

# Annual Plan of Work

## 2019



### **Mission Statement**

Conservation, Protection, and Enhancement of Todd County's Natural Resources.

### **Equal Opportunities Statement**

*Todd County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.  
USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.*

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## **Program Summary**

This Annual Plan of Work is adopted by the SWCD Board of Supervisors and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as their Annual Plan of Work for 2019. It will be used by the SWCD and NRCS to guide and prioritize staff activities and projects for 2019.

Organizational guiding principles and values are listed first and are intended to frame the entire plan.

The Annual Plan of Work is divided into six work initiatives. Each has a brief description describing why it is important to achieving the organizational mission. Goals to make progress on each initiative are detailed along with measureable indices and some detail on how the goal will be achieved using technical, financial, and education and outreach approaches.

### **Organizational Guiding Principles**

Todd SWCD is an independent, self-governing, non-political entity created in 1965 to work toward conservation, protection, restoration, and enhancement of Todd County's natural resources.

Todd SWCD works to conserve, restore, and protect Todd County's soil and water resources by providing conservation leadership, technical, financial, and educational assistance to landowners, local governments, and businesses.

Todd SWCD prefers to work proactively with landowners to bring about a steady improvement of natural resources instead of reactive, compliance driven programs whenever possible.

Todd SWCD forms strategic partnerships to maximize outcomes work and minimize duplication with our partners. Maintenance of these relationships and the continued success of our partners is important to supervisors and staff.

Todd SWCD provides staff and board training to maintain technical skills and science based knowledge to better serve our constituents, maximize our credibility, and to increase success of our on-the-ground efforts.

Todd SWCD serves landowners that voluntarily request assistance from SWCD made available through grants, state cost-share, and other resources to administer mandated and funded resource initiatives.

### **Organizational Guiding Values**

Clean water is vital for Todd County's future.

Healthy soil is a life-sustaining, nonreplicable resource essential to the Todd County's economy and water supply.

Animal agriculture is a necessary and important part of life in Todd County.

Educated and informed citizens generally make good land use decisions. Todd SWCD works to provide excellent customer service, provide education and outreach venues, and serve as a resource for landowners.

Wildlife and ecosystems are valuable to the people of Todd County and will benefit secondarily from SWCD conservation efforts focused on water and soil resources.

Todd SWCD works with all members of the public on natural resource management and improvement.

### District Leadership

Todd Soil Water Conservation District (Todd SWCD) is governed by a Board of five elected supervisors who develop policy, long range plans, and district budgets. Todd SWCD does not have any independent staff, however the district board is served by dedicated county staff that focus their time on district projects and priorities. Todd County Board of Commissioners are important supporters of Todd SWCD. All staff working to complete initiatives outlined in this plan are county employees and rely on county resources – making the Todd County Commissioners part of the leadership.

#### Todd SWCD Board of Supervisors

Area 1: Dan Whitney  
Area 2: Kenneth Pesta  
Area 3: Dale Katterhagen  
Area 4: Leland Buchholz  
Area 5: Thomas Williamson

#### Todd County Board of Commissioners

District 1: Barbara Becker  
District 2: Gary Kneisl  
District 3: Rod Erickson  
District 4: David Kircher  
District 5: Randy Neumann

#### Todd County Soil and Water Staff

Deja Anton, District Manager  
Sarah Katterhagen, Program Coordinator  
Kevin Brown, Feedlot and Conservation Technician  
Lew Noska, Conservation Technician  
TBD, Feedlot and Conservation Technician

### Key Partners

#### USDA-NRCS

Russell Kleinschmidt, District Conservationist  
Darlene Drayna, Soil Conservation Technician

#### Pheasants Forever

Luke Thoma –Farm Bill Biologist

#### Cooperating SWCD's

Douglas SWCD  
Morrison SWCD  
Ottetail SWCD  
Stearns SWCD  
Wadena SWCD

#### Todd County Planning and Zoning

Tim Stieber, Division Director  
Loren Miller, Land Use Planner  
Chris Arens, Land Use Planner  
Ben Guell, Planning and Zoning Specialist  
LeeAnne Loudon, Administrative Assistant

#### West Central Technical Service Area Staff

Ross Reiffenberger, WCTSA Engineer  
Luke Herkenhoff, WCTSA Engineering Technician  
Gary Borash, WCTSA Feedlot Technician  
Steve Linow, WCTSA Engineering Technician  
(Morris office)

#### Cooperating Agencies and Organizations

Sauk River Watershed District (SRWD)  
Bureau of Soil and Water Resources (BWSR)  
MN Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR)  
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)

## **Initiative #1: Provide Leadership to Ensure that Todd SWCD Guiding Principles and Values are Evident in All Programs and Activities.**

The Todd Soil Water Conservation District (SWCD) was organized on March 25, 1965 and certified by the Minnesota Secretary of State on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1965. The district is governed by a board of five elected supervisors that develop policy, long range plans, approve budgets, and provide program direction for staff. Soil and Water Conservation Districts derive most of their statutory authority from Minnesota Statute 103C. Todd SWCD does not currently have independent staff but through an agreement with Todd County four technical staff and two administrative staff work to implement plans, programs, and activities approved by the Board of Supervisors.

Todd County is a large rural county that relies on its natural resources: soil, water, wetlands, and forests. Therefore, it is important to Todd County citizens to have a locally lead conservation organization compared to a statewide agency. Locally lead efforts provide better planning, more applicable technical assistance, financial targeting impacting the biggest conservation issues, and information and outreach that is most needed by landowners. Todd SWCD has a long history of working with the county on Water Plan development, providing input into the County Comprehensive Plan, and review and commenting on proposed land use applications.

