

NOBLES SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



2018

Annual Report

The Nobles Soil and Water Conservation District was organized in 1954 as a legal charter insured by the Secretary of State. The District is governed by a five-member Board of Supervisors who is responsible for directing all District activities and establishing operational policies. Each supervisor is elected for a 4-year term. Each supervisor lives in a different geographic area of the District and represents that portion of the District. By utilizing a combination of available local, state and federal assistance, the District directs conservation programs to service the resource management needs of all those who live within Nobles County.

The District cooperates with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation District under a Memorandum of Understanding whereby full-time technical assistance on soil survey, engineering, agronomy, biology, woodland conservation and administration is furnished to the District by the Natural Resources conservation District's field, area and state office staff. The Nobles SWCD share the Agriculture Service Center at 1567 McMillan St., Worthington Minnesota, with several USDA agencies.

District Supervisors

Jim Knips, Chairman	Leota, Wilmont, Lismore, & Larkin Townships
Paul Langseth, Vice-Chairman	Lorain, Ransom, Bigelow, & Indian Lake Townships
Rick Nelsen, Secretary	Seward, Graham Lakes, Elk and Hersey Townships
Lynn Darling, Treasurer	Bloom, Summit Lake, Dewald & Worthington Townships Ken
Wolf, PR & I	Westside, Olney, Grand Prairie & Little Rock Townships

District Staff

John Shea, District Manager
Sabrina Raddle, Accountant/Administrative Assistant
Catelyn LaCour, Farmbill Technician
Scott Runck, District Technician

Meeting Schedule

Meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7:30 a.m.

“Protecting our soil and water resources and promoting their
wise use”

Southwest Prairie Technical Service Area

Russell Hoogendoorn, Engineer
Michael Skoglund, Engineering Technician
Ben Matthys, Engineering Technician
Tom Foerster, Engineering Technician

Natural Resource Conservation Service

Karen Boysen, Soil Conservationist
Paul Spartz, Civil Engineer

Heron Lake Watershed District

Jan Voit, District Administrator
Catherine Wegehaupt, District Technician
Jim Buschena, Board Member
Gary Ewert, Board Member
Harvey Kruger, Board Member
Bruce Leinen, Board Member
Wayne Rasche, Board Member

Kanaranzi-Little Rock Watershed District

John Shea, Executive Secretary
Anthony Boyenga, Board Member
Jerry Brake, Board Member
Coleen Gruis, Board Member
Layton Gruis, Board Member
Tim Taylor, Board Member

Okabena-Ocheda Watershed District

Dan Livdahl, District Administrator
Casey Ingenthron, Board Member
Lester Johnson, Board Member
Rolf Mahlberg, Board Member
Jay Milbrandt, Board Member
Jeff Rogers, Board Member

Annual Report

Tree Program

The Nobles SWCD sold a variety of tree and shrub species native to Minnesota. Producers purchased the trees to plant into windbreaks, for urban and rural conservation and for wildlife food and habitat. Through the annual tree program, the Nobles SWCD is able to promote conservation practices and the value of forestry resources in preventing soil loss and improving water quality. In 2018, the District sold over 7,400 trees and assisted 15 landowners with tree planting. More than 890 tree mats were sold and over 11,730 feet of matting was installed in 2018.



AgBMP Loan Program

During 2018, the Nobles SWCD in conjunction with the Nobles Co. Commissioners, Southwest State Bank Worthington, United Prairie, Fulda Credit Union, First National Bank, Compeer Financial and MinnWest Bank worked with local landowners to obtain MN Department of Agriculture AgBMP Loans. During 2018, over \$342,334 worth of loans were dispersed related to conservation tillage, ISTS, and Ag waste management.

