

# Carlton SWCD Strategic Plan 2020



Board Members: Barb Dahl, Kim Samuelson, Robert Fox, Russel Kurhajetz, Richard Dalen

Staff: Julie Radovich, Kelly Smith, Brad Matlack, Ryan Clark, Chris Gass, Melanie Bomier

Compiled during Carlton SWCD Strategic Planning Retreat  
July 19, 2019 Oldenberg House, Carlton, MN  
Facilitated by Kim Boyce

Plan drafted by SWCD Manager based on planning session outcomes  
Reviewed at all staff - all board session October 17, 2019  
Recommended for adoption by unanimous consensus

**Adopted by the SWCD Board at the November 12, 2019 board meeting**

The afternoon of the planning retreat included an active discussion about the future direction of the Carlton SWCD. Several key topics were “nominated” as possible top priorities for future SWCD work. After a discussion about the nominated topics, the group identified four major areas where future work would be focused – the desired priority areas of work for the SWCD. These four areas were identified as being consistent with the mission of the Carlton SWCD. The results are included in the following table.

<b>Nominations for possible top future priorities</b> (not listed in any priority order)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Water Quality</b></li> <li>• <b>Agricultural Conservation Practices</b></li> <li>• <b>Feedlot Technical Assistance</b></li> <li>• <b>Forestry Implementation</b></li> <li>• <b>Pollinator Enhancement</b></li> <li>• <b>Soil Health</b></li> <li>• <b>Education Outreach</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Farmers/Agriculture Sector</b></li> <li>○ <b>Youth</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Urban Conservation Practices</b></li> <li>• <b>Habitat and Bio-diversity</b></li> <li>• <b>Watershed Planning</b></li> </ul>
<b>Four Priority Areas of Future Work (next 3-5 years)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Agricultural Conservation Practices</b></li> <li>• <b>Forestry Planning and Implementation</b></li> <li>• <b>Urban Conservation Practices</b></li> <li>• <b>Watershed Planning</b></li> </ul>

Following the identification of the four major areas for future work, the participants divided into small groups to create an initial outline of the details associated with each of the four major topics. These outlines will serve as a starting point for the Carlton SWCD to move forward with their work in these four priority areas. Each small group was asked to draft responses to more detailed questions including; desired outcomes, suggested measurement strategies, identifying groups or individuals with primary responsibility for the work, the overall timeframe, types of resources and investments required, likely steps and benchmarks, and possible changes needed to SWCD policies and processes. Each small group shared their initial results to the full group, followed by a few minutes for questions, clarifications and additions.

## Desired Outcome: Ag Conservation Practices

Strategic Planning 2019

### Goal of Ag Assistance:

Implementing more ag conservation practices to minimize of erosion and nutrient runoff and improved water quality and soil health.

Be the “go to” experts for ag conservation practices – more than just an office to apply for cost-share programs.

Core Services	Keep Doing	Changes needed	Action Items	Measures of Success
AWQCP	Y	None		Implementation of more ag practices
General Ag Technical Assistance	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More JAA for ag Practices</li> <li>• Certification in Resource Management System (RMS) level planning</li> </ul>	<p>Begin offering farm planning for conservation. Try to incorporate soil health, weed control, pollinators, silvopasture, alley cropping..... into a Farm Plan.</p> <p>Conduct outreach on SWCD Farm Planning Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in ag cooperators</li> <li>• Complete 2 farm plans per year</li> <li>• Conduct 2 outreach campaigns per year</li> </ul>
Soil Health	Y		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ramp up education and implementation of soil health practices.</li> <li>• Develop access to technical soil health assistance. Redefine Extension partnership with new staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Soil health practices on 2 farms per year</li> </ul>
Buffer Compliance	Y	None		
Invasives/noxious weeds			Ramp up education and implementation of weed control practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement 4 weed control practices per year</li> </ul>
Pollinator Habitat			Ramp up education and implementation of pollinator habitat practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement 4 pollinator practices per year</li> </ul>

## Agriculture Program Procedures

The face of technical assistance to ag producers in Carlton County has seen significant changes in 2017 – 2019.

- Declining availability of NRCS engineering for ag practices.
- Declining NRCS Technical Assistance due to staffing reductions
- Change in staffing for Carlton County Bi-Products program
- Growing AWQCP program through the SWCD

These changes point to a void of services that present opportunities for program expansion at the SWCD. With these opportunities come serious challenges.

- Expertise to guide ag producers through the technical aspects of soil health, weed control grazing management, and other ag practices
- Staff capacity to devote to ramping up ag conservation practice planning and implementation assistance
- Redefining the ag partnership in Carlton County. SWCD's AWQCP Specialists works to fill identified void in assistance to producers for area wide coverage.

Initial Site visit is always free. Decide what assistance is needed.

- Farm plan
- Individual practice plan SWCD Cost Share – NRCS Cost Share – MDA Cost Share
- AWQCP Certification

The SWCD's Ag Position is the lead contact for assisting ag producers in Carlton County.