### **Goal 1-1 Seek public input and involvement into district programs and activities.**

- Conduct public board meetings and planning meetings according to public meeting law rules.
- Continually seek ways for the public and groups to provide input into the SWCD.
- Work collaboratively with county by regularly holding County Commissioner -SWCD liaison meetings.
- Complete annual report of activities and make available on line and in print.

### **Goal 1-2 Lead through conservation outreach to Todd County citizens.**

- Sponsor and organize Enviro-Fest for Todd County 6<sup>th</sup> graders involving 350+ students and organizers.
- Select and promote Conservationist of the Year and Land Stewardship Award winners.
- Organize a River and Lake Day educational event reaching lake association members.
- Prepare and distribute bi-annual Soil and Water newsletter reaching 9800 per issue.
- Provide conservation and program news monthly over the radio reaching at least 100 citizens per broadcast.
- Provide 10 press releases and monthly news article to raise conservation awareness reaching 9800 per article.
- Organize a livestock meeting reaching over 100 producers to educate them on conservation issues.
- Maintain web site with relevant materials and Facebook entries to maintain interest in Todd SWCD.
- Work collaboratively with agencies, neighboring districts, and partners.
- Participate and support Breakfast on the Farm reaching over 500 citizens with displays or outreach.
- Strive to meet and communicate with Todd County citizens through site and office visits and electronically.

### **Goal 1-3 Encourage and support planning efforts necessary to prioritize activities and ensure steady progress is made on identified natural resource issues.**

- Develop a five year Strategic Plan for the district. (*Water Plan serves as long range plan*)
- Be active contributors to one-watershed-one-plan efforts underway (Sauk River, Red Eye).
- Review County Water Plan for progress and potential revision.
- Assist MPCA with TMDL development efforts for watersheds occurring in the county (Miss. Brainerd).
- Maintain project and customer database to assist with project prioritization and customer service.
- Participate in Planning and Zoning's Development and Review Team (DRT) evaluation of plat applications.

**Goal 1-4 Maintain partnerships with local, state, and federal departments, groups and agencies to achieve common goals and increase effectiveness toward reaching Todd SWCD goals.**

- Hold monthly communication and collaboration meetings with USDA-NRCS.
- Attend annual convention, participate in state association and Area II functions and meetings.
- Develop resolutions for MASWCD to advance conservation through legislation. Participate in “Day at the Capitol” if there are burning issues – or invite legislators to local events.
- Continue financial support of West Central Technical Service Area technical program.
- Seek local involvement with local groups such as Livestock Advisory Committee, MN Corn and Soybean Grower meetings, Lake Associations, Farm Bureau and others that request information or assistance.
- Maintain good relations with state agency staff including BWSR, DNR, MPCA, and MDA.
- Assist state climatologist with volunteer rainfall monitoring program.
- Review county tax forfeited parcels for environmental considerations.
- Support requests from other county departments as feasible.

**Goal 1-5 Maintain a high level of professionalism and customer service.**

- Provide excellent customer service in a friendly, timely, and respectful manner.
- Hold regular staff meetings during which expectations are discussed and refined.
- Follow Todd County Personnel and Procedures manual and follow EEO in the workplace.
- Implement Individual Development Plans to obtain Job Approval Authority.
- Support staff development through training and development opportunities.
- Schedule and arrange SWCD teamwork exercises.
- Work to provide needed support for programs through part-time hires, interns, and duty re-assignment.

**Goal 1-6 Budget, administer, and develop funding sources.**

- Develop annual budget with Board of Supervisor input.
- Review financial information and expenditures at every regularly scheduled board meeting.
- Meet funder expectations for funders for financial and activity reporting.
- Have funds audited annually by independent auditor.
- Develop and submit proposals for Clean Water Legacy Funds and 319 Clean Water Act Funds.
- Continue to develop new funding sources.
- Administer the AgBMP Loan Program and advertise to landowners that these funds are available.

## **Initiative #2: Conservation, Protection, and Enhancement of Surface Water.**

Todd County has extensive surface waters that impact the economy and culture of the county. Surface water supports agriculture which is the largest economic sector in the county. Over 118 named lakes in the county and the several river systems provide abundant opportunity for recreation and contribute to the culture and quality of life in the county. Lake properties are valued real estate and contribute to the tax base of the county with part time and full time dwellings. Surface water leaves the county through several watersheds and is used for municipal water, recreation, and agriculture downstream. Wetlands are extensive with approximately 25% of land area of the county classified as wetlands. These wetlands are valuable for protecting water quality and regulating water levels.

Protecting and improving surface water is a top priority for the State of Minnesota and for Todd SWCD. Large amounts of technical and financial resources are allocated to this priority goal.

Todd SWCD has expended considerable effort of the past 50 years on surface water protection efforts including soil erosion control, promotion of minimum tillage, supporting USDA conservation programs, cost-sharing feedlot upgrades, exclusion areas, tree and grass buffer plantings, and many other surface water protection measures.

### **Goal 2-1 Support landowners seeking compliance with the Buffer Law and establishing buffers.**

#### **Measureable:**

- Maintain or improve the 97.5% compliance level of landowners as tracked by BuffCat (Buffer Compliance and Tracking Tool) program.