State Cost-Share

The State Cost-Share program is a viable source of funds that provides financial incentives to landowners that wish to install conservation practices on their land. In addition to the State Cost-Share program, landowners were given an opportunity to participate in various other cost-share or financial incentive programs, such as the Federal EQIP program and the State Revolving Loan Program. The SWCD and NRCS provide technical assistance for the survey, design and installation of water quality practices. The SWCD received \$17,383.00 for FY 2018 allocations.

Wetland Conservation Act Program

The Nobles SWCD assists cities, townships, citizens, and county departments in the administration of the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act. Nobles SWCD staff provides technical and administrative assistance for wetland related activities throughout Nobles County. Common activities involved with the program include tile and drainage applications as well as wetland banking. The Nobles SWCD has continued its commitment to ensure that staff is adequately trained and updated on current wetland rules and policy. In 2018, Nobles SWCD worked on over 253 landowner drainage requests.



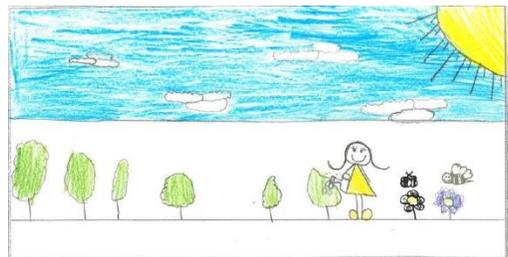
2017 Accelerated Implementation Grant

In 2017, Nobles SWCD received a grant for financial assistance to complete Intensive Hydraulic Conditioning on the remaining 60% of the Missouri River Basin. The watershed will be able to utilize the Prioritize, Target, and Measure Application (PTMApp). The basin has 1.1 million acres of drainage with approximately 630,000 acres remaining to be hydro conditioned. With the advancement in targeting pollution sources within the watershed and state, the partners intend to be able to more accurately target conservation practices with the hydraulic conditioning completed. Over 50% of the grant was completed in 2017. An additional 40% was completed in 2018 and the remaining hydro conditioning will be completed in early 2019.

Environmental Education

Environmental Education is an important part of our SWCD office. Classes and materials are offered to school and churches throughout Nobles County.

- Second Grade Arbor Day Presentations
- Fifth Grade Environmental Learning Area Tours in Adrian and Worthington
- Ecology Bus Presentations
- Fifth and Sixth Grade Environmental Fair



Conservationists of the Year

Brian and Michelle Ling were named the 2018 Nobles County Outstanding Conservationists.

The Lings farm in Bigelow Township, but don't own any of the land they farm. Brian is the third-generation Ling to farm the land and completes most of the work himself with the help of his wife, Michelle.

Nearly 35 years ago, Brian and his dad, Tom, decided to start implementing no-till practices. Within a few years, all of the land the Ling duo farmed had been converted to no-till. Lately, the Lings have been working on adding cover crops into the mix.



The Lings also have a few sediment basins in place that have outlasted their expected lifespan. Since converting to cover crops and no-till, soil loss hasn't been a huge issue.

The Lings were recognized during the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts' annual meeting December 9th-11th, 2018 Congratulations, Brian and Michelle!

Flood Relief Cost-Share

Nobles County was hit with a large rain event in the summer of 2014. Flood Relief funds of over \$600,000 were granted to Nobles SWCD in two phases. The funds are designed to help repair existing BMP's, establish new BMP's and to prevent sediment pollution in the future. In 2018, the Nobles SWCD signed a few more contracts were signed, but no contracts were completed due to weather. The contract was extended and will now be completed in 2019.

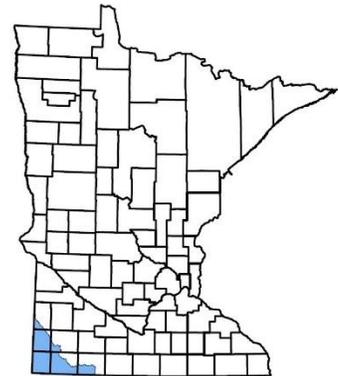
Local Capacity

The Nobles SWCD received \$120,750 from the state to use towards Local Capacity. The District was able to provide staff education and equipment for fieldwork, but they were also able to set an additional \$100,000 of the funds for cost-share contracts.

