



Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources.
Minutes.

Copyright Notice:

This material may be protected by copyright law (U.S. Code, Title 17). Researchers are liable for any infringement. For more information, visit www.mnhs.org/copyright.

BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES
HOLIDAY INN-EAST
I-94 AT MCKNIGHT ROAD
2201 BURNS AVENUE
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA
APRIL 25, 1990

AGENDA

9:00 a.m.

1. Call to Order
2. Adopt Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes of March 28, 1990
4. Reports
 - Chairman's Report - Donald Ogaard
 - Executive Director's Report - Jim Birkholz
 - Legislative Report - Jim Birkholz
 - EQB/Water Resources Committee Report - Loni Kemp
 - "Search for Success Program of Renew America" awarded last week in Washington, D.C. to the original 52 counties in water planning and their state partners - John Wells

Program Decisions

10:00 a.m.

5. Reinvest In Minnesota Reserve Program - Wayne Edgerton
 - Proposed Alteration of RIM Reserve Easement in Meeker County
 - Update on the Milton J. Peterson easement settlement in Faribault County

Strategic Directions

6. Update on 1990 Farm Bill - for discussion - Loni Kemp
7. SWCD Forestry Specialist Report - Jim Lemmerman
8. Grants for Forestry Stewardship Program
9. BWSR Draft Strategic Plan - for discussion and input
10. Advisor Comments

Noon

Lunch

Comprehensive Local Water Plan Review and Actions

- 1:00 p.m.
11. Metropolitan WMO Plans - Bruce Sandstrom
- for approval:
 - Shingle Creek WMO Plan
 - West Mississippi WMO Plan
- for overview:
- Shakopee Basin WMO
 - Credit River WMO
- 2:00 p.m.
12. 110B Comprehensive Local Water Plans
- Nobles County - for approval - Chris Hughes
 - Plan Overviews:
 - Waseca - Chris Hughes
 - Aitkin - Dan Steward
 - Morrison - Dan Steward
13. Approval of Draft Rules for Local Water Resources Protection and Management Program - for decision - Greg Larson
14. Preview of Allocation Process for 1990 Grants to Local Governments - Greg Larson and Chuck Niska
- 3:30 p.m.
- Adjourn

*Sent to Sweden
5/90*

BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES
HOLIDAY INN-EAST
2201 BURNS AVENUE
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55119
APRIL 25, 1990

Appointed Members in Attendance

Donald Ogaard
John Williamson
John Boulton
Don Warner
Loni Kemp
Natalie Haas Steffen
James Hoese
Jack Graba
Howard Peterson
William Cofell
John Brooks, Jr.

Appointed Members Absent

Loren Harste

Agency Members in Attendance

Paul Burns, Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Tom Lutgen, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Wayne Anderson, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Others in Attendance

Al Dornfeld, Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts
D'Wayne DeZiel, Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Gary Nordstrom, Soil Conservation Service
Franklin Denn, Minnesota Association of Townships
John Wells, State Planning Agency

Staff in Attendance

Jim Birkholz	Mel Sinn	Chuck Niska
Pat Bloomgren	Wayne Edgerton	Steve Miller
Tom Schwanke	Doug Thomas	Dan Steward
Jim Lemmerman	Bruce Sandstrom	Greg Larson
Dave Behm	Denice DeFrates	Mary Jo Anderson

Meeting Called to Order - Chairman Ogaard called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**
90-37 Adopt Agenda - Moved by Graba, seconded by Hoese, to adopt the agenda as presented. Affirmative: Ogaard, Williamson, Boulton, Warner, Kemp, Hoese, Graba, Peterson, Brooks, Jr., and Cofell. Opposed: None. Carried.

**
90-38 Approval of Minutes of March 28, 1990 - Moved by Cofell, seconded by Peterson, to approve the minutes of March 28, 1990 as circulated. Affirmative: Ogaard, Williamson, Boulton, Warner, Kemp, Hoese, Graba, Peterson, Brooks, Jr., and Cofell. Opposed: None. Carried.

Chairman's Report - Chairman Ogaard reported that wind erosion has been a problem recently in his area of northwestern Minnesota. Timely rains the past couple days have been appreciated, amounting to 3/4" of moisture.

He made a presentation at the "1990 Water Conference" on April 9-10, at the St. Paul Radisson. It was an excellent conference.

He reported the Environmental Quality Board's meeting on April 19. Topics discussed at the meeting included Earth Day, and a pipeline issue relating to an easement.

Don stated that Dick Ness is retiring effective May 9. Staff had a retirement party for him on April 19.

Chairman Ogaard reported that the Board has its first resignation -Loni Kemp, which will be effective after today's meeting. Don, on behalf of the Board of Water and Soil Resources, thanked Loni for her fine efforts. It was rewarding for him to have Loni as a board member. On behalf of the Governor, Don presented Loni with a letter of commendation and also a plaque. He also presented her with a plaque from the Board. Loni thanked the Board for the recognition. She stated that the Commissioner of the Pollution Control Agency asked her to apply to become a member of that board. Loni said it would be a challenging move for her; she hopes to bring her experiences from the BWSR to PCA.

Board members received copies of the "Minnesota Open Appointments Notice of Vacancy" form and were asked to give it to someone they know who may be interested in filling the current vacancy that now exists on the Board.

Executive Director's Report - Jim Birkholz reported that a letter from the Red River of the North Resource Management Area has been received requesting \$5,000 to assist with their erosion problems in information program in the valley.

Public meetings will be held statewide on the RIM program to gather input and inform the public of RIM activities.

Denice DeFrates will be leaving effective April 27. Susan Tsakakis has been hired to fill the Communications Manager position and will be starting May 9.

Pat Bloomgren will be taking a two month leave, from mid-June through mid-August, and will be doing volunteer work in the Alaska state parks system.

Natalie Haas Steffen entered the meeting at 9:20 a.m.

Jim distributed copies of the budget report, explained expenditures and stated that budget reports will be given on a quarterly basis for the Board's information.

Legislative Report - Jim Birkholz updated the Board on legislative issues. The Board's budget was reduced by \$200,000 or 2.4%. The Metro Local Water Management Task Force bill passed in both the House and Senate and the bill will be going to the Governor for signature. Jim also updated the Board on special levy limits, capital bonding requests, special local levy exemptions, RIM Reserve, sale of state and county forfeited lands.

Natalie asked if counties with bonding ability can levy to pay off debts from general revenue, using additional taxing authority. Jim will check with the Department of Revenue on this.

Chuck Niska distributed material on the water plan implementation tax levy for the Board's information. This issue will be discussed in more detail at the May meeting.

Jim stated that a written legislative summary will be sent out shortly with more specific details for the Board's information. He stated that a new spending plan with the \$200,000 budget reduction will be submitted to the Board for review and approval.

EOB/Water Resources Committee Report - Loni Kemp reported that the Water Resources Committee met on April 5. Highlights of the meeting included the Governor's appointment of a panel to discuss global warming; 10-year water plan drafts revised and refined with focus groups to meet on May 4; Great Lakes Governor's Fund multi-state involvement; MPCA received a nonpoint pollution grant, primarily for additional staff, from the Environmental Protection Agency. Wayne Anderson gave additional information on the grant program. Additional topics addressed at the WRC meeting included the grasshopper issue; Environmental Agriculturalist Education grants; nitrate pollution task force (Greg Larson is the BWSR's representative). Loni stated that the Water Resources Committee functions very well as a clearinghouse for state agencies to work together and gather information. Chairman Ogaard will replace Loni on the Water Resources Committee. On behalf of the BWSR, Chairman Ogaard thanked Loni for her contributions to the Board.

John Brooks, Jr., stated that there is a need to encourage use of updated pesticide and fertilizer application handbooks that are distributed by the University of Minnesota. John quoted an example on his farm where application that had been used in the past can be

decreased by half based on current information. Education on this issue is a necessity.

"Search for Success Program of Renew America" - John Wells, State Planning Agency, went to Washington, D.C. last week and received the award from President Bush on behalf of the original 52 counties in water planning and their state partners. The award was given to Minnesota in the groundwater protection category. He unveiled the award given by Renew America. A celebration will be held in Minnesota at the Governor's mansion with counties, and staff invited.

Chairman Ogaard called for a break in the meeting at 10:35 a.m. The meeting reconvened at 10:45 a.m.

Reinvest In Minnesota Reserve Program - Wayne Edgerton explained the proposed alteration of a RIM Reserve easement in Meeker County (Paul Arnleend, easement #47-13-86-1). Staff recommends approval of the request with the following provisions:

- 1) Acre for acre trade from Dassel Township to Ellsworth Township (6.9 acres),
- 2) New easement in Ellsworth Township will run a full ten years from date of new easement signature,
- 3) No part of the present easement area can be converted to crop production until after April 28, 1997,
- 4) All costs of the alteration of this easement must be born by Mr. Arnleend, including the cost of establishing the vegetative cover according to RIM Reserve specifications.
- 5) There can be no alteration of the existing cover on the present easement until after 6.9 acre trade is finalized, and recorded on the land title.

**
90-39 Moved by Boulton, seconded by Williamson, to accept the staff recommendation for approval of the alteration of RIM Reserve Easement #47-13-86-1 (Paul Arnleend). Affirmative: Ogaard, Williamson, Boulton, Warner, Kemp, Steffen, Hoese, Graba, Peterson, Brooks, Jr., and Cofell. Opposed: None. Carried.

**
90-40 Wayne updated the Board on the Milton J. Peterson easement settlement in Faribault County. Staff recommended payment of settlement to cancel this application due to potential long term hazardous waste liabilities because of the existence of an old town dump on the site. Moved by Cofell, seconded by Steffen, to accept the staff recommendation of payment settlement to cancel the Milton J. Peterson easement #22-04-88-1. Affirmative: Ogaard, Williamson, Boulton, Warner, Kemp, Steffen, Hoese, Graba, Peterson, Brooks, Jr., and Cofell. Opposed: None. Carried. Discussion followed.

SWCD Forestry Specialist Report - Jim Lemmerman gave a presentation summarizing Board and SWCD forestry activities since 1985.

Grants for Forestry Stewardship Program - Pat Bloomgren presented the following proposed resolution, "BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board directs the staff to allocate remaining funds from general service grants to SWCDs: to Beltrami SWCD (\$6,000 in cooperation with

**
90-41

Clearwater SWCD), and \$3,000 each to Goodhue and Wabasha SWCDs to enable them to participate in the forest stewardship program". Discussion followed. Moved by Warner, seconded by Graba, to approve staff's proposed resolution for the Forestry Stewardship Grant Program. Affirmative: Ogaard, Williamson, Boulton, Warner, Kemp, Steffen, Hoese, Graba, Peterson, Brooks, Jr., and Cofell. Opposed: None. Carried.

Update on 1990 Farm Bill - Loni Kemp distributed a listing of options for the 1990 Farm Bill for Board discussion. Loni encouraged Board members to take a position on the 1990 Farm Bill and communicate that position to others. Discussion followed.

Chairman Ogaard recessed the meeting for lunch at 12:10 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 1:10 p.m.

Discussion continued on the 1990 Farm Bill. Gary Nordstrom, SCS, commented on the conservation compliance plans, which are in the implementation phase (1990 - 1995). The goal of SCS is to have a good working relationship with farmers in implementing the conservation compliance plans.

Moved by Loni Kemp, that the BWSR is in opposition to the position of the SCS Washington, D.C. office which would weaken the conservation compliance plans as done in has been discussed in Iowa. There was not a second to the motion - the motion was defeated.

Advisor Comments

Gary Nordstrom, Soil Conservation Service, reported on the letters sent by the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) concerning redeterminations of swampbuster decisions. SCS has been directed to supply local and state committees with proper documents to better assist in determining recommendations. SCS will supply documents to ASCS. Gary will keep the Board updated on this issue.

Al Dornfeld, Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts, reported that the annual summer meeting and tour will be held on June 22-23, 1990. He stated that the MASWCD/BWSR Blue Ribbon Committee met on April 24 and discussed 10 - 12 issues. Al stated that the no net loss wetland legislation has taken a loss this session.

D'Wayne DeZiel, Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, reported that he, Dwain Otte, and Danny Potter went to Washington, D.C., last month to discuss Minnesota issues with congressmen. D'Wayne stated that the MASWCD Board of Directors are planning to attend the BWSR meeting and tour in August in Kandiyohi County, and also the September meeting and tour in Grand Marais. He stated that the MASWCD Policy Handbook will be ready for distribution shortly.

Franklin Denn, Minnesota Association of Townships, stated that Minnesota is faced with a grasshopper problem this year. He commented on the wetlands issue. Residential land use

planning needs coordination to a great extent.

Comprehensive Local Water Plan Review and Action - Bruce Sandstrom introduced Bill Weidenbacher (G.M. Montgomery) and Jerald Butcher. Bruce distributed a summary sheet of the Shingle Creek Watershed Management Plan and gave a brief overview of the plan. He also distributed a summary sheet of the West Mississippi Watershed Management Plan and gave a brief overview of the plan. Mr. Butcher commended the BWSR staff on their fine efforts and work on the plan. Mr. Weidenbacher complimented the Department of Natural Resources for their cooperation. Moved by Steffen, seconded by Kemp, to accept the staff recommendation to approve the Shingle Creek WMO Plan and the West Mississippi WMO Plan. Affirmative: Ogaard, Williamson, Boulton, Warner, Kemp, Steffen, Hoese, Graba, Peterson, Brooks, Jr., and Cofell. Opposed: None. Carried.

