

WILKIN SWCD



2016 Annual Plan

Plan Approval Date

This plan was approved by the Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District Board on February 10, 2016.

INTRODUCTION

In 2016, the Wilkin SWCD will turn 72 years old. Over the years, the District has developed programs and services that address land and water related issues and problems. When the District was first organized on June 20, 1944, its main responsibility was to control soil and water erosion caused by runoff and wind. Over the years that charge has expanded to address a number of other resource concerns. Today the District works to provide a variety of programs and services to the residents of Wilkin County.

In developing this annual plan, the District analyzes resource concerns and issues in the county. Erosion control, surface water, ground water, flooding, and wildlife habitats are considered priority resource concerns in the county. The annual plan will focus on the activities we will be working on in 2016 to address these concerns.

All of the measures identified in this plan compliment the goals and objective identified in the Wilkin County Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan, which is approved by resolution as the comprehensive plan for the District.

For the most part, the Wilkin SWCD will focus on continuing the successful programs and services developed in prior years, while working to improve and build upon local, state, and federal partnerships.

All of the activities identified in this plan will be accomplished by following our mission which is, “to provide local leadership in the conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources through programs and partnerships with individuals, businesses, organizations, and government.”

District Supervisors

District	Name	Office	Term Expiration
1	Ross Aigner	Vice. Chairman	12/31/2016
2	Pam Hendrickson	Treasurer	12/31/2018
3	Jared Nordick	Chairman	12/31/2016
4	Dan Swedlund	Public Relations	12/31/2016
5	Karlo Etten	Secretary	12/31/2018

Regular board meetings of the Wilkin SWCD are held on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30 a.m. All meetings are held at the Wilkin SWCD office located at 1150 Highway 75 North, Breckenridge, MN unless otherwise noted. All meeting notices, agendas, minutes, plans and reports are posted on the Districts official website which is www.co.wilkin.mn.us.

Wilkin SWCD Committees

Personnel	Etten	Hendrickson
Water Plan	Swedlund	
Legislative	Bajumpaa	
TSA	Aigner	Hendrickson (alt)
Non-watershed	Swedlund	Etten

District Staff

Don Bajumpaa	District Manager
Craig Lingen	Resource Specialist
Diane Lommel	District Clerk
Kim Melton	District Technician

NRCS Staff

Yara Gonzalez	District Conservationist

All programs and services of the Wilkin SWCD are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or handicap.

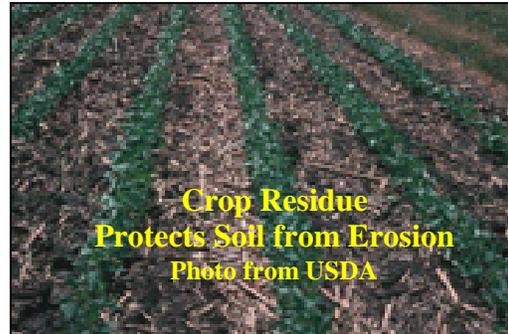
The following is a short summary of each resource concern followed by specific actions that will be completed to accomplish our annual objectives.

OBJECTIVES

Reduce Erosion and Sedimentation in Wilkin County

Over 90 percent of the soils in Wilkin County have the potential to erode by wind. During the fall, winter and spring, winds cause soils to erode when they are unprotected. Displaced topsoil fills road ditches, legal and field drainage systems, resulting in increased ditch maintenance expenses. Soil erosion is a public nuisance and has an economic impact on

our
county
and



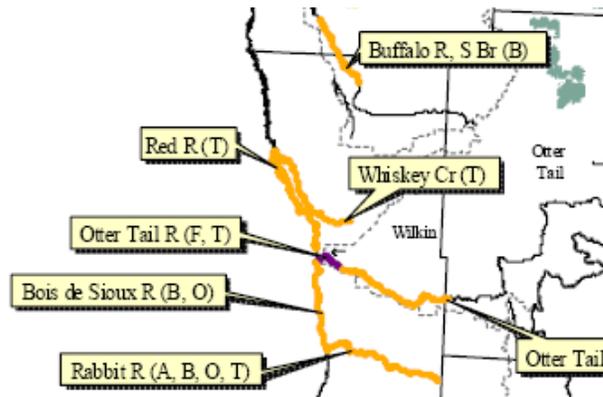
communities. Serious wind erosion reduces the productivity of cropland and leads to increased production costs. Wind erosion on unsheltered distances greater than 2000 feet should be addressed by implementing conservation practices to adequately control erosion.

