

NOBLES SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



2019

Annual Report

The Nobles Soil and Water Conservation District was organized in 1954 as a legal charter insured by the Secretary of State. 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

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

District Staff

John Shea, District Manager
Sabrina Raddle, Accountant/Administrative Assistant
Catelyn LaCour, Farm Bill 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
Cheryl Heard, District Conservationist
Paul Spartz, Civil Engineer

Heron Lake Watershed District

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

Kanaranzi-Little Rock Watershed District

John Shea, Executive Secretary
Bill Jansma, Board Member
Jerry Brake, Board Member
Coleen Gruis, Board Member
Layton Gruis, Board Member
Adam Henning, Board Member

Okabena-Ocheda Watershed District

Dan Livdahl, District Administrator
Casey Ingenthron, Board Member
Steve Bousema, 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 2019, the District sold over 6,600 trees and assisted 11 landowners with tree planting. More than 360 tree mats were sold and over 11,180 feet of matting was installed in 2019.



AgBMP Loan Program

During 2019, the Nobles SWCD in conjunction with the Nobles County, Fulda Credit Union, First National Bank, Compeer Financial and First State Bank Southwest worked with local landowners to obtain MN Department of Agriculture AgBMP Loans. During 2019, over \$653,044 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 2019 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 2019, Nobles SWCD worked on over 305 landowner drainage requests.

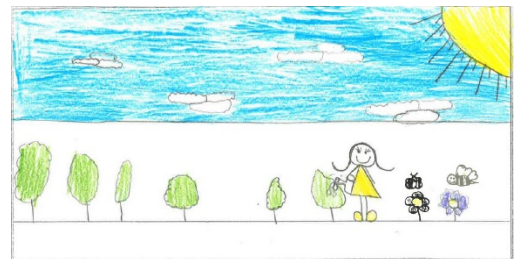
2017 Accelerated Implementation Grant

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 was 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



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 2019, the Nobles SWCD signed a few more contracts were signed, but no contracts were completed due to weather. The remaining projects were finalized in 2019 and the flood relief grant was completed.

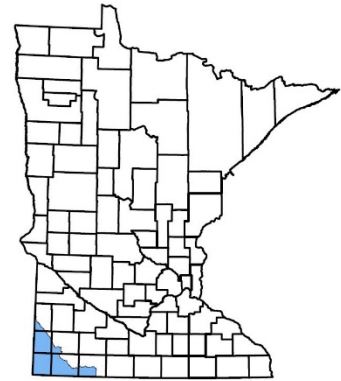
Local Capacity

The Nobles SWCD received \$125,000 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 \$78,700 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 and Board Education
- Staff Classification Update/Job Classification Survey
- Set aside an additional \$78,700 for cost-share projects.

Missouri River Watershed - One Watershed, One Plan

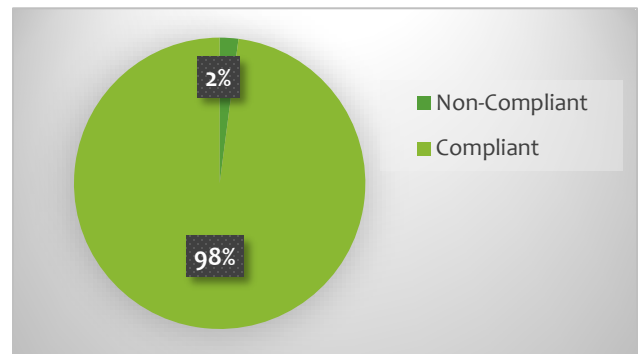
The Missouri River Watershed One-Watershed One Plan brings 6 counties, 6 Soil and Water Conservation Districts and 2 Watersheds together to develop a comprehensive plan that will address water management in the Missouri River Watershed. Prior to this evolutionary process each public entity developed 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 plan was accepted by the Board of Water and Soil Resources in 2019. A Joint Powers Board was created for the Missouri River area to help with implementing the plan.



Buffer Legislation

The Nobles SWCD received an additional \$35,000 from the state to use towards buffer implementation in Nobles County. The Public Waters had a buffer legislation deadline of November 1st, 2018. In many cases, the 2018 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 well into 2019.

Nobles SWCD has 1838 parcels that are affected by the buffer legislation. As of today, there are only 38 parcels that are now deemed non-compliant. The parcels in non-compliance have been reported to the county. The county will be sending out letters to those failing to meet compliancy. The landowner will then have 11 months from the delivery of the letter to become compliant before fines are assessed. Nobles SWCD would really like to see 100% compliance by the end of 2020.



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 2019. 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 2019, the SWCD enrolled seven contracts into CREP and completed an additional thirty-five estimates. By March 2020, the SWCD foresees another CREP enrollment period and predicts to enroll at least three more contracts into the program. CREP is a great opportunity for Landowners to receive compensation for lands that may otherwise be unproductive; however, it also allows landowners to create permanent wildlife habitat, leaving a legacy in their tracks.

