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2023 Kanabec SWCD Work Plan

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SWCD Mission

The Kanabec Soil and Water Conservation District is dedicated to promoting the wise and sustainable use of our land and water related resources; to work with and empower landowners and groups on conservation options; work in partnership with other agencies; educate the public, provide technical assistance, administer state programs and serve as a county wide soil and water conservation and natural resource information and referral center.

Areas of Focus Defined - These focus areas are meant to be new areas of work for the District or areas where more concerted efforts are planned to move the District forward toward better things.

Areas of Focus #1 - Ensure a more concerted effort is achieved in making more direct landowner contacts. A focus will be made in new and follow-up landowner contacts. This work will directly benefit work in the following Districts' efforts:

Kanabec SWCD 5-Year Strategic Plan citation:

- ✓ Primary Priority #2 Control or Prevent Erosion with a goal of 10 Tons of soil saved
- ✓ Primary Priority #3 Ensure Soil Productivity through the promotion and incentivizing 15 soil health practices

Existing Grant Focuses:

- Knife River Clean Water Funds Clean Up Grant, expiring 12/31/2023 (potential for 1-year extension) targeted area within the Knife River. Our goal here is to decrease soil loss by 8 tons and Phosphorus by 40 pounds through implementing 4-6 BMPs in riparian areas or with livestock operations. One project has already been completed with a few more in development. Develop three new projects in 2023.
- Soil Health - State Cost Share, expiring 12/31/24, As a new funding source (\$14,175) this will focus on the promotion (staff time) and installation of soil health practices.
- State Cost Share (SCS) – through increase contact with landowners seek to plan a project for our remaining SCS funds (\$4,781) to expire 12/31/23
- MN Ag. Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) – (MN Dept. of Ag) – Plan to continue this program promotional effort, as it aides in making producer contacts where conservation planning can take place, which may lead to other project implementation.
- Buffers – communicate with clients on compliance in the first half of this year, inventory for compliance on

the east part of the county.

- Continued existing and new project development where the project results meet our goals and priority areas identified in our Watershed Plans or Strategic Plan and where funding is most readily available. This may involve seeking out new funding sources as necessary.
- Continued efforts in the joint coordination of project and outreach with NRCS, as their connection and commitment with us continues.
- AgBMP Low Interest Loans – continue the administration of these loans, which add support to our conservation goals.

Outreach / Education: Generally, this includes many of our annually planned outreach activities, sometimes varied based on outcomes effectiveness.

- County Fair (conservation and AIS booths)
- Annual Newsletter, spring
- No planned Starry Trek (AIS) this year – instead will collaborate with lake assn. to include AIS education at their scheduled outreach events.
- Hold the local Work Group Meeting with NRCS, invite the public
- Website and Facebook maintenance and updates
- Provide up to four updates to the County Board on various topics that pertain to their board, i.e., budget, Snake Watershed or other areas for collaboration etc.
- Survey in conservation interest to our Ag. sector
 - Outreach event depending on survey results (2023 or 2024)

Areas of Focus #2 – Continue efforts to ensure functioning infrastructure is set up in preparation for the implementation of the Snake River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. As the funds for implementation are expected the fall of 2023.

Kanabec SWCD 5-Year Strategic Plan citation:

Our plan lists our District funding partners as crucial to all of our listed priorities. This focus area addresses building these partnerships and setting up the infrastructure needed to implement our new Snake Watershed Plan.

Coordination Tasks – Continue crucial work in coordinating our Snake Watershed infrastructure set-up for implementation of the Snake Plan.

- Coordination in the hiring of 1.25 watershed-wide staff, set-up any office infrastructure as needed to get them up to speed working.
- Discuss best options and decide on fiscal administration, staffing / hiring processes and other needed items in preparation for implementation within the partnership.
- Collaboratively develop the joint powers agreement, by-laws and other documents that will aid in our needed infrastructure for plan implementation.
- On the technical / staff level: develop a system for vetting and approving projects within the watershed, committee flow of work, citizen involvement, project / progress tracking system and other needed items for implementation set-up.

