

Activity 4 – Non-Structural Ag BMP

Process of Submitting Project Requests

Funds will annually be allocated to each District based on the percentage of acres the LSCW encompasses to provide program payments to administer within their county for the non-structural ag BMP practices, allocation as follows:

1. Anoka SWCD \$10,000
2. Chisago SWCD \$40,000
3. Isanti SWCD \$10,000
4. Pine SWCD \$10,000
5. Washington CD \$30,000

Districts wishing to utilize WBIF funds for implementing agricultural non-structural BMPs will submit a project request form for the allocation of funding to the Fiscal Agent (Chisago SWCD), including local approved non-structural ag BMP cost share policy and JAA with submittal.

Individual Districts will approve or disapprove contracts with interested land occupiers according to their local policies and following the most up to date Grants Administration Manual and the Watershed-Based Implementation Funding Policy –FY20-21. A District may request additional funds if available in another District of which funds are not encumbered, through a request to the Chisago SWCD and approval of the contributing District.

The Districts will abide by the most up to date Grants Administration Manual and the Watershed-Based Implementation Funding Policy –FY20-21 guidelines and their local policies. This attachment will be updated to reflect future Watershed-Based Implementation Funding Policies.

Processing Applications - Conservation staff will use their local non-structural ag BMP policy to rank and select non-structural BMP projects to be submitted to the District the project is located in. Reference Section VII.B of the Lower St. Croix Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for targeting process and Appendix C for scoring projects.

Ag Priority Areas

- Tier 1: Rock Lake, Rock Creek, Sunrise River and tributaries, St. Croix River tributaries with direct discharge (Rock, Rush, Goose, Lawrence, Browns, and Trout Brook, Creeks, and small creeks south of Lawrence Creek and north of Valley Branch).
- Tier 2: lakes that drain to St. Croix tributaries.
 - Rush and Goose Lakes in Chisago County
 - Forest and Comfort Lakes in CLFLWD (drain to Sunrise River)
- Projects may also occur at other priority waters as identified in Table 5-2 and Table 5-3 of the LSC CWMP. The project ranking subcommittee will also consider CWMP Figure 5-1 Vulnerable Groundwater in Agricultural Areas when evaluating potential projects.

Program Requirements

Cost share is available for implementing non-structural BMPs that have erosion control or water quality improvement benefits in accordance with the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Watershed-Based Implementation Funding

Policy –FY20-21. Non-structural BMPs will be planned and implemented according to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) standards and specifications found on the Electronic Field Office Technical Guide (EFOTG).

Cost Share Contract:

A contract between the District and land occupier receiving state funds is required to provide a legal standing to ensure practices are installed and maintained according to approved standards and specifications.

All practices must be consistent with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) or be professionally accepted engineering or ecological practices. Design standards for all practices must include specifications for operation and maintenance for the effective life of the given practice, including an inspection schedule and procedure. Technical services will be provided by local SWCD staff with appropriate job approval authority; conservation partners with appropriate job approval authority (such as: Natural Resources Conservation Service); or a NRCS approved Technical Service Provider (TSP). Non-structural vegetative practices must follow the Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines from WBIF policy.

Review of proposed practice(s) with client including technical information (implementation requirements, seed mixes, design quantities, O&M, etc.) and programmatic requirements (length of contract/lifespan, cost share rates, maximum payments, noncompliance, etc.) and agreement of client will be required prior to submitting the project for recommendation to the local SWCD.

The local SWCD from the county the practice is implemented in will be responsible for the operation and maintenance (O&M) inspections.

Incentives to install or adopt land management practices must have a minimum duration of 3 years. Contract compliance will follow the most up to date Grants Administrative Manual and the District's local policy.

Rates and General Requirements:

Cost share rates will comprise of a flat per acre rate for all non-structural BMP practices based on the Minnesota NRCS Practice Average Annual Cost Information Spreadsheet FY2018 and the Practice Cost Information Workbook Tool 2019 found in the EFOTG. Practices will be planned for 3 years of implementation and the maximum total WBIF per contract will follow local policies. Local policies will dictate whether annual or one-time payments will be made to land occupiers. Practices may be implemented on the same acres for the 3 year duration (required for nutrient management and prescribed grazing), practices may move with the rotation but must implement the same amount or greater acres in years 2 and 3, or two or more practices may be implemented on the same acres for the 3 year period alternating years (ex. Plant cover crops after corn harvest, no-till soybeans the following year). Eligibility requirements include that planned practices are newly adopted; not previously implemented on the acres by the current owner/operator and did not previously meet NRCS standards and specifications.

- **Cover Crops** - Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 340
 - 1-2 species \$50/acre/year
 - 3+ species \$60/acre/year
 - Implementation can occur on different acres within the three-year contract or on the same acres consecutively
- **Nutrient Management** - Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 590
 - \$20/acre/year
 - Implemented on the same acres annually
- **Prescribed Grazing** - Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 528
 - \$40/acre/year
 - Implemented on the same acres annually

- **Residue and Tillage Management – No-Till & Strip Till** - Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 329 for No-Till/Strip-Till
 - \$20/acre/year
 - Implementation can occur on different acres within the three-year contract or on the same acres consecutively
- **Residue and Tillage Management - Conservation Tillage** - Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 345 for Conservation Till
 - \$10/acre/year
 - Residue cover following a corn crop at the time of planting the subsequent crop must be 60% or greater.
 - Residue cover following a soybean crop at the time of planting the subsequent crop must be 30% or greater.
 - Residue cover following a small grain crop at the time of planting the subsequent crop must be 60% or greater.
 - Implementation can occur on different acres within the three-year contract or on the same acres consecutively

Project Selection Criteria

Districts will follow their respective non-structural ag BMP policy for selecting projects of which are to be located in the ag priority locations and following the Grants Administration Manual and the Watershed-Based Implementation Funding Policy –FY20-21. Reference Section VII.B of the Lower St. Croix Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for targeting process and Appendix C for scoring projects.