**
90-42

Bruce gave a brief overview of the Shakopee Basin WMO and the Credit River WMO and also distributed a summary sheet for the Board's information. Wayne Anderson, MPCA, stated that he appreciated the contact and support he received in working with Bruce on these plans.

110B Comprehensive Local Water Plans - Doug Thomas introduced Mark Tripp and Brian Christensen (G.M. Montgomery). Doug distributed a summary sheet of the Nobles County 110B Comprehensive Local Water Plan. He gave a brief overview of the 509 plan for the Board's information. Staff recommends approval of the plan. Moved by Kemp, seconded by Boulton, to approve the Nobles County 110B Comprehensive Local Water Plan. Affirmative: Ogaard, Williamson, Boulton, Warner, Kemp, Steffen, Hoese, Graba, Peterson, Brooks, Jr., and Cofell. Opposed: None. Carried.

**
90-43

Doug briefly gave a chronological overview of the Waseca County 110B Comprehensive Local Water Plan and distributed a summary sheet for the Board's information.

Dan Steward briefly gave a chronological overview of the Aitkin County 110B Comprehensive Local Water Plan and distributed a summary sheet for the Board's information.

Dan also briefly gave a chronological overview of the Morrison County 110B Comprehensive Local Water Plan and distributed a summary sheet for the Board's information.

Approval of Draft Rules for Local Water Resources Protection and Management Program - Greg Larson distributed an informational handout on the tax bill changes and what it means for allocating funding. Staff needs time to quickly prepare a new draft dealing with the tax bill changes with the metro process to make sure funding is in place. The new draft will be brought before the Board at the May meeting. Chairman Ogaard tabled action on this item until staff have an opportunity to review the new tax bill legislation and can report to the Board on the changes.

Preview of Allocation Process for 1990 Grants to Local Governments - Chuck Niska distributed a summary of the BWSR grant programs and the 1990 grant allocation process for FY91 for the Board's information. Chuck stated that \$159,000 is available for the Streambank, Lakeshore, and Roadside Erosion Program (SLR). Twenty-one applications have been received for the SLR program, in excess of \$400,000 applied for. The Abandoned Well Sealing Program application deadline is June 1st, with a rating period after that. The overall funding level recommendations will be made by the staff during the June Board meeting, regarding the cost-share program, general services grant, abandoned well sealing, and SLR/special projects. Staff recommendation will be made to the Board at the May meeting regarding the \$200,000 funding reduction in program allocations. Staff has been working with the Department of Finance to streamline an encumbrance procedure to allow SWCDs to more readily use cost-share monies in the fall of each work season.

BWSR Draft Strategic Plan - Jim Birkholz stated that the Draft Strategic Plan will be discussed at the May meeting, when a significant amount of time will be spent addressing the plan. Board members comments (written and oral) have been and will continue to be incorporated into the Strategic Plan. Natalie Steffen stated that the metro soil and water conservation districts future need to be more specifically addressed in the Strategic Plan.

Natalie suggested that Chairman Ogaard, on behalf of the BWSR, send a letter to the Upper Rum River Watershed District requesting that they begin a WMO Plan.

**
90-44 Moved by Warner, seconded by Graba, to adjourn the meeting at 3:50 p.m. Affirmative: Ogaard, Williamson, Boulton, Warner, Kemp, Steffen, Hoese, Graba, Peterson, Brooks, Jr., and Cofell. Opposed: None. Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald Ogaard
Chairman



Southbridge Office Building
155 South Wabasha St., Suite 104
St. Paul, Minnesota 55107

(612) 296-3767
Fax (612) 297-5615

Regional Offices

Northwest Region
1106 Paul Bunyan Drive, NE
Bemidji, MN 56601
218-755-3963

Northeast Region
394 South Lake Avenue
Room 402
Duluth, MN 55802
218-723-4752

West Central Region
503 Washington Street
Brainerd, MN 56401
218-828-2604

South Central Region
Box 756
New Ulm, MN 56073
507-354-2196

Southeast Region
Friedell Bldg., Room 100
1200 S. Broadway
Rochester, MN 55904
507-285-7458

Southwest Region
Box 111
1400 E. Lyon Street
Marshall, MN 56258
507-537-7260

East Central Region
Southbridge Office Building
155 South Wabasha Ave., Suite 104
St. Paul, MN 55107
612-296-3767

DATE: April 16, 1990
TO: Board of Water and Soil Resources
Members, Staff, and Advisors
FROM: Jim Birkholz, Executive Director *[Signature]*
SUBJECT: April 25, 1990 Board Meeting

Enclosed is the agenda and relevant information for the April 25th BWSR meeting. Please note that the meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn-East at the intersection of I-94 and McKnight Road. Board members may make room reservations directly with the Holiday Inn-East at 612-731-2220. Following is information regarding agenda items.

- Legislative Update. According to current rumor the session will be ended by the date of our Board meeting. I will have a full report at that time. Right now conference committees are meeting on the bonding bill which contains inadequate funding for the RIM Program and the semi-states funding bill which contains budget cuts for the BWSR and other agencies. The Metropolitan Local Water Management Task Force legislation has passed the Senate and is on special orders in the House. I anticipate being able to do a conference committee on the bill and get it passed successfully prior to the end of the session. More details at the Board meeting.
- Rules for the Local Water Resources Protection and Management Grant Program. Since the last Board meeting legislation was introduced which is now in the omnibus tax bill conference committee which would significantly impact the way in which the Board awards base grants. A new provision would allow counties participating in water plan implementation to raise an additional 1.5 million dollars statewide through a new levy exemption. While not the total solution, this is a start towards increased funding capability for water plan implementation. Staff will update the draft rules to accommodate the legislative change if it passes. Board direction is needed so that we can continue to process the draft rule.

BWSR Members, Staff, and Advisors
April 16, 1990
Page Two

- BWSR Strategic Plan Discussion. Included in the mailing is a draft copy of the Board strategic plan for your review. As you recall, this process began nearly two years ago with the preparation of the Board's mission statement. It is time to get the plan off the back burner and ensure that it serves as a document which lays out the basic roadmap for the Board to accomplish its mission. As you are reading the plan, please bear in mind that it is meant to be a statement of basic Board philosophies, directions, and strategic choices. It is intended to state the Board's values so that they may be agreed to and shared with others. I encourage you to not be overly concerned about details as you read the plan. The details of how to accomplish the wonderful things stated in the strategic plan will be dealt with as the Board makes program decisions and as the staff prepares its annual work plan to implement Board decisions.

I have allowed an hour and a half on the agenda for lengthy discussion of the plan. This discussion will need to carry over into our May Board meeting. Again, I caution you not to become overly concerned with the details as you prepare for discussion at the Board meeting. Let's focus our attention on making the best strategic choices to position the BWSR for maximum effectiveness in protecting water and soil resources in the State of Minnesota.

- Local Water Plan Approval. Staff overviews which were available at the time of this mailing are included for your information.

If you have agenda changes or require additional information, please call Chairman Ogaard or myself. See you at the Holiday Inn-East on April 25th!

JB:mja
Enc.

BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES
HOLIDAY INN-EAST
I-94 AT MCKNIGHT ROAD
2201 BURNS AVENUE
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA
APRIL 25, 1990

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

9:00 a.m.

1. Call to Order
2. Adopt Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes of March 28, 1990
4. Reports
 - Chairman's Report - Donald Ogaard
 - Executive Director's Report - Jim Birkholz
 - Legislative Report - Jim Birkholz
 - EQB/Water Resources Committee Report - Loni Kemp
5. SWCD Forestry Specialist Report - Jim Lemmerman

Program Decisions

10:00 a.m.

6. Reinvest In Minnesota Reserve Program - Wayne Edgerton
 - Proposed Alteration of RIM Reserve Easement in Meeker County
 - Update on the Milton J. Peterson easement settlement in Faribault County
7. Approval of Draft Rules for Local Water Resources Protection and Management Program - for decision - Greg Larson

Strategic Directions

8. Update on 1990 Farm Bill - for discussion - Loni Kemp
9. BWSR Draft Strategic Plan - for discussion and input
10. Advisor Comments

Noon

Lunch

Comprehensive Local Water Plan Review and Actions

- 1:00 p.m. 11. Metropolitan WMO Plans - Bruce Sandstrom
- for approval:
 - Shingle Creek WMO Plan
 - West Mississippi WMO Plan

 - for overview:
 - Shakopee Basin WMO
 - Credit River WMO
- 2:00 p.m. 12. 110B Comprehensive Local Water Plans
- Nobles County - for approval - Chris Hughes
 - Plan Overviews:
 - Waseca - Chris Hughes
 - Aitkin - Dan Steward
 - Morrison - Dan Steward
13. Preview of Allocation Process for 1990 Grants to Local Governments - Greg Larson and Chuck Niska
- 3:30 p.m. Adjourn

BWSR STRATEGIC PLAN

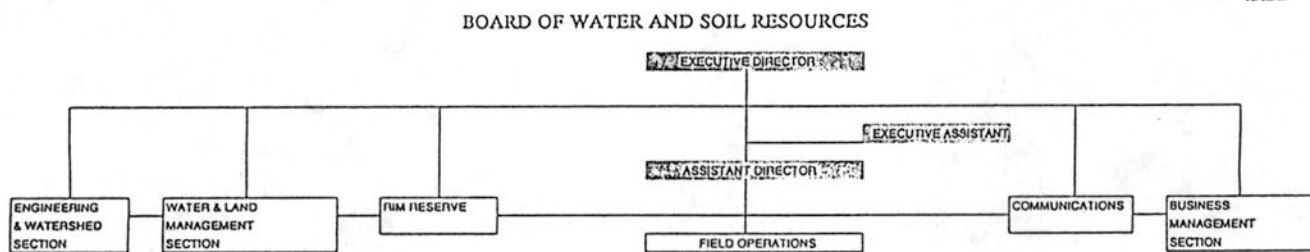
BWSR Review Draft

April 1990

ABOUT THE BOARD

The Board of Water and Soil Resources is a Minnesota state agency. The BWSR membership comprises twelve voting and five nonvoting members. The voting members include three county commissioners, three soil and water conservation district supervisors, three watershed district representatives, and three citizens. Voting members are appointed by the Governor to staggered four-year terms. The Governor designates the Chair from among the voting members. The five nonvoting members are the Department of Natural Resources, Pollution Control Agency, Department of Health, Department of Agriculture, and University of Minnesota.

The BWSR staff is headed by an Executive Director who serves at the pleasure of the Board. The central staff is located in St. Paul, and field staff are located in regional offices in Bemidji, Brainerd, Duluth, Marshall, New Ulm, and Rochester.



MISSION STATEMENT:

It is the BWSR's mission to provide leadership in developing policies and administering programs that help all citizens to be stewards of our irreplaceable water and soil resources.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

The BWSR intends to play a major leadership role in water and soil management in the 1990's. Achieving successful implementation of comprehensive local water plans will be our primary goal. We will support and assist all local units of government in managing their priority water and soil resources issues in a spirit of local/state partnership. We will strive to build effective working relationships among all local units of government, and between state resource management agencies and local governments. We will serve as the focal point at the state level for hearing and responding to local resources management concerns. We will encourage and support local initiative wherever possible. We will work to ensure that Minnesota's resource management laws and programs support strong roles and capabilities for local government. We will be dedicated to the ongoing task of informing and educating the public about resource management issues.

To help us perform our role we have initiated a strategic planning process. This strategic plan defines the mission of the BWSR, its values and strategies on key issues, and its vision of the agency's future role. The plan is intended to convey the BWSR's policy direction on issues important to its mission. The plan is also meant to serve as a tool for educating new BWSR members, staff, and BWSR clientele about the BWSR's role in managing and protecting Minnesota's water and soil resources.

We would appreciate hearing your reactions or suggestions on the contents of our strategic plan.

Donald H. Ogaard
Chairman
BWSR

CONTENTS

About the BWSR	i
Chairman's Message	ii
Contents	iii
I. Introduction: Minnesota's Water and Soil Resources	1
A. Water Resources	1
B. Soil Resources	3
II. Mission Statement	4
III. Resource Management Issues	5
A. Land Use Conversion	5
B. Nonpoint Pollution	9
C. Soil Erosion	10
D. Water Quantity Management	11
IV. Resource Management Strategies	12
A. Education	13
B. Incentives	15
C. Regulation	16
V. The BWSR's Future	18

I. INTRODUCTION: MINNESOTA'S WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES

Minnesota is endowed with an abundance of natural resources. The "land of 10,000 lakes" and "sky blue waters" contains over 15,000 lake basins; 25,000 miles of streams; major groundwater resources; and over 23 million acres of fertile soils supporting agricultural uses. Although our endowment is rich, we have learned that it is not limitless. Over __ % of the surface area of Minnesota has been directly altered by man's activities. Over __ million acres of our original prairie lands, woodlands, wetlands, and shallow lake basins have been converted to agricultural, commercial, industrial, residential, and other intensive land uses. This dramatic land use conversion has had major impacts on our water and soil resources.

Combined wind and water erosion on our 23 million acres of cultivated cropland generates an estimated 150 million tons of eroded soil per year. This eroded soil carries nutrients and pollutants that degrade our water quality. Loss of natural water retention basins due to drainage and filling has degraded water quality, diminished wildlife habitat, and exacerbated flooding problems. Construction of buildings, roads, parking lots and other impervious surfaces in urban areas has increased stormwater runoff and flood damages to both stream channels and adjoining properties.