Administrative Tasks

- Updating our employee handbook of personnel policies (current version 2016)
- Plan to set up a more detailed program log to include grant categories for improved monthly tracking of our progress. This should help improve efficiencies in grant reporting and aide our monthly accrual tracking of funds.
- Update for publication the new 2023 Plat Book with publisher ‘Mapping Solutions’.
- Budgeting and grant progress reporting.
- Facilitate our 2022 Audit.
- Maintain our QuickBooks accounting, payroll tax filing up-to-date.
- Partnering and board meeting preparations for Kanabec SWCD Board, Co. Board, SRWMB, Snake PC and future Partnership Board, Steering Committees, COLA and others as needed.
- Meeting attendance with our various partners in watershed planning and collaboration on our expanded conservation work.

Grant Applications

- MN Dept. of Ag. Soil Health Financial Assistance Pilot Program Grant, Due 3/20/23 – planning an application to fund a no-till drill for rent for promotion of soil health practices and native plantings.

Areas of Focus #3 – Begin or continue protection efforts within the county. This will generally include the set-up of our new shared Forester with Pine SWCD and our continued efforts

Kanabec SWCD 5-Year Strategic Plan citation:

- ✓ Primary Priority #1 Protect Water Quality with a goal of 2,240 pounds of Phosphorus reduced
- Re-Invest in MN (RIM)– process our currently four approved applicant’s packets for submission to BWSR for easement processing, continue communication with back logged landowners as needed for anticipated future RIM funds. Attend quarterly meetings to coordinate work within the Snake and Kettle Watersheds.
- Lawns to Legumes Grant, expires 5/1/24, work to contract with landowners all project funds this year and provide resources for planting in 2023. Continue work in reporting progress quarterly.
- Shared Forester –start a shared forester position with Pine SWCD with ¼ time in Kanabec. Start outreach with woodland owners throughout the watershed and set up a program for completing Forest Stewardship Plans and forestry BMP with guidance from the Snake Watershed Comp. Plan.
- Open House private well nitrate testing, April 24-28 – annual testing is meant to provide well information to

the landowner and add to our database of where we have high nitrates for improved targeting of conservation practices to prevent aquifer contamination.

- Tree / Shrub Sale, in May – includes pollinator flats of forbs for sale, in promotion of our Lawns to Legumes work. 8,100 trees/shrubs ordered
- In partnership with the Ann Lake Watershed Alliance (ALWA) submit a pilot grant (BWSR) to fund one internal load treatment to lower the phosphorus release. This treatment is estimated to reduce Phosphorus by 715 pounds. Conduct meetings with state agencies and the public in preparation for a treatment and permitting approval. If funded begin project management activities such as potential bidding for a consultant and treatment applicator with contracting set-up. Submitted grant application 2/14, results due the end of April.

Other Activities:

Contract Work:

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) continued coordination of education and control efforts with the COLA group against the introduction of AIS within Kanabec County. This will involve our normal work of hiring and managing summer boat inspectors, working with COLA members in continued AIS education efforts throughout the county.

Well Level Monitoring (DNR) – Ten wells throughout the county are monitored four times per year.

Training of staff as needed to maintain and expand upon our technical, outreach and administrative skills. Training (in-person and remote) takes many forms in partnership with other organizations, state and federal partners.

Staff supervisory duties, including personnel performance reviews and personnel committee meetings.

Annual Water Quality Goals from our Strategic Plan:

- a. Target Phosphorus reduction – goal 38# P reduced
- b. 1st Phase of Ann Lake Treatment – goal 2,050# P reduced (5-year goal)
- c. Target soil saved – goal 2 Tons soil saved
- d. Promote and incentivize 3 soil health practices
- e. Partner in planning 1 projects promoting and providing prescribed grazing technical assistance through NRCS
- f. Seek out targeted sites for wetland restoration to relieve flooding pressures
- g. Expand on the general public’s understanding of what we do and on the understanding of soil health principles / practices.

