

Developing a SWCD Comprehensive Plan

SWCD in counties without comprehensive local water management plans or those that choose not to adopt the county comprehensive plan should use the following outline in development of a SWCD comprehensive plan. Though a SWCD plan may vary in format or extent from this outline, the plan must include the elements listed here to meet the requirements for requesting funding from the state. A SWCD-developed comprehensive plan may cover no longer than a ten-year period.

Regardless of the format of the plan, development of the plan should include input from and discussion with the SWCD board, staff, and partners. Partnerships can be particularly effective in assisting in identifying local priority problems, developing options for addressing those problems, and potentially with leveraging additional technical and financial assistance for implementation of the comprehensive plan.

Comprehensive Plan Outline

- I. Introduction
 - A. Purpose of the comprehensive plan. Include the mission statement of the SWCD, the purpose of the comprehensive plan, and the time period the plan addresses.
 - B. Organizational history. Include a brief summary of the SWCD's history, including reasons for formation.
 - C. Authorization and jurisdiction of the SWCD. Include a brief summary of the SWCD's organizational structure, boundaries, and authorities granted to the SWCD under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103C.
 - D. SWCD policies. List any policies, written statements, or authorities granted to SWCD staff that supervisors have adopted to guide SWCD programs. These may be summarized in the introduction and presented fully in an appendix.
 - E. SWCD Accomplishments. Include a list, map, or discussion of SWCD accomplishments implemented within the time period of and/or identified in the previous comprehensive plan.
- II. Resource Inventory – the resource inventory must be developed with the following information or may reference: a county water plan authorized under Minnesota statutes §103B.311, a watershed management plan(s) required under §103B.231, a watershed management plan(s) required under §103D.401 or 103D.405, a county groundwater plan authorized under §103B.255; as long as the referenced plan is consistent with the following information.
 - A. Soil survey. Identify the soils within the SWCD and include a discussion of the soil associations. Soils mapping information may be found on the Web Soil Survey at: <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>
 - B. High priority problem areas. Provide a discussion and/or map(s) of the areas within the SWCD where erosion, sedimentation, and related water quality problems are the most severe. Include information about each of the following areas.

- i. Areas where erosion from wind or water is in excess of 2 x T tons per year and/or areas with active gully erosion.
 - ii. Areas where pollutant delivery to a water source is in amounts that may impair the quality of that water source; this may include feedlots, sinkholes, abandoned wells, and groundwater information if available. May want to include information on waters included on the 303(d) Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) list and the status of TMDL projects and implementation for these waters.
- III. Resource Assessment – the resource assessment must be developed with the following information or may reference: a county water plan authorized under Minnesota statutes §103B.311, a watershed management plan(s) required under §103B.231, a watershed management plan(s) required under §103D.401 or 103D.405, a county groundwater plan authorized under §103B.255; as long as the referenced plan is consistent with the following information.
 - A. Assessment of high priority problems. Provide an analysis of the extent, condition, and trends of the high priority problem areas identified above. Information for this analysis may be found in studies, surveys, plans, and inventories completed within the SWCD area by and with cooperating agencies and can be presented as both a discussion and with map(s).
 - B. Conservation measures needed. Considering the extent, condition, and trends of the high priority problems; discuss the types of conservation practices and measures needed to address the problems.
 - C. Effectiveness of past efforts. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of SWCD programs in addressing the high priority problems areas identified in the previous comprehensive plan. Include a discussion of why past objectives may or may not have been met and why past strategies may or may not have been successful.
- IV. Objectives, Strategies, and Actions
 - A. Objectives. Identify specific, reality-oriented, and measurable commitments the SWCD will pursue to address the problems, issues, and needs identified in the resource and SWCD assessments. These objectives should be achievable within the time period of the comprehensive plan. *Example Objective: “Reduce sheet and rill erosion to tolerable levels by increasing the acreage of conservation tillage from 10,000 to 30,000 acres within five years.”*
 - B. Strategies. For each objective, identify an approach or combination of approaches that will be utilized to accomplish the objective. *Example Strategies: “1. Increase outreach and education efforts. 2. Increase technical assistance. 3. Coordinate with communities on local regulations.”*
 - C. Actions. Describe potential step(s) the SWCD may take for each of the strategies. *Example Action: “Hold conservation tillage workshops in March and September of each year in targeted watersheds.”*
- V. Implementation
 - A. Workload Analysis.

- i. Determine the anticipated staff years to needed carry out each of the actions identified for achieving the objectives, including technical, administrative, and clerical time.
 - ii. Indicate the amount of staff years currently available.
 - iii. Discuss any discrepancies between the need and availability of staff, and possible steps to take to address the differences.
- B. Budget Forecast. Prepare a budget for the time period of the comprehensive plan forecasting the funds that will be needed to implement the actions and achieve the objectives. Include in the forecast funds for operations, personnel, and cost share.
- C. Adjustments Needed in SWCD Authorities and/or Programs. Discuss changes needed to current SWCD programs or authorities in order to carry out the plan, including proposed alterations to existing state statutes or rules.

Approval Process

1. The SWCD provides the SWCD Comprehensive Plan final draft to the Board Conservationist for review.
2. The Board Conservationist provides a recommendation to the Regional Manager for the final approval decision.
3. The Board Conservationist sends a letter of decision to the SWCD.
4. The SWCD adopts the final plan by resolution.