- Leased a Gator Side-by-Side for SWCD staff to use in the field. Field activities included: buffer checks, survey and design, field visits and tree plantings.
- Staff Education
- Staff Classification Update/Job Classification Survey
- Set aside an additional \$100,000 for cost-share projects.

One Watershed, One Plan

The Missouri River Watershed One-Watershed One Plan brings 6 counties, 6 Soil and Water Conservation Districts and 2 Watersheds together to develop a comprehensive plan that will address water management in the Missouri River Watershed. Prior to this evolutionary process each public entity developed their own strategic water plan. This new process will build off these existing local water management plans and priorities as well as align the local water planning process on major watershed boundaries. The Missouri River Watershed One Watershed-One Plan will be locally led and utilize state strategies towards prioritized, targeted and measurable implementation plans. The draft plan was put out for a 60-day review at the end of 2018.

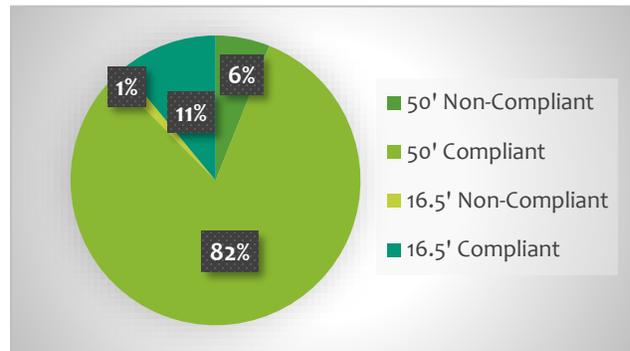


Buffer Legislation

The Nobles SWCD received an additional \$35,000 from the state to use towards buffer implementation on Nobles County. The Public Waters had a buffer legislation deadline of November 1st, 2017, but extensions were granted until November 1st, 2018 for those who contacted the SWCD. The Public Ditches had a deadline of November 1st, 2018. The SWCD is still waiting to hear from 12 landowners on the 18 affected ditch parcels.

Nobles Soil & Water Conservation District

In many cases, the 2018 buffer deadline was not met due to the extremely wet nature of the planting season; however, we were able to work with the affected landowners and extend the deadline to June 1st, 2018. Starting out, Nobles SWCD had 1838 non-compliant parcels. As of today, there are only 130 parcels remaining in the process of becoming compliant. Nobles SWCD plans to have all parcels compliant by spring of 2019. Any parcels not in compliance after this time frame will be reported to the county. The county will send out letters to those failing to meet compliance and the landowner will then have 11 months to become compliant before being fined.



Summit Lake 11

In 2015, the District acquired 277 acres of RIM property in Section 11 of Summit Lake Township. In 2017, a wetland restoration was completed throughout the 277 acres. All 13 wetland basins were restored, with the largest nearing 65 acres. A water control structure was installed during the restoration to better hold the water off the county tile that runs near the property. The SWCD enrolled the site in the Walk-In Access program in 2017. Signs were placed on the perimeter of the property as there are plans to continue this program in the future. No projects were completed on the Summit Lake 11 site in 2018. The structure is holding water and is currently being managed to prevent flooding down stream during spring runoff. The site is also enrolled into the Walk in Access program.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

Minnesota is implementing a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) that will directly address resource problems with strategic, long-term solutions. Five Minnesota agencies have come together to support MN CREP. Landowners who choose to voluntarily enroll in the CREP will not only provide significant progress for the state's water quality goals and habitat needs, but will also be part of a national model for local-state-federal partnerships. In 2018, the SWCD enrolled one contract into CREP and completed an additional fifty estimates. By April 2019, the SWCD staff plans on sending out over another 50 estimates to landowners within Nobles County.