The following is a summary of the actions the district will work on to reduce erosion.

1. Provide information to landowners/operators regarding local, state and federal programs that address wind and water erosion. This will be accomplished through one-on-one contacts, personalized letters, and the district newsletter. Annual goal is 1000 acres.
2. Plant 5 field windbreaks, 5 farmstead shelterbelts, and 2 living snow fences.
3. Assist 3 landowners in the restoration of old windbreaks.
4. Assist landowners with their tree planting and tree maintenance needs by offering tree planting, and tree fabric application.
5. Provide technical assistance to Wilkin County in discussions and planning efforts associated with addressing wind and water erosion.
6. Market local, state and federal programs on a county wide basis with emphasis in the Buffalo Red River Watershed, Otter Tail River Watershed and Bois de Sioux Watershed.
7. Assist landowners in along the Red River with gully and bank failures. Use CWL funds.
8. Assist with implementing the state soil loss law.

Improve the Quality of Surface Water in Wilkin County

Wilkin County does not have an abundance of surface water resources. Lake Breckenridge, the only lake in the county, has experienced significant degradation of water quality over the past 35 years. Rivers, streams, and drainage ditches make up the majority of the surface water present in Wilkin County. Very few wetlands are left in the county and are typically located in the northeastern portion of the county in the upland areas. There is a state designated trout stream



Wilkin County Impaired Waters

located in the northern portion of the county. Most issues relating to existing degradation of surface water resources can be traced to land use. Portions of the Rabbit River, Bois de Sioux River, Otter Tail River, Red River, Whiskey Creek, and the South Branch of the Buffalo River are identified as “impaired waters” according to Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act (see map inset). Conservation targeting efforts will be made in these impaired watersheds. The following is a summary of the actions the district will work on to improve water quality.

1. Market and promote conservation buffers, windbreaks, side-inlet structures, steam-barbs, stream jetties, and other best management practices in the Lower Otter Tail River, South Branch of the Buffalo, Whiskey Creek and Wolverton Creek Watersheds. This will be accomplished with funding from Clean Water Legacy grants. Staff will make one-on-one contacts, develop personalized letters for mailings and assist landowners with project designs and installation.
2. Assist BdSWD with planning and installation of water quality retrofits under their jurisdiction.
3. Assist Wilkin County with the implementation of the Wetland Conservation Act.
4. Provide a septic system design and inspection service in Wilkin and Richland counties with a goal of designing and inspecting 20 systems.
5. Conduct MAWQ certifications for landowners choosing to obtain Certainty Certification.
6. Work with MPCA to explore TMDL and other surface water quality monitoring opportunities.
7. Support Wilkin County to establish, implement and enforce its shoreland ordinance which requires appropriate bufferstrips along DNR protected waters.
8. Assist producers with state buffer strip law.
9. Assist with the Drainage Water Management Demonstration Research Project.

