Partners

Entity	Partnership Contribution
Lyon County	Financial, program assistance
Natural Resources Conservation Service	Programs, technical assistance, staff shared
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Consultations, Contract services with SWCD
Area II Minnesota River Control Area	Technical, financial for projects
Redwood Cottonwood Rivers Control	Cost Share partner for projects, monitoring of resources
Yellow Medicine River Watershed	Cost Share partner for projects, monitoring of resources
Lyon County Sportsman Groups	Financial for projects, education
MN Association of Conservation Districts	Legislative lobbying, education and information
MN Department of Agriculture	Low Interest loan funds, educational information
SW MN Joint Powers TSA	Engineering Assistance
MN Board of Soil & Water Resources	Program direction, grants, training