

ANNUAL REPORT

Beltrami Soil & Water Conservation District
January 1, 2014–December 31, 2014

2014

Beltrami Soil & Water Conservation District 2014 Annual Report

701 Minnesota Avenue NW, Suite 113
Bemidji, MN 56601

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2014 SUPERVISORS, STAFF, AND PERSONNEL

BELTRAMI SWCD SUPERVISORS

Jay Frenzel, Chairman
Shane Bowe, Vice Chairman
Rob Knudson, Secretary
Ruth Ann Trask, Treasurer
Jeff Haack, Public Relations
Ray Hendrickson, Representative-Northwest Beltrami County

BELTRAMI SWCD STAFF

William Patnaude, District Manager
Brent Rud, Resource Specialist
Bill Best, Resource Specialist
Mary Schoenfeld, Office Specialist
Kathy Ruzicka, Office Specialist

NORTH CENTRAL MN SWCDS JOINT POWERS BOARD

William Westerberg, Conservation Engineer
Brad Kennedy - Conservation Technician

USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Larry Voltz, District Conservationist
Nate Brandt, Soil Conservation Technician
Patty Burns, Soil Conservationist / Tribal Liaison
Travis Doeden, Soil Conservationist

OTHER ASSISTING AGENCIES

MN BOARD OF WATER & SOIL RESOURCES

John Jaschke, Executive Director
Chad Severts, Board Conservationist

MN ASSOCIATION OF SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Mark Zabel, President
LeAnn Buck, Executive Director
Tom Schulz, District 8 Representative

USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Glen Kajewski, Area Conservationist
Don Baloun, State Conservationist

BELTRAMI COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Tim Sumner
Jack Frost
Richard Anderson
Jim Lucachick
Joe Vene

MISSION

Our mission is to provide comprehensive soil and water conservation services to private landowners in Beltrami County, Minnesota.

GOALS

1. Inform and educate the public and policy makers on environmental conservation issues.
2. Enhance and protect the quality of Beltrami County water resources.
3. Improve and protect the soils in Beltrami County
4. Promote and assist in sustainable forest management.

PURPOSE OF THE DISTRICT

The purpose of the District is to promote the adoption of sound water quality, proper land use, and soil conservation practices on all lands in the District in order to secure permanent and prosperous agriculture, tourism, and community development for the general welfare and security of the people of the District. The SWCD will utilize available technical, financial, and educational resources, and focus and coordinate them so they meet the needs of the local land user.

The District will solicit the assistance of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), and other agencies in developing technical recommendations for soil conservation practices and land use practices.

Priorities of work will be determined by the SWCD Board based upon the needs & available assistance.

DISTRICT POLICIES

A. DISTRICT PROCEDURES

The District is administered by four elected Supervisors and one appointed supervisor by the Red Lake Band of Chippewa. There are five officers: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and Public Relations officer. The Supervisors serve four-year terms. Monthly meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month, with the January meeting designated for organizational purposes. All meetings are held in the County Board Room at 701 Minnesota Avenue NW, Suite 108, Bemidji, MN and meetings are open to the public. Meeting agendas and minutes are posted to the district's website.

B. REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

Assistance is provided on a request basis. Anyone desiring cost-share technical assistance from

the District is required to sign a Cooperator Agreement form. This constitutes the official assistance request to the District for sound land use and signifies the applicant's desire to be a conservationist and steward of their land. In return for this assistance, the Supervisors request the Cooperator to support and encourage the use of various conservation techniques and to plan, carry out, and maintain a sound conservation program on their land.

C. INFORMATION PROGRAM

The District will promote an information program through use of local TV, radio stations, newspapers (articles and columns), school classes, lake associations, civic organizations, etc.

D. TECHNICAL POLICIES

The District has adopted the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide for conservation land treatments.

E. CONSERVATION PLANNING

It is the District's policy to try to provide every cooperator with conservation planning to assist them with making sustainable decisions on their land. These plans will be reviewed by the Board of Supervisors at their monthly meeting. Landowners will be encouraged to implement their plans on the land as soon as possible.