To understand the importance of managing and protecting our limited water and soil resources, we need to appreciate our reliance on them and how our actions affect their integrity.

A. WATER RESOURCES

Minnesota's rivers, lakes, and wetlands cover nearly 5% of the state's area. Alaska is the only state with more lakes than Minnesota. This abundance of surface water features has significantly influenced our economic development, "outdoors" heritage, and quality of life.

Minnesota's major rivers are the Mississippi, Minnesota, Red River of the North, Rainy, and St. Croix. Many of our cities developed along these and other rivers in our state because of river transportation and water supply.

Surface water resources also play a big part in Minnesotans' love of the outdoors. Our lakes are dotted with seasonal cabins, resorts, and year-round residences. Our rivers and lakes are heavily used for recreation and relaxation. In some counties, shoreland property is the largest component of the local property tax base. Water-related recreation and tourism is an important part of Minnesota's economy.

Sound management of our water resources is vital to our quality of life. We are drawn to our rivers and lakes for fishing, swimming, boating, and other outdoor activities. Our wetlands provide valuable habitat for both game and non-game wildlife species. We place a high value on being able to spend leisure time near surface water amenities.

Minnesota is also fortunate in having a major groundwater resource. The United States Geological Survey has defined 14 major aquifer types in the state. They all fall into the two broad categories of "glacial drift" and "bedrock". Southeastern Minnesota is underlain by major sandstone and limestone bedrock formations that contain the largest quantities of groundwater found in the state. The highest yielding glacial drift aquifers are located in central Minnesota and along the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers where there are major sand and gravel deposits. In western Minnesota the glacial drift is predominantly composed of tight clay soils that yield little water, although significant supplies can be found in scattered buried drift aquifers.

Groundwater resources provide water supply for domestic, agricultural, commercial, and industrial uses. The quality of these resources is critical because two out of three Minnesotans rely on wells for their drinking water.

B. SOIL RESOURCES

Soil is a vital natural resource that supports the plant and animal life we are dependent upon for our food supply. About one-half of Minnesota is covered by soils capable of supporting intensive agricultural uses. This large base of productive soils has made it possible for Minnesota to develop the sixth largest agricultural industry in the nation. The sustainability of this resource, however, is threatened by unwise land use practices.

Soil is formed by the complex interaction of several natural elements. These elements include the parent geologic material, climatic conditions, the plants and animals living on or in the material, and time. Soil scientists estimate that it takes between 100 and 250 years for 1 inch of topsoil to be formed by natural processes. Over twelve thousand different soil types have been identified nationwide, each having unique characteristics and limitations for various land uses.

The greatest threat to the sustainability of Minnesota's soil resources is the fact that roughly 40% of Minnesota's land surface is cultivated each year for production of agricultural crops. Cultivation makes the land surface more susceptible to erosion from the forces of water and wind. The erosion rate at which a particular soil can sustain its productivity is called the tolerable soil erosion rate or "T". Values of T generally range from 1 ton per acre per year to 5 tons, depending on the soil type. In 1982 the USDA Soil Conservation Service estimated that over one-half of Minnesota's cropland was eroding at a rate in excess of the tolerable level. The SCS estimated that on average each of our cultivated acres lost over 7 tons of soil in 1987, or over twice the rate at which the soil is being replenished. Excessive soil losses not only reduce or destroy the productivity of the land, but cause several other harmful environmental effects. These "off site" impacts include siltation of streams, drainageways, lakes, and reservoirs; impairment of fish and wildlife habitat; and degradation of water quality. Although governmental programs to control excessive soil loss have been in place since the 1930's, we continue to lose ground.

II. MISSION STATEMENT

It is the BWSR's mission to provide leadership in developing policies and administering programs that help all citizens to be stewards of our irreplaceable water and soil resources.

The BWSR exists for the purpose of fostering proper water and soil management. The planned management of these precious natural resources is necessary to ensure their wise use and prevent their degradation.

The BWSR has a unique role in water and soil resource management because of its direct ties to local government. The board members include representatives of soil and water conservation districts, watershed districts, and counties; and virtually all of the BWSR's statutory responsibilities relate to local water and soil management planning and implementation. The BWSR's primary duty is to guide and support the water and soil management activities carried out by local governments.

The BWSR's mission is accomplished in several ways:

Policy Development: The BWSR seeks, through legislative initiative, policies supportive of water and soil resources management. The BWSR also serves as a forum for policy development relating to water and soil resources management and encourages implementation through local units of government.

Service to Local Units of Government: The BWSR provides local governments with guidelines, training, and technical assistance in developing, implementing, and administering water and soil resource management plans. It offers leadership training to local officials and provides local government with educational materials on resource management issues.

Coordination: The BWSR uses its members, local planning guidelines, rules, and staff assistance to ensure effective management of natural resources and to foster communication, understanding, exchange of information and ideas, and working partnerships among counties, soil and water conservation districts, watershed districts, other units of local government, and agencies involved in water and soil resources management.

Education: The BWSR develops information and education materials to increase awareness of local water and soil resources problems and to promote opportunities for citizen action and local government involvement. The BWSR's information and education efforts stress creative problem solving and prevention.

Funding: The BWSR advocates funding for water and soil resources management activities carried out by local government. It administers state grants and incentive programs to local governments to help them accomplish their resource management goals.

Conflict Resolution: The BWSR can act as both mediator and adjudicator in resolving resource management conflicts between people, local governments, and agencies; and recommends procedures to avoid future conflict.

III. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

The BWSR's conservation mission will be accomplished primarily by enabling local governments to effectively address four key resource management issues: land use conversion, nonpoint pollution, soil erosion, and water quantity management.

A. LAND USE CONVERSION

When land use changes, regardless of whether it is in a rural or an urban area, there are impacts on water and soil resources. Although each situation is unique, conversion of land to a more intensive use generally has negative effects on water and soil resources. This

type of conversion can result in: increased runoff, erosion, and sedimentation; higher downstream flood flows due to loss of natural storage or changes in the timing of subwatershed discharges; reduced rates of groundwater recharge due to creation of impervious surfaces; increased generation of water pollutants due to loss of natural filtering mechanisms; and decreases in wildlife populations due to destruction of habitat. On the other hand, land conversion to a less intensive use, such as restoration of drained wetlands or conversion of marginal agricultural land to permanent vegetation, generally will have positive water and soil impacts. Conversion of wetlands, marginal agricultural lands, forest lands, and urban lands are of particular concern.

Wetlands

Wetlands are lands where water is the dominant factor determining the nature of soil development and the types of plant and animal communities living in the soil and on its surface. Wetlands can provide significant public benefits by storing water, controlling erosion, purifying runoff, recharging groundwater, and by providing open space, landscape diversity, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities. Wetlands protection and management is critical because there is continued pressure to fill wetlands for land development purposes and to drain wetlands for conversion to agricultural and other uses. State and federal programs discourage wetland degradation, but there is no comprehensive wetland management program in place.

The BWSR believes that:

1. A "net gain" wetland management policy should be adopted in law.
2. Wetland regulation must be accompanied by strong education and incentive programs.

The BWSR will serve a major role in furthering wetland management efforts by: fostering strong local wetland protection and restoration programs through such activities as local water planning; creating opportunities for education, including forums for local-

state-federal communication on wetland issues; and seeking progressive changes in wetland management laws, programs, and policies.

Marginal Agricultural Land

Marginal agricultural lands are either highly erodible, inherently unproductive, or highly susceptible to drought or flooding problems. Considerable public benefits can be gained by taking these lands out of crop production. These benefits include water quality protection, wildlife habitat restoration, and enhanced recreational opportunities. Through 1989, Minnesota had purchased conservation easements on _____ acres of marginal agricultural land under the Reinvest in Minnesota Conservation Reserve Program. About one-_____ of these lands are permanently retired under perpetual easements. Under the same program a total of ____ wetland basins have been permanently restored.

The federal government has temporarily retired over 1.8 million acres in Minnesota under the Conservation Reserve Program. The federal CRP contracts will expire at the end of their ten-year duration. The earliest enrolled lands will be due to come out of retirement starting in 1997. Most of the lands protected under the federal "soil bank" programs of the sixties came back into production.

The BWSR believes that:

1. The majority of the marginal agricultural lands now under temporary retirement should not be brought back into production.
2. Programs should be available to retire all existing marginal agricultural land.

The BWSR will actively support state and federal programs designed to keep marginal agricultural lands out of annual crop production on a long-term basis.

Forestry

The proper management of forest land is imperative to maintain and improve water quality, the forest economy, and the tourism industry. Forty-three percent of Minnesota's

forest resources are found on small tracts or private lands. The DNR's Division of Forestry is the state's expert in forest management. Most small private forest landowners are not receiving technical assistance from the state. Soil and water conservation districts have an effective communication network with these private forest landowners, but they lack technical expertise in forestry.

The BWSR believes that:

1. State expertise in forestry management techniques needs to be delivered to private owners of small forest tracts.

The BWSR will serve an important role in forest land management by coordinating DNR and SWCD activities so that Minnesota forest landowners receive sound guidance on managing for multiple use and environmental protection.

Urbanizing Lands

The conversion of undeveloped lands or agricultural lands to residential, commercial, or industrial uses is called urbanization. This process takes place around all expanding urban centers. Poorly planned or managed urbanization can create serious water and soil resource problems, including erosion, water quality degradation, and flooding. Currently, the Metropolitan Area and many other urban centers in Minnesota are involved in local water planning. Sound local planning and regulation can prevent many of the harmful water and soil resource impacts of urbanization.

The BWSR believes that:

1. Local governments with planning and zoning authority should develop and adopt comprehensive land use plans and official controls to ensure proper land use and sound land use management practices to promote a healthy, sustainable, and aesthetically pleasing environment.

The BWSR will serve to minimize the potential water and soil resources problems associated with urbanization by assisting local governments in developing and implementing effective local water management plans.

B. NONPOINT POLLUTION

Nonpoint sources of pollution are defined as land management or land use activities that contribute to water pollution as a result of runoff or seepage into groundwater. Nonpoint sources are distinguished from point sources in that they can be generated by a variety of land use practices over broad areas of land. Examples of potential sources of nonpoint pollutants include agricultural runoff, feedlot runoff, urban runoff, runoff from forestry and mining activities, and leachate from septic systems. The primary pollutants contained in the runoff from these sources are soil particles, nutrients, and pesticides. Despite significant efforts and expenditures to address point sources, Minnesota's surface water quality still has not attained the federal Clean Water Act's "fishable and swimmable" goal. Nonpoint sources are the most significant sources of water pollution and the major contributors to eutrophication and degradation of water quality in our lakes and streams.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is the state agency responsible for developing Minnesota's nonpoint source pollution management program in accordance with requirements of the federal Environmental Protection Agency. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture has specific responsibilities under state law for regulating agricultural pesticides and nutrients. Local units of government are authorized to foster proper land use management through information and education, cost-sharing and other incentives, and land use controls.

The BWSR believes that:

1. Best management practices should be used on all Minnesota lands.
2. Pesticides and nutrients should be used to the minimum extent practicable.

3. Concepts such as "sustainable agriculture" and "watershed-based management" should be promoted and supported through incentive programs.
4. Local government adoption and enforcement of land use controls to prevent nonpoint pollution should be encouraged and supported.

The BWSR will work to empower local government to carry out effective nonpoint pollution control programs.

C. SOIL EROSION

Close to one-half of Minnesota's total land area is used for growing crops. Agricultural use dominates the western and southern portions of the state, comprising over 90% of the land area in some counties. The way this agricultural land is managed has significant effects on both water quantity and quality. Conservation farming practices such as contour farming, strip cropping, terracing, crop rotation, conservation tillage, and the use of field windbreaks can reduce erosion and its associated harmful off-site impacts. Soil conservation practices are also important in forested and urban areas to abate erosion and sedimentation.

The single greatest threat to conservation of the state's soil resource is erosion. Sediment pollution is, by volume, the greatest water pollutant. Recent estimates indicate that the off-site damages from erosion and sedimentation may actually exceed soil productivity losses. Soil erosion by water and wind are naturally recurring events. However, increasing demands from agricultural, forestry, mining, and urban development have accelerated the erosion process. The resulting environmental damage occurs in the form of reduced soil productivity and sedimentation on adjacent land or in water bodies. Excessive soil erosion and sedimentation degrade the quality of our lakes and integrity of our water conveyance systems.

Total soil erosion in Minnesota is estimated to be in excess of 150 million tons per year with over 96 percent attributed to cropland. Although the effect of this soil loss on crop production varies, it usually increases costs and makes the soils less productive. Controlling soil erosion rates below that which can indefinitely sustain the productive capacity of the soil does not necessarily ensure elimination of water pollution problems. Water pollution problems in the form of sediment pollution can still exist, even when soil losses are controlled to rates less than erosion tolerance levels.

The BWSR believes that:

1. The most marginal and sensitive lands should be retired from crop production.
2. Land treatment cost-share programs should be targeted to productive lands that are erosion-prone.
3. Local adoption of erosion and sediment control ordinances should be promoted and supported.