Control Surface Run-off and Reduce Flood Damages in Wilkin County

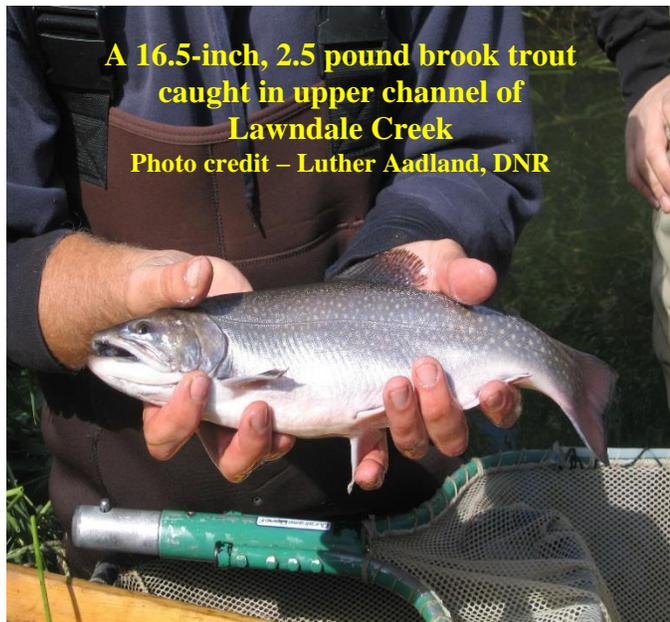
Historically, Wilkin County experiences spring and summer flood events. This flooding causes considerable damage to public and private property including roads, culverts and ditches. Much of the flooding problem relates to the geophysical and hydrologic nature of the county and the difficulty in containment by natural and artificial drainage systems. Since the flood of 1997, flood damage reduction (FDR) has received a lot of attention. The Wilkin SWCD recognizes that the success of FDR is dependant on cooperation between local, state, and federal agencies, special purpose districts, such as watershed districts, and private citizens. The following is a summary of activities the district will work on that relates to this resource concern.



1. Assist the efforts of the Buffalo Red River Watershed District and Bois de Sioux Watershed Districts work group in the development and implementation of their watershed management plans.
2. Encourage landowners/operators to control run-off from their lands with the use of bufferstrips and side-inlet structures.
3. Assist BdSWD, BRRWD and Wilkin County with planning and installation of water quality retrofits under their jurisdiction.
4. Support Wilkin County to establish, implement and enforce its shoreland ordinance which requires appropriate bufferstrips along DNR protected waters.
5. Assist local, state and federal partners with the restoration of 4 wetland basins.
6. Assist in the acquisition of RIM/WRP easements along the Wolverton Creek, Whiskey Creek and the Otter Tail River in the development of flood storage and water quality enhancements.
7. Assist the Buffalo Red River Watershed District in the development of flood storage and water quality enhancements to the South Branch of the Buffalo River and Wolverton Creek and upstream areas.
8. Assist USDA with the Red River Basin Initiative. The initiative will reduce flooding, improve water quality, and enhance wildlife habitats in the Red River Basin.
9. Assist with gathering survey data for the Otter Tail River Restoration Project.

Improve Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Wilkin County was at one time prime habitat for both waterfowl and upland game birds. Presently less than five percent of the county is considered wildlife habitat areas. This is due in part to the conversion of wildlife habitat to cropland. The establishment of wildlife habitat can aid in reducing wind and water erosion and improve water quality. Some of Wilkin County's rivers and streams provide good to excellent fishing opportunities. There are a wide variety of game fish in the Red River, Otter Tail and Bois de Sioux Rivers. Part of Lawndale Creek, County Ditch 40, is listed as a DNR trout stream. The following is a summary of activities the district will work on to improve fish and wildlife habitat.



**A 16.5-inch, 2.5 pound brook trout
caught in upper channel of
Lawndale Creek
Photo credit – Luther Aadland, DNR**

1. Encourage landowners/operators to integrate wildlife management practices into their farm management plans.
2. Encourage landowners/operators that have grasslands to employ conservation practices that improve wildlife habitat.
3. Encourage landowners/operators to enroll into local and state programs that retire marginal agricultural lands into conservation cover.
4. Assist local, state and federal partners in the promotion and development of wildlife habitat and re-establishment of native grasses on public and private lands.
5. Promote the establishment of native grasses, where practical and feasible, along county ditches and roadways.
6. Provide support and assistance as needed to DNR with the promotion of stream bank stabilization and in-stream fish habitat projects.
7. Provide support and assistance to DNR and the Buffalo Red River Watershed District with their efforts to restore the South Branch of the Buffalo River and Wolverton Creek.
8. Assist the Bois de Sioux Watershed District by promoting the installation of grasslands (buffers) and wetland habitats along river corridors of the lower Rabbit, Doran Slough and Bois de Sioux Rivers.
9. Encourage landowners to refrain from mowing road ditches until August 1st.
10. Inform landowners about RIM walk-in programs that expand opportunities for hunters.