### **Funding through Capacity and MDA**

## Desired Outcome: Forestry Planning and Implementation

Strategic Planning 2019

### Goal of Forestry Assistance:

Educate, energize and enable forest landowners to achieve health forests, and improve forest diversity.

Core Services	Keep Doing	Changes needed	Action Items	Measures of Success
Forest Stewardship Planning	Y	Streamline invoicing and collection See new procedure	Continue	20 per year
Forestry Practice Planning	Y	Waive fee based on commitment to implement See new procedure	Continue	20 per year
Forestry Practice Implementation	Y	See new procedure	Ramp up – implementation should match planning	20 per year
Forestry Outreach	Y	Incorporate “Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively” (TELE) into outreach efforts. Includes: Office Administrator Outreach Coord. Forestry Tech.	Ramp up outreach ( <u>Coordinated with SWCD outreach staff and incorp. TELE</u> ) 3 on planning and implementation 3 on choice of subject	Increase from 3 to 6 and track responses in database.
Kettle River Woodland Council liaison	Y	none		
SWCD Forestry Association liaison	Y	none		
		<b>Who is involved</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Measures of Success</b>
<b>New Initiatives</b>				
Develop neighborhood forestry ambassadors		Office Administrator Outreach Coord. Forestry Tech.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a fact sheet on becoming an ambassador</li> <li>• Develop a list of ambassadors</li> <li>• Work with Woodland Council and other partners to plan activities (4/year)</li> <li>• Qualifications???</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain 10 forest ambassadors</li> <li>• Hold 4 events</li> </ul>
Explore ways to improve markets for wood products and private forest product utilization		Manager Forestry Technician SWCD Board Consultant CC Economic developmt. NRRI	Conduct a business analysis and plan for a biomass producing program to utilize low grade forest products	Analysis report by January 2025

## Forestry Program Procedures

Stewardship Planning and Practice Planning Procedure and Fee for service billing and payment.

Initial Site visit is always free. Decide what assistance is needed.

- Stewardship plan
- CAP 106 Plan (NRCS)
- Individual practice plan

The Forestry Position is the lead SWCD staff person for forestry assistance.

### **Funding for primary work follows programs**

Stewardship planning - Fee for Service – Plan is paid for in first or second year of Tax incentive program enrollment

CAP 106 Plan (NRCS) - Assignment of payment through NRCS

Individual practice plan - Currently grants but can shift to assignment of payment from NRCS

## Desired Outcome: Urban Conservation Practices

Strategic Planning 2019

### Goal of Urban Conservation Program:

- Outreach, education and influencing residents and public staff/officials.
- to expand and “market” urban conservation and outreach.
- to expand green infrastructure and better management/implementation practices.

<b>Core Services</b>	<b>Keep Doing</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Measures of Success</b>
Conservation Planning Assistance to Municipalities	Start doing	Outreach to municipalities on SWCD services  Participation in city planning/development conversation and decision making	Conduct 1 SWCD services awareness outreach campaign per year  Attend 2 city meetings per year
Conservation Practice Implementation technical and Financial Assistance		Plan, design, and implement 2 urban runoff control practices  Continue Adopt a drain program	Implement 2 urban runoff control practices per year  Add 5 drains to adopted list per year
Promote SWCD’s Urban Conservation Program		Work with Outreach Coordinator to promote completed projects and hold events to promote Urban BMPs	Hold 2 events per year

Alyssa will lead with other staff help

## Desired Outcome: Watershed Planning

Strategic Planning 2019

### Goal of Watershed Planning:

- A One Watershed - One Plan in every watershed in Carlton County.
- Targeted and measurable priorities.
- Money and resources for implementation.
- Buy-in from the public

Core Services	Keep Doing	Changes needed	Action Items	Measures of Success
Participation in Watershed planning efforts.	Y	None		Completed WRPAS, TMDLS, 319, and 1W1P to cover entire County
Grant Writing for larger Projects	Y	None		Implementation of large projects for Improved watershed health
Civic Engagement	Y	Funding shifts to 1W1P implementation  Increased outreach to landowners on SWCD programs and conservation practices - via media, social media, events, signage.	<u>Short term:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set aside 30 hours for Melanie to collaborate on outreach with all SWCD programs and staff.</li> <li>• Continue Chris's position until end of 2019.</li> </ul> <u>Long Term:</u> define this role in PD and fund with partnerships/contracts/1W1P implementation funding/and capacity funding.	Develop more demonstration projects with SWCD signage in high traffic areas to increase public visibility. Use videos and webinars to more actively share success stories and examples of programs.  More time for design staff to implement practices.
Water Monitoring	Y	Limited to follow up monitoring to pinpoint water quality issues found in planning efforts: WRAPS, TMDLs and 1W1Ps	Develop partnerships to fund limited monitoring schedule	Further documentation of water quality and trends in Carlton County waters
Private landowner Culvert Assistance	Approved by board in July 2019	None		Provide assistance to private landowners as needed.

Water resources position will lead

Watershed Program Procedures: The only procedural change in this area relates to interaction of all staff with Water Resources staff Chris is working to define future funding for a focused outreach position.