D. WATER QUANTITY MANAGEMENT

Water quantity management deals with actions that affect water runoff, detention, retention, diversion, appropriation, and use. Issues involving water quantity management are most apparent when precipitation varies greatly from normal. In times when precipitation greatly exceeds normal we experience flooding; in times when precipitation is greatly below normal we experience drought. The economic impacts of both flooding and drought can be great. Flood damages alone are estimated at \$130 million annually in Minnesota. Water supply problems in times of drought can have even greater economic impacts due primarily to lost agricultural income. Water supply problems can also be caused by contamination of surface or groundwater. The true costs of finding adequate supplies of good quality drinking water or trying to clean up contaminated supplies are significant and are an incentive to promote the wise use and conservation of our precious water resources.

The water quantity management issue is particularly significant for the BWSR because local government plays a major role in regulating activities directly affecting water quantity. Both state and federal floodplain management and flood control programs rely upon local implementation. Land use regulations that control runoff rates and volumes, and urban water use restrictions are implemented primarily by local government. Water supply, through municipal systems, is also a local responsibility; both federal and state regulations require the local water supplier to develop water conservation plans.

The BWSR believes that:

1. State water policy should establish that every owner of land is responsible for properly managing the runoff from their property.
2. Runoff should be managed to minimize property loss and environmental damage by moderating high flows and maintaining low flows of streams.
3. Natural retention systems should be preserved and properly used to the maximum practical extent in managing surface water runoff and groundwater recharge.
4. Water conservation policies and programs should be strengthened and drought planning should be undertaken at both local and state levels.

IV. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The BWSR is not a regulatory agency. The BWSR can achieve its resource management goals only through the actions of local government. The basic strategy of the BWSR is to empower local governments to be effective resource managers.

Successful implementation of comprehensive local programs for the protection and management of water and soil resources will require the use of several management strategies with emphasis on a local/state partnership and interlocal governmental cooperation. The strategies the BWSR intends to use to accomplish its resource management mission can be broadly categorized as education, incentives, and regulation.

A. EDUCATION

Education should be the principal component of any program which attempts to change human activities. Sound management and protection of water and soil resources will require that some land use activities be changed, and some prohibited. Therefore, education will play a key role in serving as a change agent in the modification of societal values and attitudes toward land use management activities. This must occur before any significant progress can be achieved in addressing our priority resource management issues. Education initiatives must encompass holistic as well as targeted approaches, innovative concepts as well as dissemination of existing information, and advocacy of intergovernmental communication and cooperation. Education must also meet the needs of children as well as adults, urban as well as rural residents, and advocate regulatory compliance as well as voluntary adoption of best management practices.

The BWSR believes that education must include:

1. Disseminating resource management information in the most effective ways possible, including the use of radio, television, and video.
2. Developing and maintaining technical and educational services.
3. Directly communicating with targeted audiences, including cooperating agencies and land occupiers affected by water and soil resources policies and programs.
4. Advocating proper management of our resources and the importance of cooperation and coordination.
5. Instilling a sense of personal responsibility for stewardship of our natural resources.

BWSR education-related management strategies include:

*Providing local governments with the capabilities to develop and implement information and education programs through technical and financial assistance.

*Facilitating communication and cooperation among local governments, state and federal resource agencies, and private resource organizations through informational mailings,

sharing of information on successful local programs and projects, local tours, special meetings, local planning guidance, and related methods.

- *Providing the public and local governments with educational, informational, and research materials on water and soil resources management issues.

- *Providing local government officials and staff with special training opportunities regarding water and soil resources management, program administration and operation, personnel management, governmental accounting and reporting, leadership, and related topics.

- *Developing and making available planning guidelines, model ordinances, conservation easements and trusts, technical guidelines and policies, and other guidance materials to assist local governments in designing and implementing effective and coordinated water and soil management programs.

- *Utilizing BWSR monthly meetings to provide a forum at the state level for presentation and discussion of important local resource management issues.

- *Publicizing and promoting the use of effective local, state, federal, and private programs designed to manage and protect water and soil resources.

- *Supporting legislative initiatives for broad-based public education and information programs, as well as innovative approaches to reaching specific target groups.

- *Supporting legislative initiatives to create stable and adequate funding sources for both local and state water and soil management programs, including education.

- *Supporting legislative initiatives for the collection, analysis, and management of technical data on a regular and predictable basis.

B. INCENTIVES

Incentives can be successfully used to accelerate acceptance of desired values and attitudes. Incentives include those which reward compliance with desired values and attitudes as well as those which attempt to discourage undesirable values and attitudes. Proper management and protection of water and soil resources will require that desirable activities be rewarded and that undesirable activities be actively discouraged. Incentives must encompass urban as well as rural values, loans as well as grants, and reward desired behavior as well as discourage undesirable behavior.

All citizens who benefit from the goods and commodities produced from the natural wealth of our lands and waters should share the cost of maintaining their integrity. Incentive programs must recognize that all land occupiers should practice good stewardship, and that the marketplace may not always totally compensate them for conserving our water and soil resources.

The BWSR believes that incentives must:

1. Be a tool available to local government to enhance local program delivery.
2. Be offered to potentially affected land occupiers to create positive attitudes about proper land management practices.
3. Provide opportunities to dissuade harmful and encourage beneficial land and water use activities.
4. Reward landowners who practice good stewardship.

BWSR incentive-related management strategies include:

*Providing direct guidance and financial assistance to counties and other local governments involved in the preparation or implementation of comprehensive local water plans.

*Providing direct guidance and assistance to soil and water conservation districts and watershed districts in the preparation and implementation of annual and comprehensive plans.

*Providing general technical guidance and assistance to local governments regarding water and soil management issues.

*Identifying and communicating local governments' needs for surface and groundwater monitoring, geologic atlases, regional groundwater studies, and development and coordination of computerized data bases.

*Advocating expanded state grants for implementing elements of approved comprehensive local water management plans, compliance plans, and other vital water and soil protection programs.

*Advocating new positive incentives such as tax breaks for landowners who practice good stewardship, and negative incentives such as ineligibility for cost-share programs for landowners who abuse the land.

*Advocating a role for the BWSR in serving as a clearinghouse for all state grants to local governments in the area of water and soil resources management.

C. REGULATION

Regulation is often viewed as a "last resort" for dealing with resource management problems, rather than an important element of a comprehensive approach to resource management. To be effective, the need for a regulation must be understood by the public, the regulation itself must be known, and the regulation must be enforced. Many resource management issues are not yet well understood by the general public. However, it appears that the public is beginning to recognize the connections between land use activities and

nonpoint pollution and other resources management problems. For example, in some areas the public is beginning to demand adoption of local land use regulations to address nonpoint pollution. To be equitable, regulations must encompass urban as well as rural activities, the sources as well as the effects of resource problems, and a philosophy of progressive as well as ultimate penalties.

The BWSR believes that local regulatory authorities must:

1. Be provided the governmental powers necessary to address water and soil management issues proactively.
2. Be able to obtain the resources needed to properly administer and enforce local rules and official controls.
3. Couple local regulations with active efforts to educate residents and provide incentives to land occupiers to properly manage water and soil resources.
4. Be encouraged to go beyond minimum state standards for delegated programs and adopt local regulations to meet their unique needs.

BWSR's regulation-related management strategies will include:

*Providing general guidance and assistance to local governments seeking to adopt official controls or rules addressing surface water runoff, erosion and sediment control, water quality, and other aspects of water and soil resources management.

*Developing and making available model ordinances and rules for water and soil resources management, and supporting needed improvements in the statutory powers of local governments to regulate activities impacting water and soil resources.

*Encouraging local governments to make use of their regulatory authorities in addressing water and soil resources management issues, and to maximize their roles in achieving compliance with state and federal laws and rules.

*Making use of the BWSR's local plan approval authorities to ensure communication and cooperation among local governments and state agencies regarding local water and soil resources management programs and projects.

V. THE BWSR'S FUTURE

The BWSR believes that its unique structure and role provide an unprecedented opportunity for local governments to greatly expand their roles in water and soil resources management and state policy development.

The BWSR envisions its future to include:

*Creating a more unified voice for local government at the state and federal levels on water and soil resources management issues.

*Acting as a catalyst for creation of coalitions among local government associations, state and federal resource agencies, and private resource organizations on emerging water and soil resources management issues.

*Serving as an effective participant in state and federal water and soil resources policy development.

BOARD OF WATER & SOIL RESOURCES
110B COMPREHENSIVE WATER PLANNING
COUNTY STATUS REPORT

April 11, 1990

COUNTY	RESOLUTION TO PLAN (DATE)	INDEPENDENT COUNTY	PART OF REGIONAL PLANNING GROUP	SUBMITTED FOR PRELIMINARY REVIEW (DATE)	SUBMITTED FOR FINAL REVIEW (DATE)	BWSR BOARD OVERVIEW (DATE)	BWSR PLAN APPROVAL (DATE)	SCHEDULED PLAN UPDATE (DATE)
AITKIN	9/15/87		MH	1/01/90	4/01/90			
BECKER	YES		RRV	8/04/89	12/01/89	12/20/89	2/28/89	1995
BELTRAMI	10/27/87		MH	6/05/89	8/09/89	8/23/89	10/25/89	1995
BENTON	10/19/88	X						
BIG STONE								
BLUE EARTH	6/24/86		SC					
BROWN	8/24/87		SC	9/01/89	12/05/89	1/24/90	2/28/90	1995
CARLTON	12/8/87	X						
CASS	10/9/87		MH	8/23/89	1/05/90	1/24/90	3/28/90	1995
CHIPPEWA	3/05/90		WC					
CHISAGO								
CLAY	YES		RRV	8/04/89	12/01/89	12/20/89	2/28/90	1995
CLEARWATER	10/28/87		MH	6/05/89	8/09/89	8/23/89	10/25/89	1995
COOK								
COTTONWOOD	8/18/87		SC					
CROW WING	11/3/87		MH	12/27/89				
DODGE	12/22/87		RZ	8/21/89	1/01/90	1/24/90	3/28/90	1995
DOUGLAS	5/24/88	X		8/15/89	11/01/89	11/22/89	2/28/90	1995
FARIBAULT	6/17/86		SC	11/14/89				
FILLMORE	12/8/87		RZ	8/30/89	12/05/89	1/24/90	3/28/90	1995
FREEBORN	6/23/86		SC	10/01/89				
GOODHUE	12/15/87		RZ	7/31/89	12/05/89	1/24/90	2/28/90	1995
GRANT	YES		RRV	8/04/89	12/01/89	12/20/89	2/28/90	1995
HOUSTON	12/8/87		RZ	9/25/89	1/5/90	1/24/90	3/28/90	1995
HUBBARD	10/7/87		MH	7/05/89	10/03/89	10/25/89	12/20/89	1994
ISANTI								
ITASCA	10/27/87		MH					
JACKSON	6/23/86		SC	2/01/90				
KANABEC								
KANDIYOHI	2/06/90		EC					
KITTSO	10/6/87		RRV	8/04/89	12/01/89	12/20/89	2/28/90	1995
KOOCHICHING								
LAC QUI PARLE								
LAKE								
LAKE OF THE WOODS								
LESUEUR	6/24/86		SC					
LINCOLN	9/15/87		RC	10/29/89				
LYON	10/10/87		RC	10/29/89				
MCLEOD	2/06/90		EC					
MAHNOMEN	10/13/87		RRV	8/04/89	12/01/89	12/20/89	2/28/90	1995
MARSHALL	10/20/87		RRV	8/04/89	12/01/89	12/20/89	2/28/90	1995
MARTIN	6/17/86		SC	6/1/89	1/02/90	1/24/90	3/28/90	1995
MEEKER	8/15/89		EC					
MILLE LACS	12/89	X						
MORRISON	10/27/87		MH	12/01/89	4/01/90			
MOWER	12/15/87		RZ	8/04/89	12/05/89	1/24/90	2/28/90	1995
MURRAY	10/10/87		RC	10/15/89				

BOARD OF WATER & SOIL RESOURCES
110B COMPREHENSIVE WATER PLANNING
COUNTY STATUS REPORT

April 11, 1990

COUNTY	RESOLUTION TO PLAN (DATE)	INDEPENDENT COUNTY	PART OF REGIONAL PLANNING GROUP	SUBMITTED FOR PRELIMINARY REVIEW (DATE)	SUBMITTED FOR FINAL REVIEW (DATE)	BWSR BOARD OVERVIEW (DATE)	BWSR PLAN APPROVAL (DATE)	SCHEDULED PLAN UPDATE (DATE)
NICOLLET	7/15/86		SC	1/05/90				
NOBLES	YES	X		9/20/89	2/01/90	2/28/90		
NORMAN	YES		RRV	8/04/89	12/01/89	12/20/89	2/28/90	1995
OLMSTED	YES		RZ	8/07/89	1/01/90	1/24/90	3/28/90	2000
OTTER TAIL	YES		RRV	8/04/89	12/01/89	12/20/89	2/28/90	1995
PENNINGTON	YES		RRV	8/04/89	12/01/89	12/20/89	2/28/90	1995
PINE								
PIPESTONE	10/10/87		RC	11/22/89				
POLK	YES		RRV	8/04/89	12/01/89	12/20/89	2/28/90	1995
POPE								
RED LAKE	YES		RRV	8/04/89	12/01/89	12/20/89	2/28/90	1995
REDWOOD	10/10/87		RC	12/28/89				
RENVILLE	3/01/90		EC					
RICE	12/8/87		RZ	8/23/89	12/05/89	1/24/90	2/28/90	1995
ROCK	7/01/89	X						
ROSEAU	YES		RRV	8/04/89	12/01/89	12/20/89	2/28/90	1995
ST. LOUIS	12/19/89	X						
SHERBURNE	11/21/89	X						
SIBLEY	6/24/86		SC					
STEARNS	2/3/88		*					
STEELE	6/24/86		SC	8/24/89				
STEVENS	YES		RRV	8/04/89	12/01/89	12/20/89	2/28/90	1995
SWIFT								
TODD	9/18/89	X						
TRAVERSE	YES		RRV	8/04/89	12/01/89	12/20/89	2/28/90	1995
WABASHA	12/22/87		RZ	8/27/89	1/01/90	1/24/90	3/28/90	1995
WADENA								
WASECA	7/1/86		SC	10/01/89	4/01/90			
WATONWAN	6/24/86		SC	4/89	8/01/89	8/23/89	10/25/89	1995
WILKIN	YES		RRV	8/04/89	12/01/89	12/20/89	2/28/90	1995
WINONA	2/23/88		RZ	9/06/89	1/05/90	1/24/90	3/28/90	2000
WRIGHT	6/20/89	X						
YELLOW MEDICINE	10/10/87		RC					
TOTALS	80	67	10	57	47	36	33	32