#### **Leadership Actions**

- Support Buffer Law as a water quality measure – not just a regulatory mandate.
- Move landowners steadily toward 100% compliance by supporting staff as they work on the greatest identified buffer needs on state protected waters.

#### **Technical Assistance Actions**

- Develop alternative practice strategies for landowners.
- Measure and flag required buffer widths for landowners.
- Sign off on buffer compliance determinations and cost share applications.
- Complete state reporting associated with Buffer Law.
- Promote SRWD Buffer Program.
- Hold Buffer Team meetings to coordinate regulatory activities.

#### **Financial Assistance Actions**

- Utilize riparian funds for cost share if applicable.

#### **Education and Outreach Actions**

- Provide outreach and information about buffer requirements and benefits through newsletter, press releases, direct mailing, presentations, Facebook and web site.

### **Goal 2-2 Improve land stewardship through expansion of Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Management Certification Program**

#### **Measurable:**

- Enroll 4 new Landowners in program.
- Provide assistance to 18 certified landowners enrolled in the MAWQMP program.

#### **Leadership Actions**

- Highlight success of program.

#### **Technical Assistance Actions**

- Support certified producers seeking to improve their operations through site visits and planning assistance.
- Work to increase enrollment in the certification program.

### **Financial Assistance Actions**

- Promote financial incentives made available through the program (USDA and MDA).

### **Education and Outreach Actions**

- Provide outreach and information about program requirements and benefits through newsletter, press releases, direct mailing, presentations, Facebook and web site.

## **Goal 2-3      Protect surface water through efforts to improve crop nutrient management.**

### **Measurable:**

- Landowners assisted with manure management plan development – goal of 4.
- Review land application records for N & P for 25 landowners.

### **Leadership Actions**

- Recognize nutrient losses and their impact to water quality.
- Recognize that farming operations are contributors of nutrients to surface waters.

### **Technical Assistance Actions**

- Implement the Feedlot program, review and assist development of nutrient management systems.
- Review and assist in development of nutrient management systems for feedlots.
- Inspect land application events, record keeping, manure management BMP's.

### **Financial Assistance Actions**

- Research cost share sources for manure and nutrient management plans.
- Encourage enrollment into EQIP to provide cost share of nutrient management practices.

### **Education and Outreach Actions**

- Provide outreach and information about need to improve nutrient management.
- Conduct feedlot site visits and discussions, review management plans with landowners.
- Use Feedlot Meeting as a venue to improve knowledge of nutrient management practices.
- Stay informed about Nitrogen Fertilizer Rules and the role Ag has in meeting requirements.

## **Goal 2-4      Protect surface water through implementation of the Feedlot Program and improving feedlot runoff controls.**

### **Measurable:**

- Number of feedlots improved and improvement in compliance status.

### **Leadership Actions**

- Support feedlot program and its annual work plan.
- Collaborate with agencies, citizens, to seek resolution to issues pertaining to animal agriculture.

### **Technical Assistance Actions**

- Support Planning and Zoning staff to ensure feedlot requirements are met during permitting process.
- Complete farm site inspections as outlined in MPCA Annual Work Plan.
- Maintain feedlot inventory and GIS layer of registrations as required by MPCA Annual Work Plan.
- Conduct spot checks of installed runoff controls and best management practices that were cost shared.
- Review applications for protective measures and issue CSF and interim permits.
- Assist producers with finding solutions to problems relative to protecting surface water.
- Respond to citizen concerns/complaints to ensure water quality is being protected.
- Work to improve feedlot inspection processes and TEMPO program data entry.

### **Financial Assistance Actions**

- Use existing cost share and seek additional funds to install feedlot improvements.



### **Education and Outreach Actions**

- Use radio, newsletters, publications, tours, site visits, meetings, and events to increase familiarity with best management practices.
- Contribute and participate in the Todd Livestock Advisory Committee as requested.
- Host annual feedlot meeting to educate landowners and broaden understanding and accessibility.
- Maintain knowledgeable staff who are current with issues and skills.
- Maintain transparency of the Feedlot Program

### **Goal 2-5      Protect surface water through implementation of Wetland Conservation Act (WCA).**

#### **Measurable:**

● Assist over 300 landowners with wetland information and technical assistance, process over 40 applications for work in wetland areas, investigate and resolve WCA violations as they occur seeking solutions for the landowner to come into compliance.

#### **Leadership Actions**

- Continue to support wetland policy adopted by TSWCD February 2, 2017.
- Review WCA policy for changes.

#### **Technical Assistance Actions**

- Provide wetland determinations and assistance completing applications to landowners.
- Assist townships with WCA and applications.
- Provide wetland assistance to other county departments.
- Coordinate and administer federal wetland laws: Swampbuster, 1985 Food Security Act, and CWA 404

#### **Financial Assistance Actions**

- Refer fundable projects to USFW and assist landowners with project.

### **Education and Outreach Actions**

- Raise awareness of wetland benefits through news articles and one-on-one contacts.

### **Goal 2-6      Protect surface water through cost-sharing project cost.**

#### **Measurable:**

- Complete 5 projects through technical and financial assistance with that protect water quality.

#### **Leadership Actions**

- Support use of cost share to protect water quality.
- Prioritize available projects and direct funds to those with greatest potential to protect water.

#### **Technical Assistance Actions**

- Work with landowners to develop projects needed to protect water quality including erosion control, livestock exclusion, shore land stabilization, etc. that follow USDA-NRCS Field Office Technical Guide standards.
- Conduct site visits, arrange project design development if needed, develop cost share applications to fit available sources of funding.
- Provide technical assistance for diversity of projects expected: tree plantings, buffers, soil erosion, exclusion fencing, shoreline stabilization, well sealing, pit closure and ag waste system improvements.