11. Encourage the use of biological controls for pest management on grasslands and wildlife areas.
12. Assist USDA in their effort to provide floral forage habitats to benefit hive nutritional health as part of an overall effort to increase the health of honey bees.
13. Assist USDA to target and restore wetlands and grasslands in the prairie pothole region. This effort will improve wildlife habitat for migratory birds, improve water quality and quantity, improve grassland health, and reduce soil erosion and sediment.
14. Assist with restoration of streambanks along the otter tail river by installing toe wood sod mats and other bioengineered practices.

Protect Groundwater Resources in Wilkin County

Groundwater aquifers in Wilkin County are not well mapped, and the specific recharge areas are not well defined. This is especially true of the Wahpeton Buried Valley Aquifer near the City of Breckenridge. Manston Slough, is a known recharge area of the Buffalo Red River Aquifer which supplies drinking water for several downstream communities. Efforts to buffer surface waters entering the slough will protect groundwater supplies for the communities and private homes that draw their water from this aquifer. Up until 1990, very little was known about the quality of groundwater in the county. In the past 25 years, Wilkin County has conducted a water well testing program for residents to test their well water for bacteria and nitrates. The results of these tests have shown only one well with nitrates exceeding health standards and several wells with high levels of coliform bacteria. Generally speaking, groundwater resources are good. This is due in part to the thick layers of soil with low permeability located between the surface of the ground and the water table. The following is a summary of actions the district will work on that address groundwater resources.



1. Continue to monitor 11 observation wells within the county for the Department of Natural Resources.
2. Monitor groundwater in tile outlets as part of Discovery Farms research in the county.
3. Establish a water quality monitoring program to evaluate the effectiveness of shallow water wetlands and saturated buffers for treating tile outlet waters.
4. Promote target drainage water management programs in the county through CWL and EQIP programs.
5. Provide support to partners in their efforts to restore water quality and quantity of Manston Slough and the Buffalo Red River Aquifer.
6. Provide cost-share assistance for the purpose of sealing abandoned wells in Wilkin County.
7. Work with landowners to protect gravel pits from pollution contamination.
8. Investigate the need for a cost share program for the abandonment and reclamation of animal waste pits.
9. Encourage landowners to restore wetlands to recharge groundwater.

Coordinate Educational Programs to Increase Public Awareness of District Programs and the Importance of Protecting our Natural Environment

The district recognizes the need to increase education and public awareness of our natural resources for ag-producers, homeowners, children, women and others. It is our hope that as awareness of resource concerns increases through education, landowners/operators will become more engaged in the adoption of conservation practices. The following is a summary of the actions the district will work on.

1. Produce a year end newsletter. The newsletter will feature information on conservation programs, services and summarize the districts conservation accomplishments.
2. Promote Soil and Water Stewardship Week by supplying materials to Wilkin County churches and educators.
3. In cooperation with Richland Soil Conservation District, sponsor a Ladies Night program to provide conservation education and information.
4. Sponsor student(s) to attend Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center.
5. Coordinate a conservation day for all 5th graders in Wilkin County.
6. Sponsor and assist with the Area Jr. and Sr. High Envirothons.
7. Enhance SWCD website to include timely information on conservation programs and services.
8. Work with Wahpeton Daily News paper to promote conservation programs and to report accomplishments.
9. Recognize an outstanding conservationist for their participation and leadership in implementing conservation practices in the county.
10. Hold educational lyceums, presented by Tom Gibson, for Wilkin County students.
11. Explore available social media opportunities for education and promotion of District programs.