RRV - Red River Valley 15 Co. Joint Powers Board
 MH - Mississippi Headwaters Board, 8 Counties
 RC - Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area, 6 Counties
 SC - South Central Watershed Planning Project, 13 Counties
 RZ - Root-Zumbro Rivers Watershed, 9 County Joint Powers Board
 WC - West Central MN 5 County Group
 EC - East Central MN 4 County Group
 * - Stearns County is a LCMR funded planning effort
 X - Independent Counties, Counties preparing plans alone



News Release

Jim

National Association of Conservation Districts

Communications Office:
P.O. Box 855
League City, TX 77574
(713) 332-3402

Washington Headquarters Office:
509 Capitol Court, N.E.
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 547-6223

RECEIVED

APR 10 1990

CONTACT: Ellen Dougherty (202) 547-6223
Nat'l. Assn. of Conservation Districts

Margie Williams (202) 547-7800
National Assn. of Wheat Growers

FARM GROUPS ENDORSE SENATOR FOWLER'S CONSERVATION/ENVIRONMENT BILL

WASHINGTON, April 4 -- Seven major U.S. agricultural organizations have announced support for a wide-ranging conservation and environmental protection bill introduced yesterday by Sen. Wyche Fowler (D-Ga.), chairman of the Senate Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry, and Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.), Republican Leader of the U.S. Senate.

The American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers, American Soybean Association, National Association of Conservation Districts, National Association of Wheat Growers, National Corn Growers Association, National Cotton Council and U.S. Rice Producers Legislative Group said in a joint statement that Fowler's measure "continues the favorable conservation programs of the 1985 farm act and, at the same time, corrects certain administrative problems to make the programs more workable."

The bill stemmed from a nine-month process during which Fowler solicited suggestions for the conservation title of the new 1990 farm bill from a wide range of conservation and farm groups.

In addition to senators Fowler and Dole, other cosponsors of S. 2361, the "Conservation Promotion Act of 1990," are David Pryor (D-Ark.), David Boren (D-Okla.), Howell Heflin (D-Ala.), Kent Conrad (D-N.D.), Tom Daschle (D-S.D.), Max Baucus (D-Mont.), Robert Kerrey (D-Neb.), Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), Thad Cochran (R-Miss.), Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Kit Bond (R-Mo.).

(Over)

Included in the bill are the following provisions:

Conservation Reserve Program

--sets the acreage cap at 40 million acres, with discretionary authority for the secretary of agriculture to enroll an additional 10 million acres through 1995;

--expands eligibility criteria to include environmentally sensitive land;

--increases incentives for the planting of hardwood trees.

Water Quality

--additional research to develop improved agricultural practices which can affect water quality, including application of pesticides and nutrients;

--technical and financial assistance for farmers to implement "best management practices" to avoid water quality degradation.

Wetlands

--voluntary wetlands restoration efforts using the Conservation Reserve Program and long-term and permanent easements;

--mitigation of drained wetlands through restoration of previously converted wetlands;

--exemption from the 1985 farm act's "swampbuster" provisions for land farmed in six out of ten years.

Integrated Crop Management

--government crop program base and yield protection for farmers employing agricultural production systems including, but not limited to, integrated pest management and best management practices.

The farm groups expressed their appreciation to Sen. Fowler for his leadership in developing the conservation package. "We continue our pledge to work with congressional leaders and members of the environmental community to develop a conservation title for the 1990 farm bill which is environmentally progressive and, at the same time, mindful of the benefits to society of modern farming practices," the groups said.

#

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ■

Passage of the Food Security Act of 1985, with its innovative Conservation Title, dramatically changed this nation's approach to soil and wetland conservation. For the first time in history, receipt of most federal farm program benefits—commodity price supports, agricultural credit, and crop insurance—became legally contingent on the application of appropriate land stewardship practices by agricultural producers. The title and its four main provisions—conservation reserve, swampbuster, sodbuster, and conservation compliance—also changed abruptly the programs and program priorities of federal soil and water conservation agencies and their cooperators at the state and local levels—agencies that previously served their producer "clients" on a voluntary, first-come, first-served basis.

Congress authorized this sweeping policy change in part because of the shared belief within much of the agricultural and environmental communities that federal farm programs should promote natural resource conservation instead of operating at cross purposes with conservation goals as the programs had in years past.

Three so-called compliance provisions in the Conservation Title establish this linkage: swampbuster, which prohibits the conversion of wetlands to cropland as a condition of eligibility for farm program benefits; sodbuster, which makes receipt of the same benefits contingent on the application of a conservation plan whenever highly erodible land is broken out for cropping purposes; and conservation compliance, which likewise requires implementation of a conservation plan by producers who wish to continue farming highly erodible land while receiving farm program benefits.

The fourth provision in the title, the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), gives producers an incentive to retire highly erodible cropland and other fragile land from production for a period of 10 years. Producers who enroll cropland in the CRP receive an annual rental payment for idling the land. In return, they must establish and maintain a permanent vegetative cover on the CRP acres for erosion control and other environmental improvement purposes.

If the Conservation Title is to serve as a basis for improved agricultural policy, implementation of these four main provisions must prove out "on the ground." Whether each does or not hinges on a number of important questions: Will the provisions be implemented uniformly and equitably across

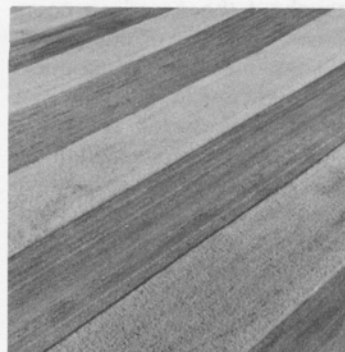
the country? Will the positive impacts of the provisions on soil, wetlands, and other natural resources justify public investment in the programs? Will individual producers and rural communities be unduly penalized economically by the programs?

With these and related questions in mind, the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) in mid-1988 undertook an independent evaluation of the Conservation Title's implementation by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and cooperating agencies. A series of 22 field visits were conducted in counties selected by the project Steering Committee as representative of the conservation challenges confronting agricultural producers and the implementing agencies. Fifteen of these visits focused on the highly erodible land provisions. The other seven visits dealt with swampbuster.

This field work involved extensive interviews with local USDA program managers, members of producer committees at the county level, and representatives of the agribusiness community. A survey of producers was also conducted in those counties where the highly erodible land visits were conducted. In addition, random samples of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and sodbuster plans were examined and field-checks done of the specific acreages involved. Similar field-checks were made of wetland determinations and exemptions granted under the swampbuster provision. A random sample of conservation compliance plans in each county was also analyzed in detail.

Much of what evaluation team members learned and observed during the field visits was encouraging. Many of the USDA and conservation district employees in the field offices visited have performed admirably under trying circumstances, and the resource protection benefits achieved thus far have been substantial. At the same time, there are problems—in implementation procedures and in lost opportunities for added resource protection.

This report, the first of three annual reports in the evaluation project, is not a comprehensive analysis of the law and all of its ramifications. But it should prove useful to policymakers, USDA administrators, and others seeking to refine the programs authorized by the Conservation Title and to use the experience with this historic legislation in crafting the 1990 farm bill and related legislation. The report sheds light on the capability of the conservation infrastructure



On the basis of the information collected during the 22 field visits and an independent analysis, the Steering Committee reached consensus on these key findings with respect to each of the four main provisions in the Conservation Title:

Conservation Reserve
1. Cooperation among USDA agencies was good at most locations, and the CRP is strongly supported by producers. Local USDA program managers and producer committee members and representatives of agribusiness.

2. Changing program rules and a lack of training and guidance from state and national offices of USDA agencies created some confusion early in the CRP implementation process. But generally the agencies have cooperated well. ASCS and SCS in particular, and the CRP, has run smoothly.

A vast majority of the individual interviewees, including producers, expressed a great deal of support for the CRP and the natural resource protection goals the program strives to achieve.

3. Soil erosion control on CRP acres will be substantial once adequate vegetative cover is established, but the per acre and total soil savings may be less than expected.

Because the land enrolled appears overwhelmingly to have been highly erodible land, and because vegetative cover is adequate on most of the enrolled acreage, soil erosion rates will be reduced substantially on nearly all CRP acres. On some CRP acres, however, drought, insect, and weed problems have delayed the establishment of permanent vegetative cover, which will also delay the attainment of some erosion control benefits and reduce total soil savings over the duration of the contracts.

Based on comparisons with National Resource Inventory (NRI) data and data from conservation compliance plans, it appears

in place throughout the American countryside to deliver programs of this magnitude. It gives some indication of producer attitudes toward these revolutionary policies and what might be expected as policy-makers and the public push for additional policy changes. And it provides some measure for gauging what might be accomplished with policies of this type in terms of resource protection and at what cost.

The Key Findings

On the basis of the information collected during the 22 field visits and its subsequent analysis, the Steering Committee reached consensus on these key findings with respect to each of the four main provisions in the Conservation Title:

Conservation Reserve

1. *Cooperation among USDA agencies was good at most locations, and the CRP is strongly supported by producers, local USDA program managers and producer-committee members, and representatives of agribusiness.*

Changing program rules and a lack of training and guidance from state and national offices of USDA agencies created some confusion early in the CRP implementation process. But generally the agencies have cooperated well, ASCS and SCS in particular, and the CRP has run smoothly.

A vast majority of the individuals interviewed, including producers, expressed a great deal of support for the CRP and the natural resource protection goals the program strives to achieve.

2. *Soil erosion control on CRP acres will be substantial once adequate vegetative cover is established, but the per acre and total soil savings may be less than reported.*

Because the land enrolled appears overwhelmingly to meet the highly erodible land criteria and because vegetative cover is adequate on most of the enrolled acreage, soil erosion rates will be reduced substantially on nearly all CRP acres. On some CRP acres, however, drought, insect, and weed problems have delayed the establishment of permanent vegetative cover, which will also delay the attainment of some erosion control benefits and reduce total soil savings over the duration of the contracts.

Based on comparisons with National Resource Inventory (NRI) data and data from conservation compliance plans, it appears

also that the CRP contracts we examined, on average, tend to show pre-contract erosion conditions higher than those in the NRI. There are several reasons for this, including the fact that the same assumptions were not always used in calculating wind erosion estimates for CRP, conservation compliance, and sodbuster purposes. Moreover, soil erosion calculations were not included in some CRP case files. Per acre and total erosion reductions are likely to be less than reported as a result. How much less we were unable to determine.

3. *The CRP will yield substantial wildlife conservation benefits, despite the fact that little attention has been paid to wildlife in the development of most CRP plans.*

The predominance of tame grass species, relative lack of wildlife plantings, and a general lack of emphasis on wildlife aspects of CRP-induced land use change has resulted in lost opportunities to maximize wildlife conservation on CRP acres. Only a small fraction of CRP acres have been planned specifically for wildlife purposes.

Still, the establishment of permanent grass and tree cover on 30-plus million acres will provide habitat for many wildlife species that was nonexistent when the land was in crop production.

4. *SCS and ASCS officials had not yet made the required field-checks to implement the CRP, potentially curtailing program performance in the face of problems with establishing and maintaining permanent vegetative cover on CRP acres.*

SCS staff members in a number of counties had not completed field-checks to certify seeding establishment on CRP acres. ASCS officials in a number of counties had not yet conducted annual field-checks to determine if producers were adequately maintaining CRP acres. This lack of field-checks may curtail program performance because unexpected and often uncontrollable problems, such as drought, insect infestations, and weed problems, have arisen on a portion of the CRP acreage. Increased management and perhaps reseeding will likely be necessary to establish adequate vegetative cover on some CRP land.

Swampbuster

1. *Swampbuster has slowed the conversion of wetlands to cropland, particularly larger wetlands, but violations are occurring.*

Relatively few acres of converted wetlands were recorded in the seven counties ex-

amined, and the consensus among those USDA officials, FWS (Fish and Wildlife Service) biologists, and producer-committee members interviewed was that drainage had slowed substantially because of swampbuster and because of market forces in agriculture. However, evidence indicates that violations continue, whether inadvertent or intentional, including some apparent violations witnessed by evaluation team members. Wetland conversion continues also by producers who, for whatever reason, do not participate in federal farm programs.

