

Lyon Soil & Water Conservation District

2009 Annual Report



Lyon Soil & Water Conservation District

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Soil & Water Conservation District

Program Partners

Entity	Partnership Contribution
Lyon County	Financial, program assistance
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	Technical, program, cost share
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)	Consultations, Contract services with SWCD
Area II Minnesota River Control Area	Technical, financial for projects
Redwood Cottonwood Rivers Control Area (RCRCA)	Financial for projects, monitoring of resources
Yellow Medicine River Watershed (YMWD)	Financial for projects, monitoring of resources
Lyon County Sportsman Groups	Financial for projects, education
MN Department of Transportation (DOT)	Assistance in establishment of Living Snow fences
MN Department of Agriculture	Low Interest loan funds, educational information
SW MN Joint Powers	Engineering Assistance
Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D)	Funding for projects
MN Board of Soil & Water Resources (BWSR)	Program direction, grants, training
MN Association of Conservation Districts (MASWCD)	Legislative lobbying, education and information

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

I. INTRODUCTION

Lyon Soil & Water Conservation District is a local unit of government that was established by MN Statutes and local land users of Lyon County. The District (or SWCD) has by law been entitled to be fully involved in a number of resource management programs that include but are not limited to soil and water conservation and protection, flood control, recreation, fish and wildlife habitat protection and restoration, and resource management. Soil & Water Conservation Districts are subdivisions of local government and are organized along county boundary lines. Soil & Water Conservation Districts work closely with partner agencies to achieve resource protection throughout watersheds located in their area. The local SWCD board and staff provide the necessary local guidance to help citizens, partner agencies and landowners address resource problems that are important to our area.

A Board of five supervisors, elected county wide by general ballot, oversees and develops the policies of the SWCD. The SWCD was established in 1945, as a result of the devastation to soil resources in the 1930's. The District works closely and cooperatively with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to implement programs and activities. In the past 60+ years, close relationships have been added with watershed management organizations, and other local, state and federal agencies.

Purpose of Annual Plan & Report:

The Annual Plan is developed as a guideline for carrying out effective and efficient programs. It is done to allow the SWCD to meet the needs of the citizens in all areas of the County and Watershed while protecting the integrity of our natural resources. The plan is adopted after consultation and input from our various partner agencies involved in the environmental and conservation efforts in our area. The plan describes the actions planned for the coming year designed to achieve the annual objectives, it summarizes the staff time needed to complete the actions, includes the amount of State and other funding the SWCD will need for the upcoming year and the justification of the need for the funds.

The Annual Report: is presented to show accomplishments in programs and projects that relate to what the SWCD Annual Report showed as goals or action items in our Annual Plan.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Lyon SWCD is to: Establish programs that assist in the protection of the public health, safety and welfare through Soil & Water Conservation and Protection. Encourage land occupiers to conserve and protect our soil and water resources, implement erosion, sediment control and water quality practices. We will promote conservation through education, trained personnel and supervisors. The SWCD will seek and implement conservation practices and programs that will benefit the landowner, the county, watershed and nation.

Priorities of the Lyon SWCD

The Lyon SWCD has established that the priority concerns of the SWCD are as follows:

- Prevent Wind, Water & Soil Erosion
- Improve Water Quality & Promote Water Conservation
- Promote Conservation & Resource Programs
- Promote Energy Conservation
- Improve Wildlife Habitat

These priorities are mirrored in the Lyon Co. Comprehensive Water Management Plan that serves as the Lyon SWCD Comprehensive 5 year work plan.

To accomplish these priorities, the following pages will outline the objectives and activities that will be used and the progress made through programs and assistance in 2009.

Organizational Chart

Board of Supervisors

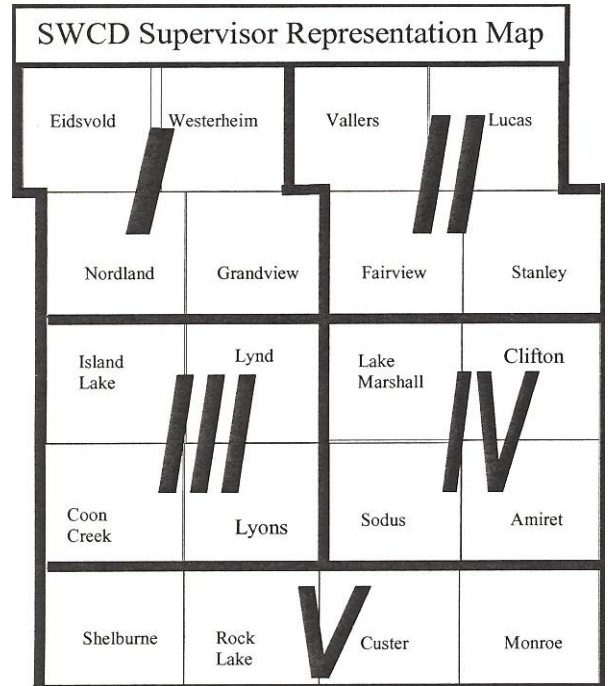
Gary Crowley ~ Area I
 Jonathan Mohn ~ Area II
 Mark Meulebroeck ~ Area III
 Otto Nyquist ~ Area IV
 Steve Prairie ~ Area V