#### **Financial Assistance Actions**

- Use existing cost share and seek additional sources during the year.

### **Education and Outreach Actions**

- Use radio, newsletters, publications, tours, site visits, meetings, and events to let landowners know about funding sources available.

## **Goal 2-7 Provide Input to Stormwater Management**

### **Measurable:**

- Cities assisted with storm water information.

### **Leadership Actions**

- Support training and time needed.

### **Technical Assistance Actions**

- Obtain needed training to enable implementing storm water requirements.

### **Financial Assistance Actions**

- Cost share if appropriate.

### **Education and Outreach Actions**

- Conduct outreach related to storm water.

## **Initiative #3 Conservation, Protection, and Enhancement of Ground Water.**

Todd County has a good supply of groundwater resources contained in two main aquifers. Groundwater supplies support crop irrigation, livestock operations, dairies, industry, and municipal and domestic wells. Although abundant, groundwater resources are not infinite and conservation practices and planning are needed to maintain both quantity and quality of groundwater for future generations.

Todd SWCD has supported a variety of activities to protect and improve groundwater resources. Staff have worked with cities as they developed their Drinking Water Supply Management Area plans. Ground water observation wells have been monitored in cooperation with the MN Department of Natural Resources. Groundwater quality efforts have been supported and testing encouraged. Practices to reduce potential for impacts have been cost-shared such as well sealing, feedlot pit closures, feedlot design and upgrades, and nutrient management.

## **Goal 3-1 Perform observation well monitoring measuring groundwater depth.**

### **Measurable:**

- Complete groundwater well network monitoring and reporting to MN DNR.

### **Leadership Actions**

- Continue contract with MN DNR to perform work

### **Technical Assistance Actions**

- Measure wells, report results.

### **Financial Assistance Actions**

- No financial assistance provided with this activity.

### **Education and Outreach Actions**

- Articles on the program to inform citizens that work is ongoing.

## **Goal 3-2 Work to protect groundwater from sources of nitrate.**

### **Measurable:**

- Technical assistance and closure of manure pits.

### **Leadership Actions**

- Support staff seeking to develop a program of technical and financial assistance to work on this problem.
- Stay current with Statewide Nutrient Management Plan efforts and progress.

### **Technical Assistance Actions**

- Provide nitrate sample analysis, have office serve as sample drop location, stay trained and current on alternatives and practices to limit nitrogen loss to groundwater such as fertilizer and manure BMP's, cover crops, precision agriculture technology, etc.

**Financial Assistance Actions**

- Promote partner programs that have cost share available, focus state cost share into townships with high nitrates.

**Education and Outreach Actions**

- Support partners that are cost sharing nitrogen BMP's (USDA, NRCS, MPCA, SRWD)
- Deliver education related to well setbacks.
- Stay current with GRAPS process in Sauk River Watershed
- Distribute articles about protecting groundwater.

**Goal 3-3 Close “out-of-use” and non-compliant Ag waste storage areas to protect ground water and for safety concerns.**

**Measurable:**

- Number of manure pits closed for the year – goal of 5 with focus Partridge River grant area.

**Leadership Actions**

- Prioritize areas to focus pit closure work – Osakis and Partridge River

**Technical Assistance Actions**

- Develop alternative closure projects with landowners and verify that pits are closed properly.

**Financial Assistance Actions**

- Obtain additional pit-closure funds by prioritizing pits identified to be closed.

**Education and Outreach Actions**

- Continue outreach on the need to close feedlot pits, especially in sensitive areas.

**Goal 3-4 Cost share abandoned well sealing to protect ground water.**

**Measurable:**

- Number of wells sealed for the year.

**Leadership Actions**

- Approve program to focus increased level of funds for well sealing in priority areas – set cost share rates, etc. Have staff focus efforts into a priority area based on soil vulnerability and depth to groundwater. Increase the target number of wells to be sealed per year.

**Technical Assistance Actions**

- Develop cost shared project and see the projects through to completion.

**Financial Assistance Actions**

- Increase number of wells sealed using cost share.

**Education and Outreach Actions**

- Focused mailing and outreach effort. Use multiple approaches for next 2-3 years

**Goal 3-5 Provide irrigation scheduling support to irrigators and irrigation conservation plans.**

**Measurable:**

- Number of acres and number of landowners receiving technical assistance - # referred and plans written.

**Leadership Actions**

- Support web based irrigation based scheduling program.

**Technical Assistance Actions**

- Promote irrigation scheduling service selected with irrigators.
- Develop conservation plans related to irrigation permit applications.

**Financial Assistance Actions**

- Support funds for program to be made available to landowners throughout the county.

**Education and Outreach Actions**

- One on one contacts. Respond to requests for conservation plans from landowners.

**Goal 3-6 Support cities with drinking water management area plans.**

**Measurable:**

- Assistance provided to cities.

**Leadership Actions**

- Be proactive and contact cities about what SWCD can provide.

**Technical Assistance Actions**

- Support requests from cities for input into their plans. Offer to identify projects for cities that may reduce nitrate losses to groundwater within their DWSMA.
- Follow up on project leads known to be in a DWSMA.

**Financial Assistance Actions**

- Prioritize cost share on projects identified within a city DWSMA

**Education and Outreach Actions**

- Provide information to cities related to DWSMAs

**Goal 3-7 Safeguard groundwater by working to improving livestock operations located in sensitive groundwater areas.**

**Measurable:**

- Number of operations assisted and education activities implemented.