No benefits had been denied producers for swampbuster violations in the counties visited. Some individuals interviewed, including a few critical of USDA's implementation of swampbuster to date, feel the all-or-nothing penalty for a violation may be too severe in some cases.

2. *USDA officials generally are making accurate wetland determinations and using the exemptions provided in the swampbuster provision in an acceptable manner, though evidence indicates considerable leniency in granting commenced exemptions at a number of locations.*

In spite of considerable delay in undertaking wetland inventories and making wetland determinations at most of the locations visited, SCS officials are doing a creditable job of making accurate wetland determinations. No evidence was found that farmed wetlands were being mislabeled as prior-converted wetlands, which is one way the intent of swampbuster might be circumvented. Some prior-converted wetlands were later reclassified as farmed wetlands once the latter became eligible for enrollment in the Conservation Reserve Program, however.

ASCS officials appeared to have been lenient in granting commenced exemptions in most of the counties examined. Moreover, the required consultation between ASCS and FWS on commenced decisions was not occurring in all counties, in part because ASCS was not always inviting FWS participation and in part because FWS at times declined to participate.

Some resentment exists among local USDA officials and producers at certain locations over the reversal of appeals on wetland determinations and exemptions by USDA officials at state and national levels. Some of these reversals, according to local interests, appear to have been based more on considerations other than technical consid-

3. *Future administration of swampbuster may be hampered by the workload confronting SCS field office staffs on swampbuster, conservation compliance, and other responsibilities that might be forthcoming in the 1990 farm bill.*

A substantial backlog of wetland determinations remains to be done in some counties because priority was given earlier to implementation of the highly erodible land provisions of the Conservation Title. Completing these determinations by the December 31, 1991 deadline will be difficult in some field offices, given current staffing levels. Shortcuts in making these remaining determinations may become necessary, and effective administration of swampbuster appears unlikely under these circumstances.

The number of requests for redetermination of a wetland's status may also become insurmountable for SCS once producers learn what areas have been identified as wetlands, and the requirement that SCS document scope and effect of prior drainage has already created a considerable workload in counties with large acreages of farmed wetlands.

Effectively carrying out the responsibilities associated with implementation of conservation compliance and the possibility of gaining added responsibilities in the 1990 farm bill will further compound the administration of swampbuster for SCS in many locations.

4. *Widespread support exists for the swampbuster provision, but that support appears more tenuous than in the case of the other provisions in the Conservation Title, primarily because many producers define "wetland" differently than does the law and its administrative rules.*

Most local USDA program managers, FWS officials, and producer-committee members interviewed in the seven counties expressed support for the concept of swampbuster. But a wetland under the law is not a wetland in the view of many producers, they say, which complicates implementation of swampbuster, particularly in the prairie pothole region of the country. Wetlands are larger marshes in the minds of many producers, with cattails and ducks and perhaps open water. Small potholes, many less than an acre in size, that sometimes hold water for only a few weeks in the spring and early summer are not wetlands at all, according to farmers, in spite of what the law says; instead, the potholes are viewed as nuisances to be drained and farmed. Fish and wildlife

interests meanwhile contend that the potholes provide critical breeding and nesting habitat for waterfowl. The upshot of this difference of opinion is a standoff between farm and environmental interests that may be difficult to resolve.

Similar differences of opinion over the definition of "wetland" exist among producers elsewhere in the country with respect to streams, wooded areas with saturated soils, and cropland or pasture with wetland characteristics.

Resentment over such matters, including the perception that the government is trying to tell them what they can and can't do with their land, and a lack of understanding of swampbuster in certain cases, may explain why some producers are not accurate in completing Form AD-1026 from year to year with regard to the drainage activity they plan to undertake.

Sodbuster

1. *The sodbuster provision appears to have slowed the conversion of highly erodible land in grass or trees to cropland, although it is difficult to determine just how much because records are not kept beyond the local level.*

A total of 1,132 sodbusting intentions had been filed by producers in the counties visited encompassing 38,422 acres. There were indications that not all land conversion that could have been sodbusting was being reported by producers, particularly in some Great Plains' counties, and little monitoring for violations was occurring. Moreover, no records of sodbusting intentions are kept at state and national levels, so it is difficult to determine just how many instances of sodbusting actually have occurred and what acreages are involved.

2. *Because soil erosion calculations were not included in the case files of many sodbusting plans, USDA program managers and producers alike in many cases do not know what specific effects the application of plans is having on soil erosion rates. There could be questions about producer compliance with the provision, so far as the plan is concerned, if prior use of the land is inadequately documented in the planning process and if conservation treatment alternatives are not selected accordingly.*

A producer who breaks out highly erodible land that is in native grass or trees must apply a conservation plan that will reduce post-treatment erosion to the soil loss tol-

erance level (T) or below. Sodbusted fields that are in introduced species of vegetation can be planned to whatever level of soil erosion control is allowed by any of the conservation systems in the local field office technical guide, including alternative conservation systems. The technical guide contains lists of treatment alternatives by soil groups and indicates for typical slope lengths and other conditions which alternatives will achieve T and which will not. SCS officials thus know which alternatives are eligible for use on sodbusted land. Conservation plans would be more complete and technically defensible for producers, however, if preplan and postplan erosion rates were documented for all sodbusted fields.

3. *While a variety of conservation management and structural practices were included in the sodbusting plans examined, there was heavy reliance on crop residue management techniques that producers may find difficult to apply and maintain and thus remain in compliance.*

Some conservation plans specify high residue levels for low-residue-producing crops or for poor soils, even in dry regions where yields and residue levels tend to be low anyway. Other plans specify residue levels that may only be achievable by producers who have experience with conservation tillage systems, particularly no-till, and can produce high crop yields from year to year.

4. *Confusion has existed in ASCS and SCS field offices over who is to perform compliance checks associated with the implementation of sodbuster. This may have resulted in a breakdown of enforcement measures to date in some counties.*

SCS officials sometimes, but not always, were checking to see if producers had fully implemented their conservation plans on fields subject to sodbuster. ASCS officials annually spot-check 15 percent of all federal farm program participants in a county, but those producers who had expressed an intent to convert land on Form AD-1026 were not included in the pool of program participants from which the annual sample for spot-checks was drawn; hence, producers who had converted land under the sodbuster provision were checked only if their names were drawn by virtue of their participation in other ASCS programs. ASCS officials in some counties indicated they had not spot-checked any sodbusters prior to the evaluation team's visit.

5. *Widespread support exists for the sod-*

buster provision among producers, local USDA program managers and committee members, and agribusiness representatives.

A majority (55 percent) of respondents in our producer survey expressed support for the sodbuster provision, including its enforcement that could, in some instances, result in the loss of federal farm program benefits. Most local USDA program managers, the members of producer-oriented committees who work with these agencies, and representatives of the agribusiness community also indicated strong support for the provision. However, a number of these individuals do not believe that sodbuster has discouraged the conversion of highly erodible pasture, range, and forest land to cropland.

Conservation Compliance

1. Significant reductions in soil erosion will result if conservation compliance plans are implemented as written. But implementation will be difficult for a significant number of plans, and the soil erosion reduction overall may be less than reported or anticipated.

Changes in farming practices—most of them modest and inexpensive—and application of special conservation measures called for in conservation compliance plans will significantly improve erosion control on highly erodible cropland. Essentially all producers who have highly erodible land are now aware of that fact, and this enhanced awareness alone should improve soil conservation efforts. At the time of our visits, most producers who needed plans had plans, nearly all others who needed plans intended to get them, and a preponderance of those who had plans considered them reasonable and practical.

For several reasons, soil conservation achieved under compliance may be less than anticipated in the plans, however. First, some plans call for crop residue levels that will be difficult to achieve and maintain; other plans entail installation of structural practices that may not be affordable with available public and private funds for cost-sharing and technical assistance. Second, preplan erosion estimates in some of the counties visited may understate existing erosion conditions. These observations suggest that while erosion will be reduced significantly average reductions may be less than estimated in plans. The study produced no basis for making a specific estimate.

2. SCS workload may exceed available staff capacity in many field offices between 1990 and 1995 because of a heavy demand for technical assistance to implement and monitor existing plans and because a substantial proportion of the plans may need to be revised. A technical assistance shortfall could seriously compromise the effectiveness of conservation compliance.

Implementation and spot-checking of conservation compliance plans could require a great deal of technical assistance during a period when staff levels are projected to decline significantly in most of the counties visited. Compounding this problem is the likelihood that many conservation compliance plans will have to be revised, some of them substantially and perhaps more than once, as implementation begins in 1990. Plan revisions have long been a part of SCS procedures (for example, in the Great Plains Conservation Program), but never on such a large scale. If the evaluation team's review of the planning process is any indication, both the revision and implementation of plans will overwhelmingly be conducted "one-on-one" with producers, intensifying demands on staff. Other Conservation Title provisions, notably swampbuster, will further stretch the technical assistance workload, as may provisions in the 1990 farm bill.

As a result of these concerns, a widening gap is anticipated between technical assistance needs and staffing that could seriously compromise implementation of conservation compliance as early as the end of 1990. The problem could become acute by 1993, particularly if enforcement challenges prove substantial and require routine field inspections.

3. Variation was found in the quality of conservation compliance plans and the planning process. Some conservation opportunities appear to have been lost, and in some cases producers and SCS officials may not know how much soil conservation the plans should or will achieve.

Conservation compliance plans for more than half of the land included in the study did not contain estimates of soil erosion rates that would indicate to the producer and to USDA officials how serious the erosion problems were at the time of planning and the degree to which those problems would be solved if the plans were implemented. Some plans provided producers with considerable detail about what would be required; others consisted of a single sheet of paper on which producers selected from a

list one or more practices for their highly erodible fields.

Alternative conservation systems were rarely used in the counties examined; about 80 percent of the plans indicated that erosion would be reduced to a rate at or below the soil loss tolerance (T) value.

Generally, those offices using computer-assisted planning tools, mainly for calculating erosion estimates, produced better, more complete plans and had a better understanding of what the plans might accomplish.

4. Success of the conservation compliance policy rests primarily on the ability of producers to increase and maintain crop residue on the soil surface, especially by reducing tillage. Other erosion control options—strip cropping, contouring, crop rotation, etc.—were generally not required or even considered in developing plans.

Most conservation compliance plans did not call for strip cropping, crop rotations, or structural practices. Maintenance of crop residue cover on the soil surface will be the key to success for most producers. It appears that in some plans, however, residue cover goals are unrealistic, given the agronomic potential of the soil and expected crop yields. For example, some plans call for keeping as much as 60 percent residue cover with continuous soybeans. Producers may have to adopt additional, low-cost practices, such as strip cropping or contouring, to attain the erosion reduction goals set forth in the plans and thereby avoid the potential loss of farm program benefits.

5. The vast majority of producers supports the conservation compliance policy and believes that implementation of conservation plans will have no impact or a positive impact on the profitability of their farming operations. Some producers still question the resolve of Congress and USDA to implement the policy on schedule, however.

Nearly 75 percent of the respondents in our producer survey expressed support for conservation compliance. Of those who had obtained a conservation plan at the time of the survey, 80 percent said they considered the plan reasonable and practical; nearly the same percentage said plan implementation would have a positive impact or no impact on farm profitability. At the same time, 22 percent of the respondents said they do not expect to lose federal farm program benefits if they are unable to achieve compliance or choose not to be in compliance; another 28 percent said they did not know if they would lose benefits.

MINNESOTA LOTTERY



*This proposal
offers better
funding to
RIM.
preferred
option!*

21.7%
to
**Greater
Minnesota
Corporation**

\$11.22 million

38.3%
to
**Debt Service for
Environment,
Natural Resources,
and Higher Education
Bonding**

\$ 19.8 million

28.3%
for
**Higher
Education
Bonding
Debt
Service**

\$ 14.63 million

10.0%
for
**Environment
and
Natural Resource
Bonding Debt Service**

Wastewater Treatment
Independent Grants
RIM
Parks, Natural Areas, Trails
Waterbank