District Staff

Rose Anderson District Administrator
 Laura DeBeer Conservation Technician
 Bernie Louwagie Administrative Assistant

USDA NRCS Staff

Jamie Thomazin.....District Conservationist
 Mike Timmerman.....Soil Conservation Tech
 David Voight.....Soil Conservationist
 Gary Blough.....Ag Engineer



Monthly Board meeting:

4th Tuesday of the month, 10 AM ~ November through April
 1 PM ~ May through October

Location: Lyon SWCD Meeting room, 1424 E. College Drive, Suite 600, Marshall, MN

Web Page: <http://www.lyonswcd.org>

PROGRAMS that the Lyon Soil & Water Conservation District administers:

Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM)	Tree sales/planting and matting
State Cost Share program	Grant Applications
Rainfall Monitoring Program	Farmer Magazine/Outstanding Conservationist Award
Displays at fairs and Sportsman Shows	Buffer cost share programs
Clean Water Legacy Grant Programs	DNR Well monitoring
Tax Forfeited Land review	Wetland Conservation Act administration
DNR water permit reviews	Newsletters and Press releases
Educational programs	Environmental Fair
Lyon SWCD Web site	Feedlot Inventory
Beginning Farmers	AgBMP Loan Program
Annual Plan and Reports for public information	Assistance in Conservation Planning projects
Alternative Intake Conversion Cost Share	Conserving Use acres for conservation projects

Assist Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) with programs

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

Acronyms that may used throughout the Annual Plan

AgBMP	~	Agricultural Best Management Practice
Area II	~	Area II, MN River Control Area
BWSR	~	Board of Water & Soil Resources
CLWM	~	Comprehensive Local Water Management
CCRP	~	Continuous Conservation Reserve Program
CREP	~	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
CWL	~	Clean Water Legacy
CRP	~	Conservation Reserve Program
DNR	~	Department of Natural Resources
EEO	~	Equal Employment Opportunity
EQIP	~	Environmental Quality Incentives Program
FSA	~	Farm Service Agency
GIS	~	Geographic Information Systems
HEL	~	Highly Erodible Land
LGU	~	Local Government Unit
MACDE	~	Minneota Association of Conservation District Employees
MASWCD	~	Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts
NHEL	~	Non-Highly Erodible Land
NRBG	~	Natural Resources Block Grant
NRCS	~	Natural Resources Conservation Service
RCRCA	~	Redwood Cottonwood River Control Area
RIM	~	Reinvest in Minnesota
SWMN JPO		SWMN Joint Powers Organization
SWCD	~	Soil & Water Conservation District
TMDL	~	Total Maximum Daily Loan
USFWS	~	US Fish & Wildlife Service
WCA	~	Wetland Conservation Act (MN Law)
WHIP	~	Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program
WREP	~	Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program
WRP	~	Wetland Reserve Program
YMWD	~	Yellow Medicine River Watershed District

II Objectives

1) Maintain efficient SWCD operations

Goals for 2009:

- a) Conduct regular Board of Supervisor meetings
- b) Maintain Trained staff to ensure efficient and knowledgeable implementation of SWCD programs and services
- c) Lyon SWCD Board and Administrator will maintain accurate program and financial records and reporting through the e-link program
- d) Board and staff will periodically review operations and priorities
- e) Work to achieve stable funding for the SWCD to ensure adequate support of conservation efforts and effectively address citizens concerns and needs.
- f) Publish an Annual Report for the public that addresses accomplishments and funding utilized. Providing accountability to the public and government units for funding received to administer the programs of the SWCD, this will be mailed and on the SWCD web site.
- g) Conduct regular reviews of practices, & projects (spot checks) that were established with tax-payer funded programs to ensure the practices are being maintained for their contract life.
- h) Supervisors and staff will continue to participate in Joint Powers Boards, advisory committees and task forces to ensure the needs of our area are addressed.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS in 2009 Objective #1:

- Staff worked with *176 landowners* on wetland conservation act applications, questions and determinations. Each landowner/operator that is looking at projects that may impact wet areas is asked to sign a request for Lyon SWCD staff to review the request and advise as to if the project needs a State of MN Wetland Conservation Act application also.
- Staff participated in meetings and applications for funding with our watershed partners including Redwood, Cottonwood, Yellow Medicine and DesMoines. We have given letters of support for TMDL plans and are participating in work plans for the watersheds.
- Tree program ~ information and promotions resulted in:
 ~ *26,338 feet of windbreaks/shelterbelts planted in 2009*
- Staff discussed concerns with landowners on the Emerald Ash Borer and invasive species especially Buck Thorn
- Staff and Supervisors are active members of panels and Boards for the SWMN TSA and RCRC
- Lyon SWCD Board reviews all financial transactions monthly and engages an independent auditor to review financial records as required by law. In 2009, an audit was completed on the 2008 financial records. No discrepancies were found and the audit is available on the Lyon SWCD web site.
- Lyon SWCD prepares Annual Plans, Reports and financial information and these are made available on the SWCD web site: www.lyonswcd.org
- Regular meetings are held with our watershed partners to discuss status of projects and funding as well as to discuss priorities.
- Staff received needed training as available; in 2009 8 trainings were attended by 2 staff people on the Wetland Conservation Act.
- All Lyon SWCD staff attended area meetings were information was provided on programs and issues as well as 2 staff people attended the BWSR learning academy in November 2009
- Regular Board meetings were held each month in 2009.
- A Lyon County Commissioner attended all SWCD regular Board meetings.
- Prepared a Budget for the year of 2009, revised the Budget due to financial changes.
- Staff receives and comments on DNR water permits.
- Staff reviews and comments on Planning & Zoning permits that may impact wetlands.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS in 2009 Objective # 1 (continued):

- Administrator reviews Beginning Farmer applications, recommends conservation plans for Highly Erodible Land if needed and other programs that may benefit the land that is being purchased.
- Staff reviews all land that is in forfeiture due to non payment of taxes. Land that is highly erodible or contains wetland is identified.
- Works with Lincoln County with the working Lands Initiative.
- State Cost share contracts were spot checked in accordance with the State C/S guidelines
- Re-invest in MN and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program contracts were spot-checking according to the schedule BWSR requires. Those that needed maintenance work were noted and the landowners were contacted.
- Participated in several brain storming sessions for projects and funds needed in our watersheds.
- Maintained a Rainfall Monitoring network of volunteers throughout the county (11). This program records the daily rain/snow received and is reported to the State of MN Climatology office.
- DNR monitoring wells, SWCD staff read the water level and reported to DNR
- Reporting of activities and projects were entered into the e-link state reporting system
- Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) for the State of MN: Lyon SWCD is the Local Government Unit and Technical unit for the act in Lyon County.

In 2009 the workload included: 210 landowner contacts

- 3 ~ Replacement plans were approved
 - 2 ~ WCA exemptions were granted
 - 2 ~ no-loss decisions were approved
 - 1 ~ no-loss request was denied
 - 4 ~ sites were visited for potential violations
 - 7 ~ Monitoring reports were received for wetland replacement areas
 - 1 ~ Restoration order was issued
- 29.26 acres of buffer were established, 3.3 were public value credits
5.52 acres of water quality treatment was established

Road projects reviewed for possible wetland areas ~ 2

2) Provide assistance to land users in high priority wind, soil and water erosion areas of the county and watershed areas.

Goals for 2009:

- a) Provide information and technical assistance to landowners in the application of conservation practices that meet the technical requirements of the USDA NRCS, MPCA or State of Minnesota as applicable to programs.
 - i) 20 acres of waterways
 - ii) 10 Water & Sediment Control Basins
 - iii) 1000 feet of terraces
 - iv) 10 tree windbreak plantings
- b) Promote the increased use of reduced tillage, best management practices
 - i) 1200 acres
- c) Conduct conservation tillage transect survey for the county in partnership with our other conservation agencies.
- d) Promote conservation programs of the Farm Bill
- e) Utilize AgBMP Low interest loan program to provide loans to land users for conservation tillage equipment, manure handling, ISTS and erosion control projects.
 - i) 30 loans totaling \$300,000.00
- f) Promote conservation practices to urban residents on the importance of reduction of fertilizer use, reducing runoff into storm sewers and conservation of resources.
 - i) Rain garden establishment to promote use of ~ 1 per year on public land, dependent on funding.
 - ii) Education and promotion of wise use of water and other resources ~ newsletters, posters
 - iii) Promotion through news articles and presentations of the reduction of use of fertilizers and pesticides and the need to use them only as necessary.