F. DISTRICT BUDGETS

The District Board will annually submit a budget request to the State Board of Water and Soil Resources and the County Board of Commissioners.

G. SERVICE CHARGES

No charges will be made for assistance provided by the NRCS personnel. However, a fee schedule has been adopted by the Board for time, materials and services provided by District staff.

H. COMBINED WORK PLAN

A Combined work Plan for the District and the County Environmental Services Department will be developed annually through the District Board of Supervisors, staff from the County Environmental Services and staff from the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The Combined Work Plan will be used to identify projects where environmental conservation practices can be applied.

I. ANNUAL REPORT

The District shall prepare an annual report showing the yearly accomplishments.

J. NONDISCRIMINATION

It is the policy of the Beltrami SWCD that all persons shall have equal opportunity and access to its programs and facilities without regard to race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, marital status, disability, handicap, or sexual orientation.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY BELTRAMI SWCD

- + Administer AgBMP low-interest Loan Program.
- + County designated employees for the MDA Noxious Weed Program. Provide program & technical assistance to municipality and township weed inspectors
- + Administration of funds from the State Cost-Share Program.
- + Administration of Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) and Permanent Wetland Preserves (PWP) Program.
- + Conservation information and materials available to church, civic, and other groups upon request.
- + Education awareness through County Fair and Community Education.
- + Envirothon information for educators.
- + Groundwater Well Monitoring Program
- + Information on renovation and weed control in conservation plantings.
- + Provide technical assistance for the Wetland Conservation Act and provide wetlands information and assistance to landowners and agencies.
- + Resource information and teaching guides available to aid students and teachers.
- + Resource assessment assistance available on request.
- + Serve as Host District for Non-Point Engineering Assistance Program.
- + Soils information and maps available.
- + Technical assistance available to individuals, groups, and committees for the promotion of conservation and the wise use of natural resources.
- + Silt curtain and tree planting machines rental program
- + Trees available for field windbreaks, shelterbelts, erosion control, reforestation, and wildlife plantings.
- + Use Geographic Information Systems to assist with resource decisions.
- + Volunteer Rainfall Monitoring Network.
- + Provide well-water testing information to individual homeowners.
- + Wood-ash utilization information and assistance.

SUPERVISORS AREAS

The District is divided into five areas of responsibility with one supervisor elected from each area. Nominations for supervisors will only be accepted from persons residing in the area in which the term is expiring. The nominated person must also be a resident of that area. Election of supervisors is by district-wide ballot. In 2014 the District Supervisors and their areas were:

District Area 1

Supervisor: Jay Frenzel

Townships: Battle, Birch Island, Cormant, Eland, Kelliher, Quiring, Red Lake, Shotley, Shooks, N. Waskish, S. Waskish, Woodrow, Unorganized Townships

Cities: Kelliher and Waskish

District Area 2

Supervisor: Rob Knudson

Townships: Birch, Brook Lake, Hines, Hornet, Langor, Moose Lake, Sugar Bush, Summit, Taylor, Ten Lake

Cities: Blackduck, Hines, Funkley

District Area 3

Supervisor: Ruth Trask

Townships: Alaska, Buzzle, Eckles, Grant Valley, Jones, Lammers, Liberty, Maple Ridge, Roosevelt

Cities: Pinewood, Solway, Wilton

District Area 4

Supervisor: Jeff Haack

Townships: Bemidji, Durand, Frohn, Hagali, Nebish, Northern, O'Brien, Port Hope, Turtle Lake, Turtle River

Cities: Bemidji, Puposky, Tenstrike, Turtle River

District Area 5

Supervisor: Shane Bowe (appointed position by the Red Lake Council)

Townships: Red Lake Indian Reservation

Cities: Red Lake, Redby, Ponemah

Northwest Area:

Liaison appointed by the SWCD representing northwest Townships: Ray Hendrickson

Townships: Lee, Hamre, Stenerson, Benville, Spruce Grove, Minnie, Northwood-unorganized, Big Grass unorganized, Winner-unorganized, Yale-unorganized

Beltrami SWCD is one of 9 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD Area VIII) in the north-central portion of Minnesota that meet about 4 times a year to discuss common resource management issues. The other counties are Cass, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Hubbard, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake of the Woods, and Wadena.