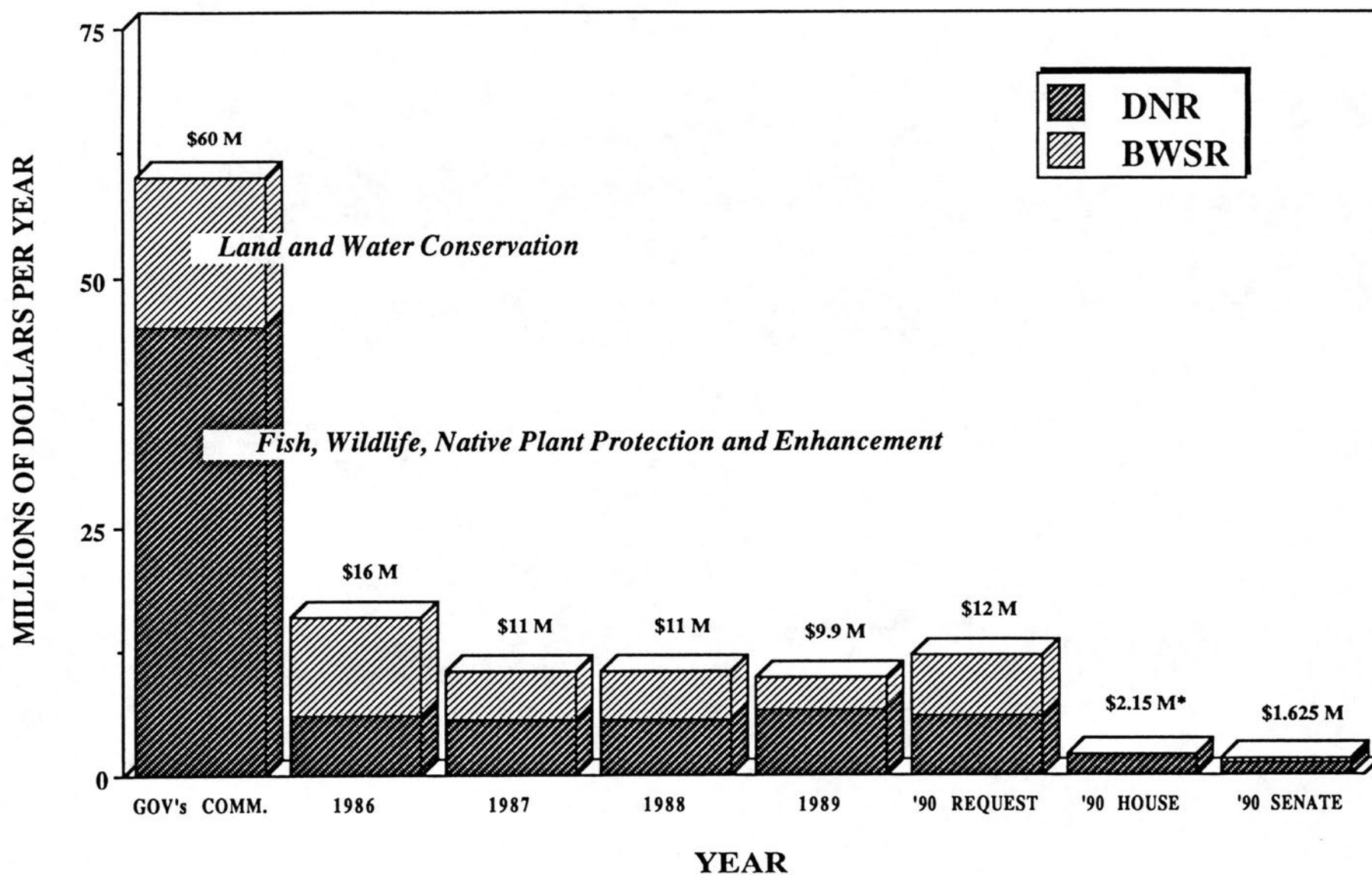
\$ 5.17 million

40%
**Dedicated
in Constitution
to MN Environment
and Natural Resources
Trust Fund.**
**Dedication expires
when Trust balance
reaches \$1 billion.**

\$20.68 million

**TRUST FUND CONSTITUTIONAL DEDICATION
PROPOSAL**

ANNUAL REINVEST IN MINNESOTA FUNDING



* House bill includes \$1.15 million per year for Water Bank, Dorer Forest acquisition, and Savage Fen SNA.



News Release

National Association of Conservation Districts

Communications Office:
P.O. Box 855
League City, TX 77574
(713) 332-3402

Washington Headquarters Office:
509 Capitol Court, N.E.
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 547-6223

CONTACT: Ellen Dougherty (202) 547-6223
Nat'l. Assn. of Conservation Districts
Margie Williams (202) 547-7800
National Assn. of Wheat Growers

FARM GROUPS ENDORSE SENATOR FOWLER'S CONSERVATION/ENVIRONMENT BILL

WASHINGTON, April 4 -- Seven major U.S. agricultural organizations have announced support for a wide-ranging conservation and environmental protection bill introduced yesterday by Sen. Wyche Fowler (D-Ga.), chairman of the Senate Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry, and Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.), Republican Leader of the U.S. Senate.

The American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers, American Soybean Association, National Association of Conservation Districts, National Association of Wheat Growers, National Corn Growers Association, National Cotton Council and U.S. Rice Producers Legislative Group said in a joint statement that Fowler's measure "continues the favorable conservation programs of the 1985 farm act and, at the same time, corrects certain administrative problems to make the programs more workable."

The bill stemmed from a nine-month process during which Fowler solicited suggestions for the conservation title of the new 1990 farm bill from a wide range of conservation and farm groups.

In addition to senators Fowler and Dole, other cosponsors of S. 2361, the "Conservation Promotion Act of 1990," are David Pryor (D-Ark.), David Boren (D-Okla.), Howell Heflin (D-Ala.), Kent Conrad (D-N.D.), Tom Daschle (D-S.D.), Max Baucus (D-Mont.), Robert Kerrey (D-Neb.), Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), Thad Cochran (R-Miss.), Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Kit Bond (R-Mo.).

(Over)

Included in the bill are the following provisions:

Conservation Reserve Program

--sets the acreage cap at 40 million acres, with discretionary authority for the secretary of agriculture to enroll an additional 10 million acres through 1995;

--expands eligibility criteria to include environmentally sensitive land;

--increases incentives for the planting of hardwood trees.

Water Quality

--additional research to develop improved agricultural practices which can affect water quality, including application of pesticides and nutrients;

--technical and financial assistance for farmers to implement "best management practices" to avoid water quality degradation.

Wetlands

--voluntary wetlands restoration efforts using the Conservation Reserve Program and long-term and permanent easements;

--mitigation of drained wetlands through restoration of previously converted wetlands;

--exemption from the 1985 farm act's "swampbuster" provisions for land farmed in six out of ten years.

Integrated Crop Management

--government crop program base and yield protection for farmers employing agricultural production systems including, but not limited to, integrated pest management and best management practices.

The farm groups expressed their appreciation to Sen. Fowler for his leadership in developing the conservation package. "We continue our pledge to work with congressional leaders and members of the environmental community to develop a conservation title for the 1990 farm bill which is environmentally progressive and, at the same time, mindful of the benefits to society of modern farming practices," the groups said.

#

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ■

Passage of the Food Security Act of 1985, with its innovative Conservation Title, dramatically changed this nation's approach to soil and wetland conservation. For the first time in history, receipt of most federal farm program benefits—commodity price supports, agricultural credit, and crop insurance—became legally contingent on the application of appropriate land stewardship practices by agricultural producers. The title and its four main provisions—conservation reserve, swampbuster, sodbuster, and conservation compliance—also changed abruptly the programs and program priorities of federal soil and water conservation agencies and their cooperators at the state and local levels—agencies that previously served their producer “clients” on a voluntary, first-come, first-served basis.

Congress authorized this sweeping policy change in part because of the shared belief within much of the agricultural and environmental communities that federal farm programs should promote natural resource conservation instead of operating at cross purposes with conservation goals as the programs had in years past.

Three so-called compliance provisions in the Conservation Title establish this linkage: swampbuster, which prohibits the conversion of wetlands to cropland as a condition of eligibility for farm program benefits; sodbuster, which makes receipt of the same benefits contingent on the application of a conservation plan whenever highly erodible land is broken out for cropping purposes; and conservation compliance, which likewise requires implementation of a conservation plan by producers who wish to continue farming highly erodible land while receiving farm program benefits.

The fourth provision in the title, the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), gives producers an incentive to retire highly erodible cropland and other fragile land from production for a period of 10 years. Producers who enroll cropland in the CRP receive an annual rental payment for idling the land. In return, they must establish and maintain a permanent vegetative cover on the CRP acres for erosion control and other environmental improvement purposes.

If the Conservation Title is to serve as a basis for improved agricultural policy, implementation of these four main provisions must prove out “on the ground.” Whether each does or not hinges on a number of important questions: Will the provisions be implemented uniformly and equitably across

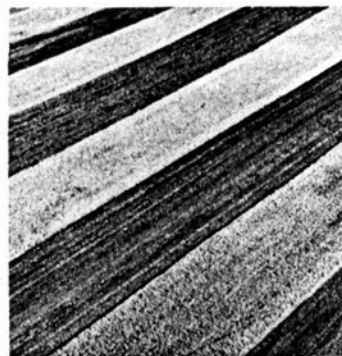
the country? Will the positive impacts of the provisions on soil, wetlands, and other natural resources justify public investment in the programs? Will individual producers and rural communities be unduly penalized economically by the programs?

With these and related questions in mind, the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) in mid-1988 undertook an independent evaluation of the Conservation Title's implementation by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and cooperating agencies. A series of 22 field visits were conducted in counties selected by the project Steering Committee as representative of the conservation challenges confronting agricultural producers and the implementing agencies. Fifteen of these visits focused on the highly erodible land provisions. The other seven visits dealt with swampbuster.

This field work involved extensive interviews with local USDA program managers, members of producer committees at the county level, and representatives of the agribusiness community. A survey of producers was also conducted in those counties where the highly erodible land visits were conducted. In addition, random samples of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and sodbuster plans were examined and field-checks done of the specific acreages involved. Similar field-checks were made of wetland determinations and exemptions granted under the swampbuster provision. A random sample of conservation compliance plans in each county was also analyzed in detail.

Much of what evaluation team members learned and observed during the field visits was encouraging. Many of the USDA and conservation district employees in the field offices visited have performed admirably under trying circumstances, and the resource protection benefits achieved thus far have been substantial. At the same time, there are problems—in implementation procedures and in lost opportunities for added resource protection.

This report, the first of three annual reports in the evaluation project, is not a comprehensive analysis of the law and all of its ramifications. But it should prove useful to policymakers, USDA administrators, and others seeking to refine the programs authorized by the Conservation Title and to use the experience with this historic legislation in crafting the 1990 farm bill and related legislation. The report sheds light on the capability of the conservation infrastructure



in place throughout the American countryside to deliver programs of this magnitude. It gives some indication of producer attitudes toward these revolutionary policies and what might be expected as policy-makers and the public push for additional policy changes. And it provides some measure for gauging what might be accomplished with policies of this type in terms of resource protection and at what cost.

The Key Findings

On the basis of the information collected during the 22 field visits and its subsequent analysis, the Steering Committee reached consensus on these key findings with respect to each of the four main provisions in the Conservation Title:

Conservation Reserve

1. *Cooperation among USDA agencies was good at most locations, and the CRP is strongly supported by producers, local USDA program managers and producer-committee members, and representatives of agribusiness.*

Changing program rules and a lack of training and guidance from state and national offices of USDA agencies created some confusion early in the CRP implementation process. But generally the agencies have cooperated well, ASCS and SCS in particular, and the CRP has run smoothly.

A vast majority of the individuals interviewed, including producers, expressed a great deal of support for the CRP and the natural resource protection goals the program strives to achieve.

2. *Soil erosion control on CRP acres will be substantial once adequate vegetative cover is established, but the per acre and total soil savings may be less than reported.*

Because the land enrolled appears overwhelmingly to meet the highly erodible land criteria and because vegetative cover is adequate on most of the enrolled acreage, soil erosion rates will be reduced substantially on nearly all CRP acres. On some CRP acres, however, drought, insect, and weed problems have delayed the establishment of permanent vegetative cover, which will also delay the attainment of some erosion control benefits and reduce total soil savings over the duration of the contracts.

Based on comparisons with National Resource Inventory (NRI) data and data from conservation compliance plans, it appears

also that the CRP contracts we examined, on average, tend to show pre-contract erosion conditions higher than those in the NRI. There are several reasons for this, including the fact that the same assumptions were not always used in calculating wind erosion estimates for CRP, conservation compliance, and sodbuster purposes. Moreover, soil erosion calculations were not included in some CRP case files. Per acre and total erosion reductions are likely to be less than reported as a result. How much less we were unable to determine.

3. *The CRP will yield substantial wildlife conservation benefits, despite the fact that little attention has been paid to wildlife in the development of most CRP plans.*

The predominance of tame grass species, relative lack of wildlife plantings, and a general lack of emphasis on wildlife aspects of CRP-induced land use change has resulted in lost opportunities to maximize wildlife conservation on CRP acres. Only a small fraction of CRP acres have been planned specifically for wildlife purposes.

Still, the establishment of permanent grass and tree cover on 30-plus million acres will provide habitat for many wildlife species that was nonexistent when the land was in crop production.

4. *SCS and ASCS officials had not yet made the required field-checks to implement the CRP, potentially curtailing program performance in the face of problems with establishing and maintaining permanent vegetative cover on CRP acres.*

SCS staff members in a number of counties had not completed field-checks to certify seeding establishment on CRP acres. ASCS officials in a number of counties had not yet conducted annual field-checks to determine if producers were adequately maintaining CRP acres. This lack of field-checks may curtail program performance because unexpected and often uncontrollable problems, such as drought, insect infestations, and weed problems, have arisen on a portion of the CRP acreage. Increased management and perhaps reseeding will likely be necessary to establish adequate vegetative cover on some CRP land.

Swampbuster

1. *Swampbuster has slowed the conversion of wetlands to cropland, particularly larger wetlands, but violations are occurring.*

Relatively few acres of converted wetlands were recorded in the seven counties ex-

amined, and the consensus among those USDA officials, FWS (Fish and Wildlife Service) biologists, and producer-committee members interviewed was that drainage had slowed substantially because of swampbuster and because of market forces in agriculture. However, evidence indicates that violations continue, whether inadvertent or intentional, including some apparent violations witnessed by evaluation team members. Wetland conversion continues also by producers who, for whatever reason, do not participate in federal farm programs.

No benefits had been denied producers for swampbuster violations in the counties visited. Some individuals interviewed, including a few critical of USDA's implementation of swampbuster to date, feel the all-or-nothing penalty for a violation may be too severe in some cases.

