

SWCD Aid Utilization Guidelines & 2024 Annual Plan



Guidelines approved by Ramsey County Board on November 28, 2023

**RAMSEY COUNTY GUIDELINES ON USE OF
SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT AID PAYMENTS
Minn. Stat. § 477A.23, subd. 4(b)**

State Soil & Water Conservation District Aid payments will be used by Ramsey County to carry out duties as outlined in Minn. Stat. § 103C.332, subd. 1:

- (1) respond to and provide technical and financial assistance to landowners to maintain and improve the quality, quantity, distribution, and sustainability of natural resources, including surface water, groundwater, soil, and ecological resources;
- (2) provide technical assistance in implementing the soil erosion law under sections [103F.401](#) to [103F.48](#);
- (3) arrange for employees to serve on technical evaluation panels to implement the wetland laws as required under section [103G.2242](#);
- (4) locally administer the reinvest in Minnesota reserve program under section [103F.515](#) and rules adopted thereunder, using knowledge of local resources to manage each easement to maximize environmental benefits;
- (5) participate in administering the Wetland Conservation Act as provided under sections [103G.221](#) to [103G.2375](#), either in an advisory capacity or as the designated local government unit administering the program;
- (6) participate in the local water management program under chapter 103B, either in an advisory capacity or as the designated local government unit administering the program;
- (7) participate, as appropriate, in the comprehensive watershed management planning program under section [103B.801](#);
- (8) participate in disaster response efforts as provided in chapter 12A;
- (9) provide technical recommendations to the Department of Natural Resources on general permit applications under section [103G.301](#);
- (10) provide technical assistance and local administration of the agricultural water quality certification program under sections [17.9891](#) to [17.993](#);
- (11) provide technical assistance for the agricultural land preservation program under chapter 40A, where applicable;
- (12) maintain compliance with section [15.99](#) for deadlines for agency action;
- (13) cooperate to the extent possible with federal, state, and local agencies and with private organizations to avoid duplicating and to enhance implementing public and private conservation initiatives within the jurisdiction of the district.

In carrying out the above duties, Ramsey County will use state aid payments to deliver some of the following programming as outlined in Minn. Stat. § 103C.332, subd. 2:

(1) performing administrative services, including comprehensive and annual work planning, administering grants, leveraging outside funding, establishing fiscal accountability measures, reporting accomplishments, human resources management, and staff and supervisor development;

(2) providing technical expertise, including knowledge of local resources, performing technical evaluations and certifications, assessing concerns, and providing oversight in surveying, designing, and constructing conservation practices;

(3) providing information and education outreach, including increasing landowner awareness and knowledge of soil and water conservation program opportunities to protect soil and water resources and publicizing the benefits of soil and water conservation to the general public;

(4) facilitating regulatory processes for impacted landowners and providing technical review and comment on regulatory permits and development plans for regulations relating to soil and water conservation;



(5) administering projects and programs, including but not limited to the nonpoint source pollution abatement program; reinvest in Minnesota reserve conservation easements program; disaster response; local water management and comprehensive watershed management planning programs; and projects related to floodplains, lakes, streams and ditches, wetlands, upland resources, and groundwater resources, to maintain and improve the quality, quantity, distribution, and sustainability of natural resources, including surface water, groundwater, soil, and ecological resources;

(6) monitoring and inventorying to collect data that provide a baseline understanding of resource conditions and changes to the resources over time and analyzing and interpreting the data to support program implementation; and

(7) maintaining a modern technology infrastructure that facilitates planning and projects, including geographic information systems, modeling software, mobile workstations, survey and design equipment and software, and other technology for linking landowners with conservation plans.

2024 ANNUAL PLAN

RAMSEY COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DIVISION

	KEY MESSAGES / CALL TO ACTION	ACTION ITEMS & COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PAGE NUMBER
 <p>CLIMATE CHANGE Reduce Impact, Adapt to Climate Variabilities, & Minimize Flooding</p>	<p>Community Resilience</p> <p>Impacts to climate variabilities in Ramsey County.</p> <p>Resilience in Ramsey County Comprehensive Plan.</p>	<p>1. Hold a technical workshop for staff to update BMP design models to incorporate more intense precipitation events, in line with projected regional models, and to use the most updated floodplain delineations</p> <p>Reference: Comp. Plan Page 61</p>
 <p>BIODIVERSE ECOSYSTEMS Promote Biodiverse Ecosystems</p>	<p>Support Lawns to Legumes Program Plant native plants to restore habitat for pollinators.</p> <p>Control Invasive Species Learn what the problem plants and animals are and how to control them.</p>	<p>1. Support Ramsey County Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA)</p> <p>2. Complete macrophyte and biovolume studies on lakes and storm ponds</p> <p>3. Provide inspectors for boat launch inspections.</p> <p>4. Evaluate opportunities to increase pollinator habitat on cost share projects</p> <p>Reference: Comp. Plan Page 63</p>
 <p>URBAN AGRICULTURE Increase Urban Agriculture & Improve Soil Health</p>	<p>Healthy Soil Sustains Us. Stop Treating Soil Like Dirt! Plant native plants for habitat and improved soil health.</p> <p>Promote Composting</p>	<p>1. Provide site visits for agricultural landowners interested in the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program.</p> <p>Reference: Comp. Plan Page 65</p>

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 <p>GROUNDWATER Conserve and Protect Groundwater</p>	<p>Groundwater is a vital natural resource to Ramsey County</p> <p>Understanding the interaction of groundwater and surface water is essential in developing effective policy and planning efforts</p> <p>Protection efforts will be a priority</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seal an average of 20 unused wells per year 2. Cross reference Ramsey SWCD well inventory with the Minnesota Well Index 3. Maintain an electronic inventory of all septic systems in Ramsey County 4. Assist with update to Ramsey County Geologic Atlas <p>Reference: Comp. Plan Page 48-49</p>
 <p>LAKES, RIVERS, CREEKS Protect and Restore Surface Water</p>	<p>Your Street Connects to Lakes and Rivers.</p> <p>Reduce stormwater pollution runoff.</p> <p>Salt Smarter</p> <p>80% of Ramsey County residents' drinking water comes from the Mississippi River.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Install minimum 12 BMPs per year 2. Conduct at least 250 site visits annually 3. Track and map installed BMPs <p>Reference: Comp. Plan Page 51-52</p>
 <p>WETLANDS Protect and Restore Wetlands</p>	<p>Wetlands Serve Valuable Functions such as Providing Habitat, Water Filtration, and Water Storage.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Serve on Technical Evaluation Panels 2. Administer the annual Wetland Conservation Act grant from Board of Soil & Water Resources. <p>Reference: Comp. Plan Page 67</p>
 <p>PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT Increase Public Engagement Across All Communities</p>	<p>ALL MESSAGES</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add two volunteer reporters to the rain gauge network 2. Provide opportunities to interact with diverse communities <p>Reference: Comp. Plan Page 57-58</p>