

2010 Annual Plan

Ramsey Conservation District

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Ramsey Conservation District 2010 Annual Work Plan

Approved by the District Board on – February 12, 2010

I. Introduction and Overview

The Ramsey Conservation District (District) is a political subdivision of the State of Minnesota established to assist the citizens of Ramsey County conserve natural resources. The District is one of 91 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, (conservation districts), within our State.

Leadership and governance of the District is provided by five elected officials called “Supervisors”. The role of the District Supervisors’ is to develop policy, prioritize long-range plans for natural resource conservation programs, prepare an annual budget and work plan, and acquire the resources needed to implement natural resource conservation programs. The District does not have taxing or regulatory authorities and must rely on partnerships with other governmental agencies to fund and implement its conservation programs. Our primary partners are: Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), Ramsey County Board of Commissioners, US Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Metropolitan Conservation Districts (MCDs), seven water management Organizations (WMOs) that have territory in Ramsey County, and municipalities within Ramsey County.

It is the Mission of the District to protect and improve Ramsey County’s natural resources and in so doing, improve the quality and sustainability of life for our citizens.

Guiding Principles for District Programs:

To achieve our mission, the District has adopted this Annual Plan of Work for the period of January, 2010 through January, 2011. This work plan can be amended by the District Board of Supervisors at anytime during the year.

A. District Organization

District Board

Carrie Wasley, Chair

Mara Humphrey, Vice Chair

Margaret Behrens, Secretary, Public Relations & Information

Karen Eckman, Treasurer

Nick Quade, Member

The District Board has formed committees to assist in carrying -out District business

Annual Report/Comprehensive Plan	All Members of the Board
Budget /Finance	Wasley and Eckman
Personnel	Humphrey and Wasley
Metro Conservation Districts	Eckman and Wasley
Rice Creek Watershed District Citizen Advisory Committee	Quade
Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization	Behrens
Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District Advisory Board	Wasley and Humphrey
Capitol Region Watershed District Advisory Committee	Eckman and Wasley
Legislative Committee	All Members of the Board
Ramsey County League of Local Governments	Behrens and Humphrey

As of January 8, 2010, the Board of Supervisors will hold their regular meets at 11:30 am on the 2nd Friday of each month. Notice of the meetings will be posted on the District's web-site www.ramseyconservation.org and at the District office. All regularly scheduled meetings will be held at the SWCD office, 1425 Paul Kirkwold Drive, Arden Hills, MN 55112. The District Board meeting date is subject to change by the District Board. Special meetings will be scheduled as needed.

B. Staff Resources Available for Implementing Conservation Programs

3 full-time staff (3.0 FTE), one part-time staff (.8 FTE), and 1 summer internship or temporary part-time employee- (.35 FTE) (mid-March through end August) are employed by the District to provide technical assistance for conservation program delivery. The District also utilizes staff services from the NRCS (.05 FTE) and staff services from the MCD (.31 FTE) to help in carrying out the conservation programs outlined in the plan. Collectively, 4.5 FTE will be utilized to carry-out District programs. **FTE = Full-time Equivalency staff**

District Staff:

Tom Petersen, District Manager, wetland specialist, and erosion control inspector (1.0 FTE)

Ann WhiteEagle, Office Manager and rain gauge network coordinator (.8 FTE)

Mike Goodnature, Conservationist Specialist (1.0 FTE)

Ryan Johnson, Urban Conservation BMP Specialist (1.0 FTE)

One Student Intern or temporary part-time employee (.35 FTE)

The District’s programs also benefit from many volunteers. The District currently has 60 volunteer rain gaugers, a retired geologist that measures 15 deep aquifer monitoring wells on a monthly basis, and countless un-compensated hours volunteered by the District Board of supervisors and District staff.

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Michelle Wohlers, District Conservationist (housed at the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District in Farmington, MN) .05 FTE

Metropolitan Conservation Districts (MCD)

Landscape Restoration Specialists .31 FTE - Available for stream bank, lakeshore and rain garden designs and implementation, urban watershed analysis for storm water retro-fit, as well as educational presentations for the use of native plants to conserve water quality and control soil erosion.