Strengthen and build new partnerships to accomplish the short and long term goals of the district

The district recognizes that we can not accomplish the objectives outlined in this annual plan alone. Over the years the district has developed and maintained partnerships with a wide variety of partners. Partnerships provide an opportunity for those involved to identify common goals and objectives and resources (financial or people) that they can contribute to help address a particular need. The following is a summary of the partnership efforts the district will continue and opportunities the district will pursue.

1. Remain engaged with USDA service center partners to determine the district's role in promoting and delivering USDA programs to landowners/operators.
2. Assist Wilkin County through our involvement in implementing the Local Water Plan and Wetland Conservation Act and through representation on the water plan citizens and technical advisory committees; and non-watershed advisory committee.
3. Assist Buffalo Red River Watershed District in identifying critical erosion areas for BMP targeting, through the use of LiDAR photography and Stream Power Index.
4. Inventory and map the locations of all conservation practices and easements present in impaired watershed areas.
5. Using GPS, inventory erosion sites along and adjacent to all waterways and county ditches for potential erosion practices.
6. Assist the county in developing a program to monitor the impacts of pattern tile on water quality.
7. Continue to work with Wilkin County, Bois de Sioux and Buffalo Red River Watershed Districts to promote buffer strips and other watershed planning activities.
8. Continue to work with MPCA to explore "third party vendor" opportunities associated with TMDL plan development and water quality monitoring.
9. Continue to work with MNDOT to promote living snow fences along State Highway 210 and State Highway 9.
10. Participate and support the Red River Valley Conservation Technical Service Area 1.
11. Participate and support MASWCD Area 1.
12. Work with the Richland Conservation District to expand the district's tree fabric and septic system design programs to landowners in Richland County.
13. Explore opportunities to expand the district's educational programs with Richland SCD.
14. Continue to work with MDA to pilot and develop the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program.
15. Continue to work with MDA to research Drainage Water Management practices.

Staffing Needs Summary			
Administrative	Technical	Clerical	Total
1830	5169	801	7800
Total Staff Hours Available: 5720			
Total Staff Hours Needed: 0			

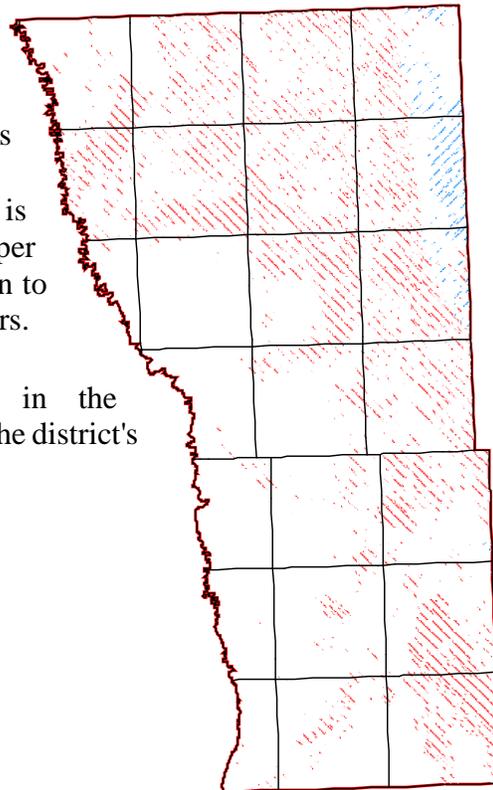
Erosion, Sediment Control and Water Quality Cost Share Program

The Erosion, Sediment Control, and Water Quality Cost-Share Program (C-S Program) provides funds to Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) to cost-share on priority projects. The SWCD Board of Supervisors are given the authority to decide which resource problems within their jurisdiction are most deserving of financial assistance, as well as the amount of assistance. Guidelines set by the Board of Water and Soil Resources state that SWCDs may cost share with land occupiers at the maximum rate of 75 percent of the eligible cost of a project. All eligible practices identified in section V of the State Cost Share Program Manual will be considered high priority practices with the exception of the Unused Well Sealing practice, which will be subordinate and not exceed 50 percent cost-share.