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.

Goals for 2009:

- a. Provide assistance to land users by installation of
 - i. 4 Ag Waste System upgrades
 - ii. 15 ISTS systems upgrades
- b. Support local, state and federal programs to provide for a buffer zone along drainage ditches, streams, rivers and wetlands, promote restoration and creation of wetlands.
 - i) 60 acres
- c. Cooperate with our neighbor SWCD's within the watershed to utilize programs and grant opportunities to provide cost share funds to install practices to reduce pollution to our water courses and implement TMDL plans in place.
 - i) 2 grant applications per year by SWCD's
 - ii) Provide support, technical assistance, input & implementation of watershed partner applications, RCRCA, YMWD and Des Moines
- d. Maintain responsibility as the Local Government Unit (LGU) for the county and cities within the Lyon County in the implementation of Minnesota's Wetland Conservation Act, to achieve a no net loss of wetlands. Encourage the restoration of previously drained basins and their enrollment in the State's Wetland Banking program. 1 Certified Wetland Delineator on staff, ~Conservation Technician

1 Staff as the Administrator of WCA, ~District Administrator
- e) Work with other partners in implementation of the "Local Comprehensive Water Plan"(CLWM) priorities.
 - i) Utilize implementation funds for CLWM to provide incentives for goal accomplishments
 - i) Convert 6 tile intakes to below ground (alternative)
 - ii) Provide workshops to landowners on practices that improve and protect water resources
 - iii) Provide educational materials and events on conservation of resources

ACCOMPLISHMENTS in 2009 for Objectives #2 & #3:

Funding Source	# of Projects	\$'s to Practice	Pollution Reduction Phosphorus lbs/Yr	Pollution Reduction Sediment Reduction Tons/Yr
Alternative Intakes:				
CWF/Redwood Cottonwood Watershed and Lyon Co Waterplan Funds	46	\$14,936	180	32
Waterways installed:				
State C/S Lyon SWCD	2	\$7,567	10	44
Yellow Medicine CWL	4	\$15,063	85	75
Water & Sediment Basins:				
Yellow Medicine CWL	8	\$2,761	5.78	6.6
Redwood/Cottonwood CWL	4	\$18,890	42.17	178.5
RCRCA CWL 319	8	\$18,768	106	92
Nutrient Management Plans:				
Redwood/Cottonwood CWL	12	\$37,973	*	*
Dams, New and Repairs:				
Redwood Cottonwood CWL	2	\$37,900	196	257
Well Sealing:				
Lyon SWCD c/s	23	\$2,550	*	*
Windbreaks:				
Lyon SWCD C/S	16.80acres 20 sites	\$25,440	*	*
Ag Waste Facilities:				
Feedlot Water Quality Grant, Lyon SWCD	1	\$27,664	35.6	

*These practices do not have calculations for soil, sediment or phosphorus reductions. While they may provide all of these benefits, accurate means on calculating has yet to be developed.

- The **Shelterbelt plantings** provide protection to building sites, livestock, human activities, wildlife and protect roads.
- The **Well sealing projects** provide protection to the groundwater by eliminating direct access of pollutants.
- The **Nutrient Management Plans** provide guidance in application of fertilizers that only provide what the soils need for crop production eliminating over use of products that have the potential of polluting our surface and groundwater.

Program and Project Accomplishment through Federal Programs partnered with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Lyon Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD). These projects if they received incentive cost share payment were funded through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Practice	Accomplishment
Conservation Plans written	10,200 acres
Cropland with conservation practices applied to improve soil Quality	11,420 acres
Land with conservation practices applied to improve water quality	10,417 acres
Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans through Federal Programs developed	46/5918 acres
Grazing land with conservation plans and practices	660 acres
Conservation Practices applied that improve fish and wildlife habitat	2987 acres
Wetlands created, restored and/or enhanced by conservation practices	89 acres
Composting facilities constructed	2
Closure of Ag Waste Facility	1
Conservation Cover practices installed	397 acres
Conservation Crop Rotation plans applied	7822 acres
Small impoundment Structures installed	6
Diversions constructed	1100 feet
Fence installed from grazing plans, controlled access	11,700 feet
Filter Strip practices	93 acres
Grassed Waterways installed	12 acres
Pest Management plans	4045 acres
Residue Management	982 acres
Restoration and Management of Rare or Declining Habitats	191 acres
Underground outlets installed with projects	24
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management	2443 acres
Waste Storage Facilities	4
Water & Sediment Control Basins	14
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation	1130 feet

ACCOMPLISHMENTS in 2009 for Objectives #2 & #3 (continued):

The Conservation Security Program (CSP) is a federal program that provides incentive payments to producers for practices that they are doing on their land that protects the environment.