Non-Point Engineering Assistance Program – The MCDs receives \$150,000 per year from the BWSR for the purchase of consulting engineering services to design and supervise the construction of conservation practices. The District will identify potential projects and seek funding from the grant on a case-by-case basis.

C. FUNDS NEEDED TO EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT THE 2009 WORK PLAN

Note: Monetary values are in thousands

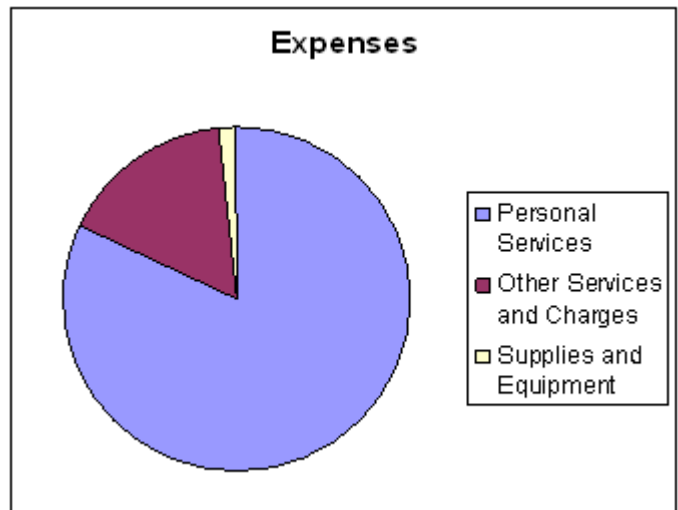
Operational Budget:

Personal Services-\$275.886 (82%)

Other services and charges-\$55.654 (16.5%)

Supplies and Equipment- \$5.55 (1,5%)

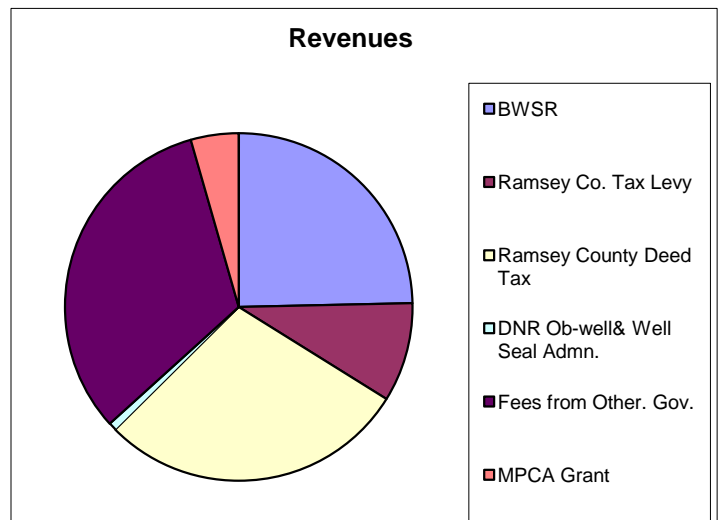
Total- \$337.090



Operational Revenues:

MN BWSR Grant and Aid - \$83.083 (24.6%)
Ramsey Co. Tax-levy-\$31.058 (9.2%)
Ramsey County Agricultural Conservation Fees (Deed-Tax) -\$96.749 (28.7%)
DNR Ob-well Contract and well sealing administration- \$2.5 (<1%)
Fees from Other Govts.-\$108.7 (32.2%)
MPCA Grant -\$15.00 (4.4%)

TOTAL- \$337.090



Cost-share Revenues:

Each year the BWSR provides grants to the 91 SWCDs to carry-out conservation practice cost-share programs. As of January 2010, the District has approximately \$140,000 available to cost-share with property owners needing shoreline restoration and other erosion control and water quality protection conservation practices. The District anticipates additional conservation practice cost-share revenues as the State “rolls-out” the newly passed conservation sales tax revenues in the coming months and years.

D. EQUIPMENT/ Software NEEDS and Ownership

An inventory of existing equipment is available at the District office. New equipment will be purchased as needed. Identified for purchase in 2010 are: 1 Annual ArcGIS license and WinSLAMM software for assessing pollutant loading in watersheds. All computers and software are owned and supported by the Ramsey County Information Services Department. Equipment includes, survey rods and instruments, soils probes, digital cameras, and audio visual projectors.