1. High Priority Erosion Problems

"High priority erosion problems" include areas where:

- erosion from wind (red) and water (blue) is occurring equal to, or in excess of 2 x T (tons per acre) per year, additional priority will be given to sites located in watersheds with impaired waters.
- active gully erosion is occurring, and
- other areas identified as high priority in the comprehensive local water plan, which is also the district's comprehensive plan.

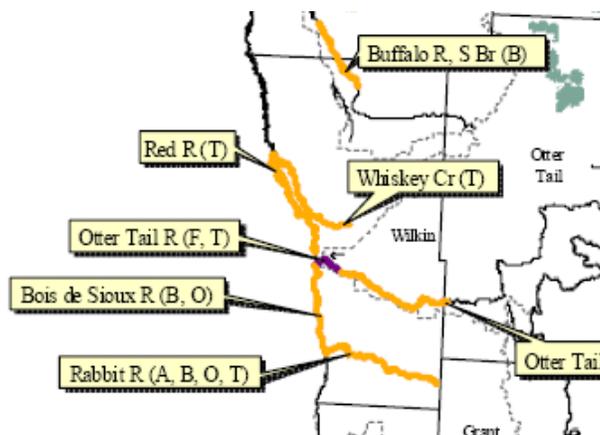


2. High Priority Water Quality Problems

"High priority water quality problems" include:

- areas where sediment, nutrients, chemicals, or other pollutants discharge to Department of Natural Resources (DNR) designated protected waters, or waters identified as impaired on the state's impaired waters inventory.
- other high priority waters identified in the comprehensive local water plan, which is also the district's comprehensive plan.
- areas where surface water is discharged into a sinkhole or ground water.