**Leadership Actions**

- Support Feedlot Program in identifying operations in sensitive areas.
- Support program with adequate funds to allow addressing groundwater concerns.

**Technical Assistance Actions**

- Evaluate sites with groundwater protection as a consideration.
- Overlay known feedlot locations with soil and groundwater sensitivity indices to determine what operations need to be evaluated for current practices.
- Review manure management records to ensure that amounts applied fit agronomic requirements.

**Financial Assistance Actions**

- Seek out cost share and funding to assist the ag waste industry in reaching compliance.

**Education and Outreach Actions**

- Reach landowner through a variety of events and programs throughout the year.
- Work to educate the ag industry on the laws and rules in place and suggest BMP's and solutions that will help protect groundwater in Todd County.

## **Initiative #4      Conservation, Protection, and Enhancement of Soil Productivity and Farm Sustainability.**

The Todd County Soil Survey originally published in 1989 provides a wealth of information related to the soils found in Todd County. A wide diversity of soils can be found in Todd County with 97 soil series listed in the Soil Survey ranging from clay to sand in texture. These soil support agriculture practiced on 273,000 acres of cultivated land and 138,000 acres of land classed as hay land, pasture, and grass land. Both row and hay crops support a large base of animal production with over 900+ feedlots identified and large processing facilities located in the county.

Maintaining soil productivity and health is important to safeguard the future of agriculture as the largest economic driver for the county. High quality soils are an important key to long term farm sustainability. If soil quality decreases water infiltration rate also generally decreases. This results in increased runoff and soil erosion Small changes in soil infiltration rate on soils over a 100,000 acre land area can create some real problems for public ditches, rivers, and lakes.

Soil productivity and farm sustainability can be positively influenced through promotion of cover crops and residue management, through the Minnesota Ag Water Quality Program, by promotion of Precision Agriculture, through promotion of proper grazing management. Straight education and outreach activities relative to soil health and soil quality conducted one-on-one can also be an effective teaching approach.

### **Goal 4-1      Increase awareness and knowledge of relationship between soil productivity and farm sustainability.**

#### **Measurable:**

- Develop baseline for number of customers being delivered soil health information.

#### **Leadership Actions**

- Maintain staff training and experience such that they are in a position to work with farmers on solving soil related problems such as erosion and infiltration.
- Encourage livestock grazing operators since there are so many links between soil health and grazing.

#### **Technical Assistance Actions**

- Advise landowners on how soil quality and productivity relates to farm sustainability.
- Conduct landowner soil health tests and discuss BMP plans that impact soil health.
- Continue to use MAWQCP to protect soil, raise awareness of soil productivity and protection.
- Promote precision agriculture as a means of protecting soil and ensuring farm sustainability.
- Promote the soil benefits of manure application, pasture management, and cover crops.
- Promote proper grazing management as a means of protecting and improving our soil resource.
- Acquire more pasture and grazing JAA and accompany NRCS Specialist on site visits.

#### **Financial Assistance Actions**

- Refer landowners to existing programs that fund soil health activities.
- Develop funding source for pasture plans, access control, grassed waterways, WASCOSBS, and projects that control erosion and protect soil.

#### **Education and Outreach Actions**

- Continue to incorporate soil health into existing events and programs such as Feedlot Meeting.
- Consider developing an event that models soil quality tools.
- Consistently deliver relevant information that can solve producer needs.

## **Goal 4-2 Support USDA-NRCS with their program implementation, delivery, promotion.**

### **Measurable:**

- Number of landowners enrolled and projects implemented to protect and improve soil, water, and related natural resources.

### **Leadership Actions**

- Chair USDA' Local Work Group meeting to set priorities.
- Support activities that strengthen the USDA-NRCS-SWCD partnership.
- Continue to support the Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist position as a means of supporting our local USDA office programs and staff.

### **Technical Assistance Actions (USDA-NRCS staff)**

- Provide technical assistance for CRP contracts through FBAP position administered by the district.
- Provide technical assistance for Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) through FBAP position administered by the district.
- Provide Assistance related to Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and establish 10 contracts.
- Complete conservation and compliance plans using FOTG as the standard for specifications.
- Conduct compliance reviews for FSA loan requirements.

### **Financial Assistance Actions**

- Prioritize cost share projects and use cost share to augment USDA program funds.

### **Education and Outreach Actions (SWCD staff)**

- Support USDA programs by including information in newsletters and other venues.

## **Goal 4-3 Address Identified Soil Erosion Problems**

### **Measurable:**

- Number of soil erosion problems resolved voluntarily through technical assistance.

### **Leadership Actions**

- Ensure staff training is adequate to evaluate magnitude of soil erosion problems and develop alternatives.

### **Technical Assistance Actions**

- Advise landowners on how soil quality and productivity relates to farm sustainability.
- Conduct landowner soil health tests and discuss BMP plans that impact soil health.
- Continue to use MAWQP to protect soil, raise awareness of soil productivity and protection.
- Respond to excessive soil loss complaints and work to resolve the soil erosion problems.
- Design field windbreaks, and planting plans for landowners designed to reduce erosion.

### **Financial Assistance Actions**

- Direct landowners to funding sources to solve soil erosion problems.

### **Education and Outreach Actions**

- Make to soil erosion loss program more widely known through newsletters and press releases.