The District rents a vehicle from the Ramsey County Public Works Department motor pool for use on approved District business, otherwise, District staff are expected to utilize their personal vehicles for all District business. District staff and RCD Supervisors are reimbursed for mileage at the rate authorized by the IRS.

E. Anticipated RCD Conservation Partners in 2010

Organization	Provides the District with Financial Assistance	Provides the District with Technical Assistance	Provides the District with Organizational Assistance
U.S.D.A. , Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)		✓	
Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources	✓	✓	✓
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	✓	✓	
Minnesota Department of Agriculture		✓	
Minnesota Department of Health		✓	
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	✓	✓	
Minnesota Association of Conservation Districts			✓
Metropolitan Council		✓	
Metro-Conservation Districts	✓	✓	
Ramsey County	✓	✓	✓
Cities of Shoreview, Arden Hills, and Falcon Heights	✓		
Rice Creek Watershed District (WD)	✓		
Ramsey-Washington Metro WD	✓		
Capitol Region WD	✓		
Vadnais Lake Watershed Management Organization (WMO)	✓		
Grass Lake WMO	✓		
Valley Branch WD	✓		

F. District Natural Resource Conservation Goals

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|-----------------------|--|
| Goal Number 1- | Protect and improve Water Quality (surface and ground) |
| Goal Number 2- | Preserve, protect, expand, and enhance wildlife habitat, urban green-space, and natural ecosystems |
| Goal Number 3- | Explore opportunities to enhance and improve the efficiency of delivering natural resource conservation services to the citizens of Ramsey County |
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Goal Number 1

Protect and Improve Water Quality (surface and ground)

Objective 1: Protect groundwater quality and quantity - Revise and implement the *Ramsey County Groundwater Protection Plan* to insure a sustainable potable water supply.

- Secure Ramsey County Board adoption of the revised *Ramsey County Groundwater Protection Plan*
- Participate in the Ramsey County Board's groundwater policy workshop(s), in early 2010, serving as a technical and policy advisor. Promote the County's adoption of the Plan, seek dedicated/stable long-term funding for plan implementation, and edit the draft plan as needed to secure County adoption.
- Complete the final State Agency review/BWSR approval process, Regardless of whether the County Board determines that it will adopt the revised plan,
- Promote the RCD's leadership position, with Ramsey County or a confederation of local governmental units that wish to proceed collectively for groundwater protection in coordination of Plan implementation.
 - ❖ Seek MPCA grant funding to: 1. inventory and map sub-surface stormwater infiltration systems to assist emergency response personnel protect groundwater from chemical spills that enter the stormwater conveyance systems. 2. Expand groundwater elevation monitoring network. 3. Monitor groundwater quality.
 - ❖ Seek funding from Ramsey County (Neighborhood Development Block Grant) and/or other sources to implement a suburban-wide abandoned well sealing cost-share program.

Estimated FTE = .2

Objective 2: Protect Surface Water Quality Protection – Prevent soil erosion, its pollution of water resources, and degradation of storm water conveyance systems.

- Inspect permitted construction sites, in the cities of Shoreview, Arden Hills and Falcon Heights for compliance with city erosion and sediment control rules and regulations (estimated .15 FTE).
- Market District erosion and sediment control services to cities within Ramsey County.
- Continue with the Long and McCarron’s Lakes shoreline stabilization projects. The District has approx. \$130,000 in cost-share funding for this program and anticipates assisting 20 property owners install shoreline conservation practices this year.
- Help land owners with erosion problems seeking assistance from the District to identify the cause/source and control of soil erosion. We provide technical assistance and cost-share assistance for the installation of general soil conservation practices. The District has \$9,000 in State cost-share funding for this program. (.15 FTE) needed to implement this program. The District anticipates assisting two landowners with non-lakeshore soil erosion problems.
- In cooperation with the VLAWMO, implement a sub-watershed stormwater retro-fit analysis study for Lambert Creek (.2 FTE).
- Through partnerships with several (WMOs) we administrate and provide technical assistance for storm water management best management practice (BMP) cost-share programs. We assist property owners install conservation practices to manage storm water runoff from their properties. WMO cost-share funds will be utilized, by the District, to leverage matching cost-share funds from State, regional, and Federal agencies.
- The District will participate in several public information events/workshops to promote rainwater gardens for storm water management (.2 FTE).
- Manage a 60 member volunteer rain gage network, reporting data to the MN Climatologist (.1 FTE).
- Ramsey County Public Works will utilize District staff to design storm water infiltration practices to reduce storm water pollution from road improvement projects.
- Seek opportunities to assist 1 city’s inventory stormwater conveyance systems and compile annual MS4 permit reports.