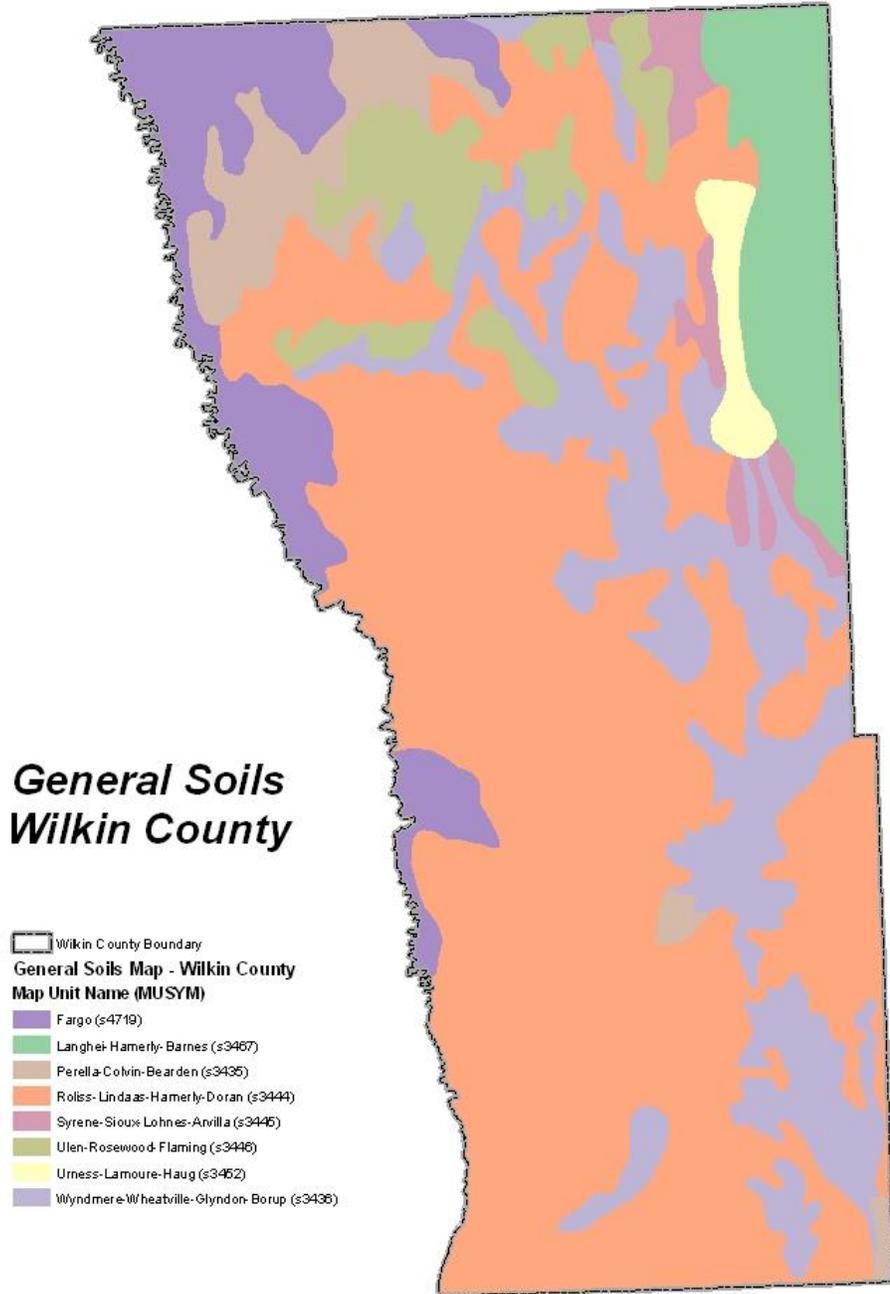
IMPAIRED WATERS MAP



State Cost Share Practice Summary for 2016

<u>Practice</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Field Windbreaks	7 sites	12,500.00
Abandoned Well Sealing	5 wells	1,000.00

General Soils Map



Fargo Association: Nearly level and gently sloping, poorly drained soils formed in clayey lacustrine sediments; on lake plains.

Langhei-Hamerly-Barnes Association: Nearly level to hilly, well drained soils formed in loamy or silty glacial till or lacustrine deposits; on till plains, lake plains, and moraines.

Perella-Clovin-Bearden Association: Nearly level and gently sloping, somewhat poorly drained and moderately well drained soils formed in silty or loamy lacustrine sediments; on lake plains.

Roliss-Lindaas-Hamerly-Doran Association: Nearly level, somewhat poorly drained and moderately well drained soils formed in loamy glacial till and in lacustrine sediments; on uplands, lake plains, and till plains.

Syrene-Sioux-Lohnes-Arvilla Association: Nearly level and gently sloping, moderately well drained, well drained, and excessively drained soils formed in sandy or loamy deposits; on lake plains and outwash plains.

Ulen-Rosewood-Flaming Association: Nearly level, somewhat poorly drained and moderately well drained soils formed in loamy or sandy sediments; on lake plains.

Urness-Haug Association: Level, very poorly drained soils formed in silty lacustrine sediments or organic deposits; on lake plains and ground moraines.

Wyndmere-Wheatville-Glyndon Association: Nearly level, somewhat poorly drained and moderately well drained soils formed in loamy or sandy lacustrine sediments or in glacial till; on lake plains.