STAFF and ACTIVITY REPORT 2014

WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY PROTECTION PROGRAM

Comprehensive Local Water Management

- Provided technical assistance for the Wetland Conservation Act and wetland management planning effort
- Monitored 14 groundwater observation wells
- Provided assistance to lakeshore owners, groups, and association
- Continued educational efforts dealing with nutrient management, lakeshore management, and non-point source pollution
- Administered state cost-share program
- Prepared/submitted written materials, newsletters and news articles, television and radio interviews, and presentations to civic groups and students were used to deliver conservation and water quality protection messages.

Non-Point Engineering Assistance

In 1995, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) provided funding to the SWCD's in Minnesota to improve their technical capabilities by hiring registered engineers, and technicians to assist landowners with the design and construction of conservation practices. The North Central Minnesota SWCDs Joint Powers Board (NCMJPB) consists of the SWCDs in Beltrami, Cass, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Hubbard, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake of the Woods, and Wadena counties. The Beltrami SWCD serves as its host district. Here technical staff are headquartered and program administration is based. The 2014 technical staff consisted of Mr. William Westerberg (engineer) and Mr. Brad Kennedy (technician) who worked to meet the conservation needs of the area's landowners. This program expedites Beltrami County landowner's requests for conservation practices engineering design and construction assistance. Staff provided site evaluation assistance to 6 property owners. Survey and design completed on wetland banking project. Construction oversight and certification of Tower shoreline protection project on Movil Lake.

Groundwater Monitoring

In 2014 the SWCD continued to monthly monitor 14 observations wells for Beltrami County and the DNR Division of Waters. The readings are entered on-line into the MNDNR Ob-Well database.

DISTRICT CONSERVATION GRANTS

The District annually receives program funding from the Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR). The grant dollars are broken down into the following categories: Conservation Delivery, Easement Delivery, and Cost Share

- Conservation Delivery – these are placed into the general revenue account of the District. These monies are used for district expenses: Cooperative Agreement payment to the County, Board Meetings, dues, Insurance, etc.
- Easement Delivery – funds were applied to two onsite inspections on properties in the County which were previously awarded a Reinvest in Minnesota Conservation (RIM) Easement payment.
- Cost Share - projects that were constructed and certified for cost-share payment included:
 - Tower Shoreland Stabilization on Movil Lake (FY12) for 8,500.

EROSION CONTROL

In an effort to assist landowners with erosion concerns along lakeshore property, the District worked on a few shoreline re-vegetation projects. Some were a result of a pending permitting decision, a shoreland violation restoration order, or simply landowners who desired to implement effective conservation measures on their property. Additionally, the SWCD provides technical expertise to assist landowners in selecting appropriate erosion control methods for their construction projects.

FORAGE & PASTURE MANAGEMENT

Wood Ash Utilization

Forage production has been identified as the major cropping activity in Beltrami County. Many of the soils found in and around the County are such that they require high amounts of lime to raise the pH level for increased legume production. A substitute for lime is the wood ash found as a by-product at local panel board companies. Through cooperative efforts of the SWCD, MN Extension Service, Nor-Board Company, and MPCA, the Ash Utilization (approval process) program was formed. To expedite the approval process, MPCA has empowered the SWCD to analyze the landowner's site using MPCA guidelines, soils maps, and other information to make comments and or approvals for application of wood ash. In 2014 there were 22 landowners that made the request for approval to receive wood ash for alfalfa fields.

TREE PROGRAM

Approximately 188 persons purchased trees provided through the District Tree Program in 2014. Many participants were repeat customers who annually use this program to achieve their specific conservation goals. Approximately 20,700 trees were sold.

