

WASHINGTON CONSERVATION DISTRICT (WCD)
2023 GUIDELINES ON USE OF SWCD AID PAYMENTS
Minn. Stat. § 477A.23, subd. 4(b)
(effective July 20, 2023)

In accordance with Minn. Stat. § 103C.005 SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION POLICY, the WCD is charged with:

Maintaining and enhancing the quality of soil and water for the environmental and economic benefits they produce, preventing degradation, and restoring degraded soil and water resources of this state contribute greatly to the health, safety, economic well-being, and general welfare of this state and its citizens. Land occupiers have the responsibility to implement practices that conserve the soil and water resources of the state. Soil and water conservation measures implemented on private lands in this state provide benefits to the general public by reducing erosion, sedimentation, siltation, water pollution, and damages caused by floods. The soil and water conservation policy of the state is to encourage land occupiers to conserve soil, water, and the natural resources they support through the implementation of practices that:

- (1) control or prevent erosion, sedimentation, siltation, and related pollution in order to preserve natural resources;
- (2) ensure continued soil productivity;
- (3) protect water quality;
- (4) prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs;
- (5) reduce damages caused by floods;
- (6) preserve wildlife;
- (7) protect the tax base; and
- (8) protect public lands and waters.

Further, to support the SWCD Policy, the State SWCD Aid payments may be used by the district board and staff to support the powers and responsibilities of being a SWCD as outlined in Minn. Stat. § 103C.331, subd. 1-20; and

To achieve the SWCD Policy, the State SWCD Aid payments will be used by the district board and staff to carry out the duties as outlined in Minn. Stat. § 103C.332, subd. 1.

In carrying out the above-referenced powers and duties, the district board and staff will use state aid payments to deliver the following services as outlined in Minn. Stat. § 103C.332, subd. 2:

- (1) performing administrative services, including comprehensive and annual work planning, administering grants, leveraging outside funding, establishing fiscal accountability measures, reporting accomplishments, human resources management, and staff and supervisor development;
- (2) entering into cooperative agreements with the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other United States Department of Agriculture agencies to leverage federal technical and financial assistance;
- (3) providing technical expertise, including knowledge of local resources, performing technical evaluations and certifications, assessing concerns, and providing oversight in surveying, designing, and constructing conservation practices;
- (4) providing information and education outreach, including increasing landowner awareness and knowledge of soil and water conservation program opportunities to protect soil and water resources and publicizing the benefits of soil and water conservation to the general public;
- (5) facilitating regulatory processes for impacted landowners and providing technical review and comment on regulatory permits and development plans for regulations relating to soil and water conservation;
- (6) administering projects and programs, including but not limited to the nonpoint source pollution abatement program; reinvest in Minnesota reserve conservation easements program; disaster response; local water management and comprehensive watershed management planning programs; and projects related to floodplains, lakes, streams and ditches, wetlands, upland resources, and groundwater resources, to maintain and improve the quality, quantity, distribution, and sustainability of natural resources, including surface water, groundwater, soil, and ecological resources;
- (7) monitoring and inventorying to collect data that provide a baseline understanding of resource conditions and changes to the resources over time and analyzing and interpreting the data to support program implementation; and
- (8) maintaining a modern technology infrastructure that facilitates planning and projects, including geographic information systems, modeling software, mobile workstations, survey and design equipment and software, and other technology for linking landowners with conservation plans.

Jay Riggs, WCD Manager

Date