## **Initiative #5      Conservation, Protection, and Enhancement of Todd County Private Forest Lands and Natural Areas.**

Approximately 135,000 acres of Todd County are in woodland. Most of the large un-cleared woodlands are privately owned and occur in the eastern third of the county where terrain and rocky soils made these areas less suited to farming. These forests add to the scenic quality of the area and provide protection of for many of the lakes which have excellent water quality. These areas are vulnerable to future development and potential lake impacts.

Markets for timber resources have changed with closing of a local paper pulp mill and a bioreactor power generator in adjacent counties. Several small sawmills located in the county primarily produce pallet components from locally harvested trees. Todd County is on the edge of the prairie with almost no timber land to the south and west. Relatively few foresters work the County and many residences do not view timber as a major resource. However, with proper management, forest resources can provide multiple future benefits to the county.

Todd SWCD has been active in forest management in the past. Reductions in state programs that supported tree planting and forest management plan development and implementation and greater state emphasis on water quality protection took staff away from a forestry focus.

Historically, the district has not had a large emphasis on natural area development or wildlife habitat improvement. About 28% of county land is owned for recreational purposes. These landowners have a strong desire to improve the wildlife habitat values associated with their properties. Establishment of the Farm Bill Biologist position through Pheasants Forever in 2013 allowed some focus on natural area work. This position is funded through BWSR with some local match. The primary focus of the position was initially to establish CRP contracts on sensitive lands. This was highly successful with Todd County CRP acres increasing while most counties lost CRP acres. Additional natural area work in recent years includes seeking protective easements around the remaining wild rice lakes in the county, and assisting landowners with planting of native prairie seed mixes.

### **Goal 5-1      Support landowners interested in forest stewardship.**

#### **Measurable:**

- Number of landowners served.

#### **Leadership Actions**

- Acknowledge forestry and our woodlands as a valuable county resource.

#### **Technical Assistance Actions**

- Connect landowners seeking forestry assistance with MN DNR or private foresters.
- Discuss forestry stewardship at site visits to properties with eligible forests.

#### **Financial Assistance Actions**

- Connect landowners with available resources

#### **Education and Outreach Actions**

- Support existing forestry resources using education and outreach.

### **Goal 5-2      Provide easy access to trees and shrubs and provide technical information to landowners about enhancing their land through vegetation establishment. Hold Annual Tree and Shrub Sale.**

#### **Measurable:**

- Number of customers served and plants sold to landowners.

#### **Leadership Actions**

- Acknowledge the customer service value of the annual tree program.

### **Technical Assistance Actions**

- Provide information to landowners seeking advice on tree selection.
- Refer customers to MN DNR for private forest management (PFM) and forest stewardship plantings.
- Promote native plants that grow best under a variety of conditions.
- Design shelter belts, field windbreaks, and planting plans for landowners.

### **Financial Assistance Actions**

- Cost share plantings where allowed by cost-share rules.

### **Education and Outreach Actions**

- Provide information on planting methods to landowners.

## **Goal 5-3 Continue support for the Farm Bill Biologist Program partnership between Pheasants Forever, Todd SWCD, and USDA-NRCS.**

### **Measurable:**

- Number of landowners assisted and projects implemented because of the partnership.

### **Leadership Actions**

- Acknowledge the value of FBAP position that reaches both traditional customers and non-farm clientele.

### **Technical Assistance Actions**

- Provide service to landowners related to wildlife habitat establishment on private lands.
- Promote the SRWD hay buffer program
- Work with landowners that are interested in signing up for the RIM easement program.

### **Financial Assistance Actions**

- Work with landowners to get signed up with USDA Farm Bill Programs – CRP, CREP, RIM
- Increase use of SRWD funding sources and wildlife funds by landowners.

### **Education and Outreach Actions**

- Use newsletter and other outreach to raise landowner awareness.
- Use one-on-one site visits as an opportunity to educate and inform landowners.

## **Goal 5-4 Promote and establish permanent RIM/CREP easements on sensitive lands.**

### **Measurable:**

- Number of landowners signed up for easements.

### **Leadership Actions**

- Acknowledge the use of easements as an effective conservation tool.

### **Technical Assistance Actions**

- Provide service to landowners related to developing applications for easements.
- Complete spot checks of existing easements and work to resolve identified issues.

### **Financial Assistance Actions**

- Develop estimates for landowners for RIM and CREP program.

### **Education and Outreach Actions**

- Use direct mailing and 1:1 site visits to solicit interest in easements.
- Use news articles to articles to highlight successful projects.



## **Initiative #6      Conservation, Protection, and Enhancement of Public Lands and Waters.**

Private recreational land makes up a significant portion of land within Todd County. Both non-homestead lakeshore and non-homesteaded seasonal recreation consisting mostly of forested and wetlands fall in this category. In a survey conducted as part of the Priority Concerns Scoping Document (PCSD) for the Water Plan Update 2015 hunting and fishing (59.8%) and swimming, canoeing, boating or jet skiing (35.9%) were the top two responses to the question, “When you think about Todd County Water what comes to mind for you?” The highest number of respondents also rated “Wildlife Habitat” as seeing some improvements within the county in recent years.

Public recreation land within Todd County is primarily managed by the MN DNR. In addition to public lands, some lands are made available to the public through hunting access easements such as the Walk-In-Access program.

**Park Land:** Todd County administers one park – Battle Point on Lake Osakis and a canoe landing on the Long Prairie River. Many of the towns and cities throughout the county have parks.