The District annually renews its Minnesota Tree Certification to assure that tree and shrub stock are of highest quality. Additional information is available on the SWCD website at <http://www.beltramiswcd.org>

EDUCATION

Red Lake Water Festival

District Staff participated in the annual Red Lake Water Festival held at the Concordia Language Village. This Water Festival is sponsored by the Red Lake Nation Department of Natural Resources. Students, teachers and chaperones from area schools participated. Students received hands-on education regarding nonpoint source and environmental pollution through two interactive contamination models. Students also had a race to remove non-point source pollution from storm drains and learned about onsite sewer systems, forestry fire impacts, air water quality, drinking water, ground water, source water protection, water conservation, and water cycles.

2014 Area 8 Envirothon

Soil & Water Conservation work together annually to put on our area's Envirothon. The Envirothon was held at Lake Bemidji State Park. Staff assisted with setup/tear down, judging, and traffic.

Civic Groups

SWCD staff assisted with technical and administrative needs of a variety of civic groups such as Beltrami County Lakes and Rivers Association, Friends of Lake Bemidji, Chamber of Commerce, Turtle River Watershed Association, and others concerning conservation, stream monitoring, and groundwater protection.

Resource Management Professionals

The District Manager and staff continue to meet at least once a month with NRCS and Northwest Joint Powers Board Staff to review events and programs each are working on. These meetings help to build a partnership among resource managers. Complex issues are discussed at these meetings involving resource issues in the County. With the combined skills and experience of staff, issues can be addressed and operational decisions can be made. These meetings also provide the base for reviewing the combined work plan, addressing what is and is not working, what changes need to be made, and what new objectives should be added to the work plan.

J.W. Smith Biomes

Staff worked with the ISD 31 maintenance supervisor, MNDNR Forestry, & NRCS to assess the condition of the trees and identify noxious/invasive weeds. A meeting was held to discuss the short and long term maintenance goals plus future use by teacher & students.

Highway 197 Vegetative Restoration Project Signage

Staff completed the MNDOT grant to have signs designed, fabricated, and installed on the south shore of Lake Bemidji. The signs were assembled and installed by MNDOT in September.

DISTRICT BOARD MEETINGS

Beltrami SWCD Board Meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month. Meetings were held in all months except for November. Agendas and minutes are sent to supervisors, other agencies and posted on the Soil & Water Conservation District's website. Local newspapers and radio stations announce the meeting dates.

RAIN GAUGE REPORTING SYSTEM

Special gauges and forms are provided to 20+ Beltrami County residents participating in the statewide recording of precipitation amounts on a daily basis. These readings are sent to the SWCD office each month. After being recorded for District use they are forwarded to the state climatologist. Rainfall and temperature information was used by several agencies to determine crop loss, disaster aid, stream flow predictions, etc. University, high school and elementary students often request information for research projects. Many of the monitors supply additional weather related information.

The Beltrami SWCD Board of Supervisors and staff would like to thank the participating monitors. Without these people assisting, the program would not have the success that it currently has. Please check the State Climatology Office website at <http://climate.umn.edu/> for additional monitoring information.

SUMMARY

There continues to be a growing awareness of this area's abundant natural resources that is drawing increasing numbers of visitors and new residents to Beltrami County. In addition, a stable, improving economic outlook has prompted many visitors to the area to become local landowners as they purchase recreational or retirement property. This increased investment in the area needs to be accompanied by a similar acknowledgement of stewardship responsibilities. Current landowners must strive to exhibit the stewardship principles they have practiced for so many years, and convey their love for this land to our newest landowners. By working together in recognition of the many abundant, yet fragile Beltrami County resources, this legacy will exist for our subsequent generations.

The SWCD Board is committed to providing environmental conservation services for private landowners. The Beltrami SWCD Supervisors and staff are committed to working with all Beltrami County landowners and local units of government to identify environmentally sound solutions to all local resource issues, and assist with promoting the stewardship concept.