The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) is a federal program that provides financial assistance to producers to install practices that will improve land for crop production, reduce pollution and enhance water quality.

In 2009 the following are contracts and funding received by Lyon County producers:

Programs	# of Contracts	Funding provided
EQIP	23 approved in 2009, 53 total contracts active	\$432,367 paid in 2009
CSP	16 contracts approved in 2009	\$56,508 paid

AgBMP Low interest loan program: Provides 3% loans to Lyon County residents to install or purchase equipment that will protect or resources. Applications must meet the goals and objectives of the Lyon County Compressive Water Plan Applicants can be approved for up to \$100,000 and may have up to 10 years to repay the loan. Funds repaid are eligible to be utilized for additional projects for 10 years. New applications are made the SWCD each year for additional funding.

Loans approved in 2009:

Practice	# of Loans	\$'s Used
Ag Waste facilities & Manure Handling Equipment	5	\$196,424
Conservation Tillage Equipment	4	\$310,124

To date we have \$1.5 Million dollars in active loans to Lyon County residents for practices that provide phosphorus reductions and soil/sediment reduction.

Individual Septic System upgrades (ISTS): no projects were funded through the SWCD AgBMP loan funds in 2009. Landowners that contacted the SWCD for assistance in funding to upgrade these systems were directed to the Lyon county Environmental Office to utilize loans available through MPCA administered through the county. These loans are tied to the land taxes and are paid when real estate taxes are paid.

Clean Water Legacy Applications:

Lyon SWCD with Redwood, Lincoln, & Yellow Medicine SWCD applied for and successfully received 3 CWL grants to install conservation practices that will implement the goals of the Lower MN Dissolved Oxygen TMDL plans. Funding is administered by Redwood SWCD(Redwood/Cottonwood watershed) and Lyon SWCD(Yellow Medicine watershed) for these grants. The funding is available in each of the member SWCD for projects that were identified in the grant applications.

4) Provide information and education to the public on the benefits and need to project and reduce use of our resources

Lyon SWCD will promote conservation of resources by:

- a) Presentations to school and other groups
- b) Participate in county fair and in Farmfest as funding allows
- c) Honor a county land user as “Outstanding Conservationist”
- d) Participate and promote “Environmental Fair” and “Envirothon”
- e) Promote and sponsor Woman’s Conservation day
- f) Provide information and news through our Web site: www.lyonswcd.org
- g) Utilize mailings as needed to inform cooperators of program opportunities
- h) Promote programs that provide assistance for projects.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS in 2009:

- Radio and Newspaper ads and articles were done in 2009 including:
EQIP sign-up periods, Tree program promotions, & Program updates ~ 8 articles
- Newsletter was published twice with information on programs and Wetland Laws.
- Demonstrations: The SWCD promoted grazing workshops in our neighboring counties that were available to our cooperators also.
- Staff discussed concerns with landowners on the Emerald Ash Borer and invasive species especially Buck Thorn
- Staff and Supervisors are active members of panels and Boards for the SWMN TSA and RCRC
- Education Programs, presentations were given for Arbor Day, The SWCD assisted in planning and working at the Envirothon and Environmental Fair as were as other water quality and conservation days
- District Administrator gave a presentation at the Spring Senior College at SMSU. Topics covered were the importance of protection of our resources and programs available through our office and staff
- Staff and Supervisors were committee members and/or officers on Area V Educational events and Area V Directors
- Outstanding Conservationist for 2009 was awarded to Weedman Family of Amiret. News articles were done and recognition was made by the Farmer Magazine.
- Lyon SWCD web site was updated monthly or more if needed with meetings, programs, reports and events.
- Women’s Conservation Day was held in September in Lyon County. Attended by 80 from 9 neighboring counties. Sponsored by the SWCD’s of those counties. Topic for 2009 was reduction of storm water runoff and included rain garden establishment and construction and use of rain barrels.

5) Implement EEO and Civil Rights Responsibilities

- a) Review status of data by race and sex with assistance of NRCS and check for any deficiencies
- b) Review Memorandum of Understanding with NRCS which includes EEO and Drug Free Workplace.
- c) Include nondiscrimination statement in all information released to the public
- d) Review policies and encourage equal representation of minorities, women, and handicapped on local program boards, councils and committees
- e) Review handicapped accessibility to office including parking space requirements.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS in 2009:

- Lyon SWCD includes a non-discriminatory statement on all promotional, correspondence and information sent. The Board reviews our Memorandum of Understanding and Freedom of Information Act information annually with our conservation partners.