**Public Land:** Consist of wetlands, uplands, or woods owned and managed for wildlife by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). A total of 15,195 acres of management areas, USFW Waterfowl Production Areas, and Walk-In Access land are available to the public.

**Public Waters:** Todd County’s lakes, rivers and streams are a valuable resource for the County. In Todd County, protected waters such as lakes and rivers cumulatively cover over 32,000 acres. There are 355 bodies of water listed on the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources water inventory, including 118 bodies defined as protected lakes, 178 defined as protected wetlands and 59 protected rivers and streams. These water bodies not only provide great natural beauty, they supply the water necessary for recreation, industry, agriculture and aquatic life. Threats to our public waters include surface runoff addressed in Initiative #2 and groundwater contamination addressed in Initiative #3. Aquatic Invasive Species are also a serious threat that can negatively impact public waters – reducing property values and the public resource.

### **Goal 6-1      Protect Public Waters from Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) by implementing and directing an AIS program designed to reduce the threat of invasion and education the public.**

#### **Measurable:**

- Number of boat inspections, numbers of landowners reached, AIS programing delivered.

#### **Leadership Actions**

- Prepare and update Todd County Aquatic Invasive Species Plan to be approved by Board of Commissioners for 2019
- Prepare materials for and pull together a steering committee for AIS and develop annual work plan.
- Develop resolution for county to delegate AIS work to the SWCD starting 2019.

#### **Technical Assistance Actions**

- Support contractors and Lake Associations and landowners seeking information on AIS.
- Research new approaches to be taken for AIS committee.
- Be the point of contact for AIS issues.

#### **Financial Assistance Actions**

- Administer AIS Prevention Aid Funds (receive funds from county which is the recipient of funds).

#### **Education and Outreach Actions**

- Implement strategies and activities outlined in AIS annual work plan.

**Goal 6-2 Implement watershed and minor watershed level planning when prioritizing projects in an effort to protect public waters to the highest degree possible with funds expended.**

**Measurable:**

- Implement project prioritization data base.
- Use of minor watershed data to target restoration projects and funding requests.

**Leadership Actions**

- Strengthen the prioritization and targeting of projects into minor watersheds that will benefit most.

**Technical Assistance Actions**

- Select projects based on most likelihood to improve public waters.
- Collect and use data that will allow ranking, targeting, and prioritizing of projects.

**Financial Assistance Actions**

- Develop grant applications using prioritizing methods.

**Education and Outreach Actions**

- Conduct outreach activities in prioritized areas that will improve water quality

**Goal 6-3 Increase use of the Walk-In-Access Program by Todd County Landowners.**

**Measurable:**

- **Number** of landowners enrolled in the county and acres enrolled.

**Leadership Actions**

- Promote WIA as a means of adding value to set-aside conservation programs such as CRP.

**Technical Assistance Actions**

- Assist landowners with sign-up.

**Financial Assistance Actions**

- Inform landowners that some restoration project money is available for their property after they sign up.

**Education and Outreach Actions**

- Promote the program and seek additional sign-ups.

**Goal 6-4 Implement streambank and lake shore stabilization projects to directly protect water quality.**

**Measurable:**

- **Number** of projects and actions taken to protect shoreline areas.

**Leadership Actions**

- Identify and prioritize water bodies that can be significantly improved through this type of project.

**Technical Assistance Actions**

- Respond to landowners and local governments seeking assistance and designs to solve shoreline erosion.
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**Financial Assistance Actions**

- Seek funding for shoreline stabilization projects and use what is already available.

**Education and Outreach Actions**

- Advertise successful projects.

**Goal 6-5 Develop program to focus Shoreland Landowner education and project implementation.**

**Measurable:**

- **Completed** plan to identify land parcels around lakes that have a high risk of runoff.

**Leadership Actions**

- Support development of plan and implementation of the plan.

**Technical Assistance Actions**

- Study work from Crow Wing County and develop outline for steps to be taken around Todd County Lakes.

- 

**Financial Assistance Actions**

- Seek funding to support an intern or PTE to complete pilot study data gathering around lakes.