Estimated FTE = .9

Goal Number 2

Preserve, protect, expand, and enhance wildlife habitat, urban green-space, and natural ecosystems

Objective 1: Protect native ecosystems by preventing the spread of invasive plant species and encouraging the use of native plants through cost-share projects and educational opportunities.

- The District belongs to “Blue Thumb”, an aggregate of metro-area conservation organization that promote the use of native plants for the protection of water resources and control of non-point source pollution, volunteering District staff and Supervisor time at various and sundry public events. (30 hours of district staff/board volunteer time required)
- We will sponsor workshops supporting the concept of sustainable land use and water quality protection

Objective 2: Protect and restore wetlands to preserve and better utilize the biological treatment capacities wetlands can provide to urban storm water treatment, prevent flooding, promote groundwater recharge, and create aquatic wildlife habitats. MN Rule 8420 requires that soil and water conservation districts assist the DNR enforce the Wetland conservation Act and advise local units of government administrate the Wetland Conservation Act.

- Implement all provisions required of soil and water conservation districts as prescribed in the MN Wetland Conservation Act. (assist DNR enforce the law, consult with local units of government administrating the law).
- Serve as a “clearinghouse” for questions the public may have regarding the WCA.
- Manage an administrative services cost-share program (funded by BWSR) providing reimbursement to local governmental units administrating the MN WCA.
- Report WCA administration and wetland impact statistics to the MN BWSR. (Staff .15 FTE).
- Seek grants to Geo-reference and 1991 aerial photos to aid in the enforcement of the MN WCA. (Utilize the services of the Ramsey County Surveyors Office to provide mapping product. Funded by \$15,000 grant from Ramsey county GIS Users Group and local governmental units administrating the MN Wetland conservation Act).
- Staff will attend WCA technical, administrative and enforcement training.
- Advise the DNR regarding permit requests to impact “Waters of the State”.
- Review and comment CRWD wetland management plan.

Goal Number 3
Explore opportunities to enhance and improve the efficiency of delivering natural resource conservation services to the citizens of Ramsey County.

Objective 1: Explore and assess opportunities to merge RCD staff resources with Ramsey County staff resources.

Discuss staff merge options with County officials as a component of revising the RCD's Comprehensive Plan.

G. Overview of Conservation Practice Cost-Share Programs Offered by the District

The District will promote and/or manage several cost-share programs for the construction of natural resource conservation practices. Most of the cost-share funding is provided to the District by the MN BWSR. However, several water management organizations work through the RCD to fund conservation projects with their cost-share funds.

BWSR Cost-Share funding

BWSR provides cost-share funding to the RCD through annual contributions (on average \$10,000) and through competitive special project grant allocations (\$0 to \$250,000). The District is allowed to utilize up to 20% of this funding to cover the cost of technical and administrative services associated with the expenditure of these funds in 2009, the RCD will be administrating/utilizing over \$250,000 in these funds.

BWSR Cost-share Program is administered by the SWCD. The following practices are eligible for 75% cost-share:

- Critical Area Planting
- Diversions
- Field Windbreaks
- Shelterbelt
- Grass Waterway
- Wastewater and Feedlot Runoff Control
- Filter Strips
- Sediment Basins
- Stream bank & Shore land Protections
- Strip-cropping
- Terraces

WMO Cost-share funding

The District has partnerships with several WMOs where-by District staff work with land owners to install conservation practices and the WMOs provide cost-share assistance to the landowner. On average, the WMOs provide \$90,000 per year in cost-share assistance through the District to Ramsey county residents.