**Annual Calendar of Events/Plan of Work
January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016**

January

1. Regular board meeting
2. Oath of office for newly elected supervisors
3. Election of officers
4. Pay national, state, and area dues
5. Review all memos of understanding
6. Review and revise budget if needed
7. Complete reporting in e-LINK
8. Prepare annual plan and submit to board for review and comments
9. District program/project promotion to landowners/operators
10. Meet with Buffalo River Watershed Districts

February

1. Regular board meeting
2. NACD annual meeting
3. Present/approve year-end financial reports and notes to financial statements
4. Approve annual plan of work
5. Cancel extra trees
6. Review and confirm tree orders and seed sales
7. District program/project promotion to landowners/operators
8. Complete BWSR challenge grant application(s)
9. Meet with MPCA to explore TMDL and WRAP opportunities for the district
10. Attend MASWCD Day at the Capitol

March

1. Regular board meeting
2. District program/project promotion to landowners/operators
3. Wolf Ridge Sponsorship
4. Complete supervisor vouchers
5. Attend MASWCD Area I meeting
6. Monitor DNR observation wells and Discovery Farm outlets
7. Field check/maintain equipment
8. WCMJPB meeting
9. Present annual report and plan to Wilkin County Commissioners
10. District program/project promotion to landowners/operators
11. Confirm MnDOT living snow fence site locations

April

1. Regular board meeting
2. Conduct Ladies Night program
3. Sponsor Soil and Water Stewardship Week and distribute material
4. Mail out tree pick-up post cards
5. Monitor DNR observation wells and Discovery Farm outlets
6. Sponsor Tom Gibson lyceums
7. Prepare tree cooler for planting stock
8. District program/project promotion to landowners/operators
9. Start planting trees and applying fabric
10. Field check/maintain equipment

May

1. Regular board meeting
2. Complete MASWCD resolutions for MASWCD area meeting
3. Coordinate Area I Envirothon with Southern Area 1 Districts
4. Plant trees & apply fabric
5. Plant grasses and forbs
6. Field check/maintain equipment
7. Monitor DNR observation wells and Discovery Farm outlets
8. District program/project promotion to landowners/operators

June

1. Regular board meeting
2. Complete supervisor vouchers
3. Attend MASWCD area I meeting
4. Prepare next fiscal year budget
5. WCMJPB meeting
6. Plant grasses and forbs
7. Complete tree planting, and tree fabric application
8. Field check/maintain equipment
9. Monitor DNR observation wells and Discovery Farm outlets
10. District program/project promotion to landowners/operators

July

1. Regular board meeting
2. Field check/maintain equipment
3. Monitor DNR observation wells and Discovery Farm outlets
4. District program/project promotion to landowners/operators
5. Attend county water plan meeting
6. Select outstanding conservation cooperator

August

1. Regular board meeting
2. Meet with county board to present budget
3. Field check/maintain equipment
4. Monitor DNR observation wells and Discovery Farm outlets
5. District program/project promotion to landowners/operators

September

1. Regular board meeting
2. Sponsor 5th grade conservation day
3. Review annual plan and calendar of work
4. Complete supervisor vouchers
5. Monitor DNR observation wells and Discovery Farm outlets
6. Submit DNR observation well data sheets
7. Field check/maintain equipment
8. District program/project promotion to landowners/operators

October

1. Regular board meeting
2. Coordinate Area I Envirothon with Southern Area 1 Districts
3. Set tree prices and order stock for next season
4. Monitor DNR observation wells and Discovery Farm outlets
5. Field check/maintain/clean field equipment
6. District program/project promotion to landowners/operators
7. Complete septic system continuing education classes as required.

November

1. Regular board meeting
2. Attend MASWCD area I meeting
3. Vote on MASWCD resolutions
4. Plant grasses and forbs (dormant seedings)
5. Conduct employee performance evaluations
6. Monitor DNR observation wells and Discovery Farm outlets
7. District program/project promotion to landowners/operators
8. Attend county water plan meeting

December

1. Regular board meeting
2. Attend MASWCD annual meeting
3. Review and approve employee salaries
4. Prepare Annual Report/Newsletter for January mailing
5. Complete supervisor vouchers
6. WCMJPB meeting
7. Monitor DNR observation wells and Discovery Farm outlets
8. Submit invoice and observation well sheets to DNR
9. Sign natural resources block grant application
10. District program/project promotion to landowners/operators

All programs and services of the Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, or handicap.