**Education and Outreach Actions**

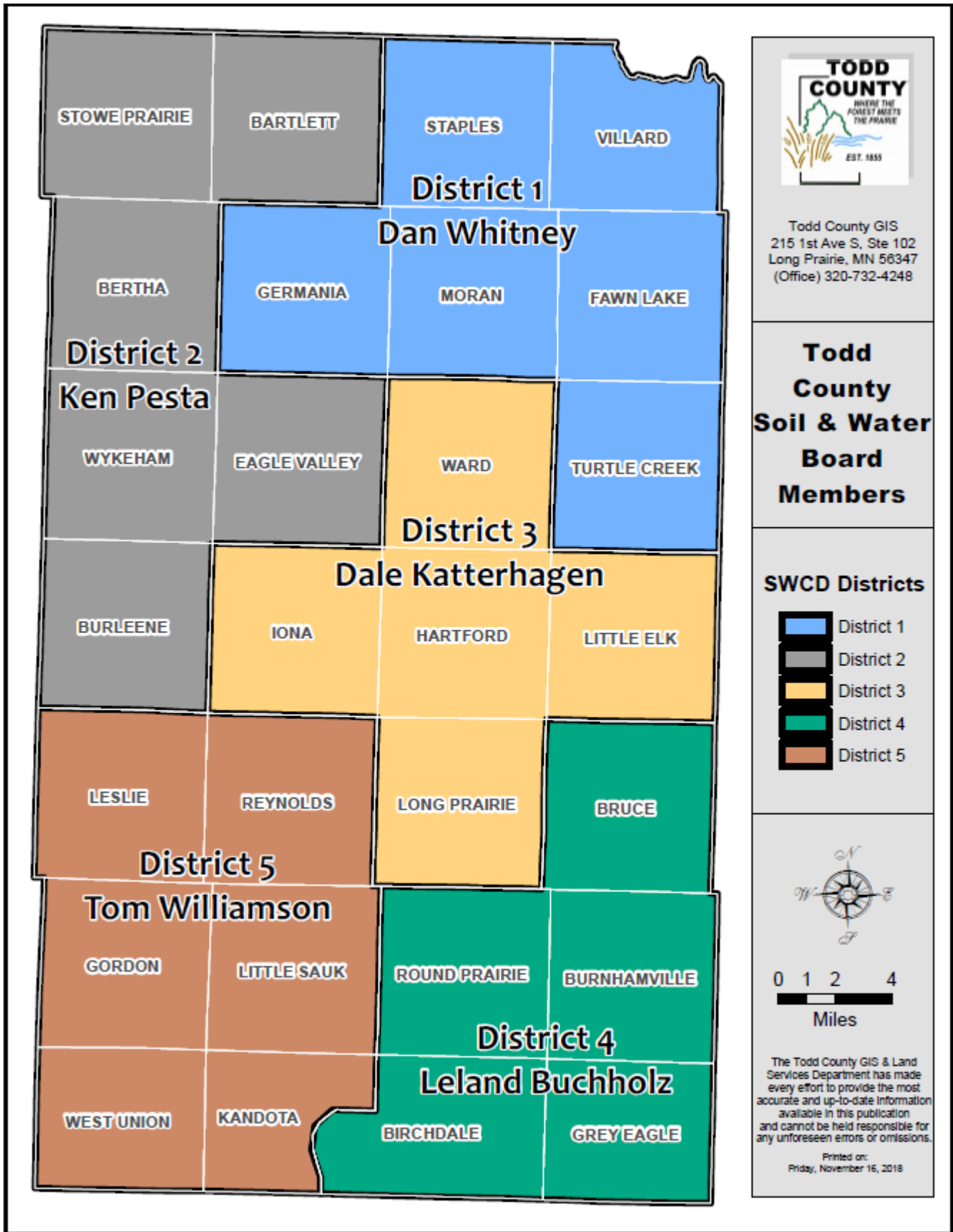
- Contact lake associations to determine which may be interested in serving as a pilot.

Attachment #1: Todd Soil and Water Conservation District Annual Budget 2019

**2019 Todd County Soil and Water Budget**

<b>Income</b>	
<b>Intergovernmental Revenue</b>	
<b>County</b>	
County Allocation-General	\$ 20,000.00
County Allocation-Riparian AID	\$ 96,979.00
County Allocation for Feedlot Program	\$ 49,297.00
County Allocation for Wetland Program	\$ 21,641.00
Local Levy for Water Plan	\$ 4,777.00
MPCA Feedlot Program-Delegated to SWCD	\$ 70,423.00
Wetland Conservation Program-Delegated to SWCD	\$ 21,641.00
Local Water Management--Delegated to SWCD	\$ 14,676.00
	\$ 299,434.00
<b>State</b>	
General State Grants	\$ 20,000.00
BWSR Service Grant	\$ 20,054.00
BWSR Erosion & Control (C/S)	\$ 16,595.00
MN DNR Ob Well Grant	\$ 3,120.00
Farm Bill Assistance Grant	\$ 58,500.00
MPCA Lake Osakis/319 Grant	\$ 211,000.00
BWSR Buffer Grant	\$ 20,000.00
BWSR Local Capacity Funding	\$ 120,000.00
	\$ 469,269.00
<b>Total Intergovernmental Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 768,703.00</b>
<b>Charge for Service</b>	
Tree and Plant Sales	\$ 15,000.00
	\$ 15,000.00
<b>Miscellaneous Revenues</b>	
Interest Earnings	\$ 600.00
Other Miscellaneous Revenues	\$ 10,000.00
	\$ 10,600.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 794,303.00</b>
<b>Expense</b>	
<b>District Operations</b>	
Supervisor Compensation	\$ 6,000.00
	\$ 6,000.00
<b>Other Services &amp; Charges</b>	
MCTT Supervisors Work Comp	\$ 50.00
Membership & Registrations	\$ 4,000.00
Professional Services (Audit)	\$ 4,800.00
Travel and Expense	\$ 3,000.00
MCTT Supervisors Insurance Coverage	\$ 1,800.00
	\$ 13,650.00
<b>Total Operations and Other Services</b>	<b>\$ 19,650.00</b>
<b>Project Expense</b>	
<b>District Projects</b>	
Tree Expense	\$ 15,000.00
Miscellaneous Project Expense	\$ 10,000.00
Farm Bill Assistance Expense	\$ 58,500.00
Program Expense	\$ 406,629.00
	\$ 490,129.00
<b>State Projects/Cost Share Projects</b>	
State Cost Share	\$ 16,595.00
MPCA Lake Osakis/319 Grant	\$ 200,000.00
Local Capacity Service Cost Share	\$ 20,000.00
County Riparian AID Cost Share	\$ 66,979.00
	\$ 303,574.00
<b>Total Project Expense</b>	<b>\$ 793,703.00</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$ 813,353.00</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$ (19,050.00)</b>

Attachment #2: Todd Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor Districts



Attachment #3: Todd County Commissioner Districts