2. *USDA officials generally are making accurate wetland determinations and using the exemptions provided in the swampbuster provision in an acceptable manner, though evidence indicates considerable leniency in granting commenced exemptions at a number of locations.*

In spite of considerable delay in undertaking wetland inventories and making wetland determinations at most of the locations visited, SCS officials are doing a creditable job of making accurate wetland determinations. No evidence was found that farmed wetlands were being mislabeled as prior-converted wetlands, which is one way the intent of swampbuster might be circumvented. Some prior-converted wetlands were later reclassified as farmed wetlands once the latter became eligible for enrollment in the Conservation Reserve Program, however.

ASCS officials appeared to have been lenient in granting commenced exemptions in most of the counties examined. Moreover, the required consultation between ASCS and FWS on commenced decisions was not occurring in all counties, in part because ASCS was not always inviting FWS participation and in part because FWS at times declined to participate.

Some resentment exists among local USDA officials and producers at certain locations over the reversal of appeals on wetland determinations and exemptions by USDA officials at state and national levels. Some of these reversals, according to local interests, appear to have been based more on considerations other than technical considerations.

3. *Future administration of swampbuster may be hampered by the workload confronting SCS field office staffs on swampbuster, conservation compliance, and other responsibilities that might be forthcoming in the 1990 farm bill.*

A substantial backlog of wetland determinations remains to be done in some counties because priority was given earlier to implementation of the highly erodible land provisions of the Conservation Title. Completing these determinations by the December 31, 1991 deadline will be difficult in some field offices, given current staffing levels. Shortcuts in making these remaining determinations may become necessary, and effective administration of swampbuster appears unlikely under these circumstances.

The number of requests for redetermination of a wetland's status may also become insurmountable for SCS once producers learn what areas have been identified as wetlands, and the requirement that SCS document scope and effect of prior drainage has already created a considerable workload in counties with large acreages of farmed wetlands.

Effectively carrying out the responsibilities associated with implementation of conservation compliance and the possibility of gaining added responsibilities in the 1990 farm bill will further compound the administration of swampbuster for SCS in many locations.

4. *Widespread support exists for the swampbuster provision, but that support appears more tenuous than in the case of the other provisions in the Conservation Title, primarily because many producers define "wetland" differently than does the law and its administrative rules.*

Most local USDA program managers, FWS officials, and producer-committee members interviewed in the seven counties expressed support for the concept of swampbuster. But a wetland under the law is not a wetland in the view of many producers, they say, which complicates implementation of swampbuster, particularly in the prairie pothole region of the country. Wetlands are larger marshes in the minds of many producers, with cattails and ducks and perhaps open water. Small potholes, many less than an acre in size, that sometimes hold water for only a few weeks in the spring and early summer are not wetlands at all, according to farmers, in spite of what the law says; instead, the potholes are viewed as nuisances to be drained and farmed. Fish and wildlife

interests meanwhile contend that the potholes provide critical breeding and nesting habitat for waterfowl. The upshot of this difference of opinion is a standoff between farm and environmental interests that may be difficult to resolve.

Similar differences of opinion over the definition of "wetland" exist among producers elsewhere in the country with respect to streams, wooded areas with saturated soils, and cropland or pasture with wetland characteristics.

Resentment over such matters, including the perception that the government is trying to tell them what they can and can't do with their land, and a lack of understanding of swampbuster in certain cases, may explain why some producers are not accurate in completing Form AD-1026 from year to year with regard to the drainage activity they plan to undertake.

Sodbuster

1. *The sodbuster provision appears to have slowed the conversion of highly erodible land in grass or trees to cropland, although it is difficult to determine just how much because records are not kept beyond the local level.*

A total of 1,132 sodbusting intentions had been filed by producers in the counties visited encompassing 38,422 acres. There were indications that not all land conversion that could have been sodbusting was being reported by producers, particularly in some Great Plains' counties, and little monitoring for violations was occurring. Moreover, no records of sodbusting intentions are kept at state and national levels, so it is difficult to determine just how many instances of sodbusting actually have occurred and what acreages are involved.

2. *Because soil erosion calculations were not included in the case files of many sodbusting plans, USDA program managers and producers alike in many cases do not know what specific effects the application of plans is having on soil erosion rates. There could be questions about producer compliance with the provision, so far as the plan is concerned, if prior use of the land is inadequately documented in the planning process and if conservation treatment alternatives are not selected accordingly.*

A producer who breaks out highly erodible land that is in native grass or trees must apply a conservation plan that will reduce post-treatment erosion to the soil loss tol-

erance level (T) or below. Sodbusted fields that are in introduced species of vegetation can be planned to whatever level of soil erosion control is allowed by any of the conservation systems in the local field office technical guide, including alternative conservation systems. The technical guide contains lists of treatment alternatives by soil groups and indicates for typical slope lengths and other conditions which alternatives will achieve T and which will not. SCS officials thus know which alternatives are eligible for use on sodbusted land. Conservation plans would be more complete and technically defensible for producers, however, if pre-plan and postplan erosion rates were documented for all sodbusted fields.

3. *While a variety of conservation management and structural practices were included in the sodbusting plans examined, there was heavy reliance on crop residue management techniques that producers may find difficult to apply and maintain and thus remain in compliance.*

Some conservation plans specify high residue levels for low-residue-producing crops or for poor soils, even in dry regions where yields and residue levels tend to be low anyway. Other plans specify residue levels that may only be achievable by producers who have experience with conservation tillage systems, particularly no-till, and can produce high crop yields from year to year.

4. *Confusion has existed in ASCS and SCS field offices over who is to perform compliance checks associated with the implementation of sodbuster. This may have resulted in a breakdown of enforcement measures to date in some counties.*

SCS officials sometimes, but not always, were checking to see if producers had fully implemented their conservation plans on fields subject to sodbuster. ASCS officials annually spot-check 15 percent of all federal farm program participants in a county, but those producers who had expressed an intent to convert land on Form AD-1026 were not included in the pool of program participants from which the annual sample for spot-checks was drawn; hence, producers who had converted land under the sodbuster provision were checked only if their names were drawn by virtue of their participation in other ASCS programs. ASCS officials in some counties indicated they had not spot-checked any sodbusters prior to the evaluation team's visit.

5. *Widespread support exists for the sod-*

buster provision among producers, local USDA program managers and committee members, and agribusiness representatives.

A majority (55 percent) of respondents in our producer survey expressed support for the sodbuster provision, including its enforcement that could, in some instances, result in the loss of federal farm program benefits. Most local USDA program managers, the members of producer-oriented committees who work with these agencies, and representatives of the agribusiness community also indicated strong support for the provision. However, a number of these individuals do not believe that sodbuster has discouraged the conversion of highly erodible pasture, range, and forest land to cropland.

Conservation Compliance

1. *Significant reductions in soil erosion will result if conservation compliance plans are implemented as written. But implementation will be difficult for a significant number of plans, and the soil erosion reduction overall may be less than reported or anticipated.*

Changes in farming practices—most of them modest and inexpensive—and application of special conservation measures called for in conservation compliance plans will significantly improve erosion control on highly erodible cropland. Essentially all producers who have highly erodible land are now aware of that fact, and this enhanced awareness alone should improve soil conservation efforts. At the time of our visits, most producers who needed plans had plans, nearly all others who needed plans intended to get them, and a preponderance of those who had plans considered them reasonable and practical.

For several reasons, soil conservation achieved under compliance may be less than anticipated in the plans, however. First, some plans call for crop residue levels that will be difficult to achieve and maintain; other plans entail installation of structural practices that may not be affordable with available public and private funds for cost-sharing and technical assistance. Second, preplan erosion estimates in some of the counties visited may understate existing erosion conditions. These observations suggest that while erosion will be reduced significantly average reductions may be less than estimated in plans. The study produced no basis for making a specific estimate.

2. *SCS workload may exceed available staff capacity in many field offices between 1990 and 1995 because of a heavy demand for technical assistance to implement and monitor existing plans and because a substantial proportion of the plans may need to be revised. A technical assistance shortfall could seriously compromise the effectiveness of conservation compliance.*

Implementation and spot-checking of conservation compliance plans could require a great deal of technical assistance during a period when staff levels are projected to decline significantly in most of the counties visited. Compounding this problem is the likelihood that many conservation compliance plans will have to be revised, some of them substantially and perhaps more than once, as implementation begins in 1990. Plan revisions have long been a part of SCS procedures (for example, in the Great Plains Conservation Program), but never on such a large scale. If the evaluation team's review of the planning process is any indication, both revision and implementation of plans will overwhelmingly be conducted "one-on-one" with producers, intensifying demands on staff. Other Conservation Title provisions, notably swampbuster, will further stretch the technical assistance workload, as may provisions in the 1990 farm bill.

As a result of these concerns, a widening gap is anticipated between technical assistance needs and staffing that could seriously compromise implementation of conservation compliance as early as the end of 1990. The problem could become acute by 1993, particularly if enforcement challenges prove substantial and require routine field inspections.

3. *Variation was found in the quality of conservation compliance plans and the planning process. Some conservation opportunities appear to have been lost, and in some cases producers and SCS officials may not know how much soil conservation the plans should or will achieve.*

Conservation compliance plans for more than half of the land included in the study did not contain estimates of soil erosion rates that would indicate to the producer and to USDA officials how serious the erosion problems were at the time of planning and the degree to which those problems would be solved if the plans were implemented. Some plans provided producers with considerable detail about what would be required; others consisted of a single sheet of paper on which producers selected from a

list one or more practices for their highly erodible fields.

Alternative conservation systems were rarely used in the counties examined; about 80 percent of the plans indicated that erosion would be reduced to a rate at or below the soil loss tolerance (T) value.

Generally, those offices using computer-assisted planning tools, mainly for calculating erosion estimates, produced better, more complete plans and had a better understanding of what the plans might accomplish.

4. *Success of the conservation compliance policy rests primarily on the ability of producers to increase and maintain crop residue on the soil surface, especially by reducing tillage. Other erosion control options—strip cropping, contouring, crop rotation, etc.—were generally not required or even considered in developing plans.*

Most conservation compliance plans did not call for strip cropping, crop rotations, or structural practices. Maintenance of crop residue cover on the soil surface will be the key to success for most producers. It appears that in some plans, however, residue cover goals are unrealistic, given the agronomic potential of the soil and expected crop yields. For example, some plans call for keeping as much as 60 percent residue cover with continuous soybeans. Producers may have to adopt additional, low-cost practices, such as strip cropping or contouring, to attain the erosion reduction goals set forth in the plans and thereby avoid the potential loss of farm program benefits.

5. *The vast majority of producers supports the conservation compliance policy and believes that implementation of conservation plans will have no impact or a positive impact on the profitability of their farming operations. Some producers still question the resolve of Congress and USDA to implement the policy on schedule, however.*

Nearly 75 percent of the respondents in our producer survey expressed support for conservation compliance. Of those who had obtained a conservation plan at the time of the survey, 80 percent said they considered the plan reasonable and practical; nearly the same percentage said plan implementation would have a positive impact or no impact on farm profitability. At the same time, 22 percent of the respondents said they do not expect to lose federal farm program benefits if they are unable to achieve compliance or choose not to be in compliance; another 28 percent said they did not know if they would lose benefits.



April 5, 1990

TO: Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Health
Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Commissioner, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Commissioner, Minnesota State Planning Agency
Chairman, Minnesota Environmental Quality Board
Director, Minnesota Geological Survey
Director, Minnesota Office of Waste Management

Southbridge Office Building
155 South Wabasha St., Suite 104
St. Paul, Minnesota 55107

(612) 296-3767
Fax (612) 297-5615

Regional Offices

Northwest Region
1106 Paul Bunyan Drive, NE
Bemidji, MN 56601
218-755-3963

Northeast Region
394 South Lake Avenue
Room 402
Duluth, MN 55802
218-723-4752

West Central Region
503 Washington Street
Brainerd, MN 56401
218-828-2604

South Central Region
Box 756
New Ulm, MN 56073
507-354-2196

Southeast Region
Friedell Bldg., Room 100
1200 S. Broadway
Rochester, MN 55904
507-285-7458

Southwest Region
Box 111
1400 E. Lyon Street
Marshall, MN 56258
507-537-7260

East Central Region
Southbridge Office Building
155 South Wabasha Ave., Suite 104
St. Paul, MN 55107
612-296-3767

On April 1, 1990 the Waseca County Board of Commissioners submitted its Comprehensive Local Water Plan to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) for final review. Pursuant to Minnesota Rules, Chapter 9300.0170 the BWSR is transmitting a copy of the Waseca County water plan for your agency's review and comment. Your agency has 45 days from receipt of this letter to submit comments in writing to the BWSR identifying the portions of the plan that the agency has determined to be inconsistent with state law.

The Waseca County water plan document itself is being sent to your agency's 110B Technical Review Committee Member under separate cover. The 110B Technical Review Committee Members are:

MDA, Greg Buzicky
MDH, Judith Ball
MDNR, Tom Lutgen
MPCA, Kathy Svanda
MSPA/EQB, Marilyn Lundberg
MGS, Barb Palen

Thank you for your agency's assistance and commitment to make comprehensive local water the success that it has been. We also look forward to working with your agency as counties begin implementation of their water plans.

Sincerely,

Jim Birkholz
Executive Director

cc: Members BWSR
Staff BWSR
Henry Quade
110B Technical Committee
State Conservationist, SCS
State Executive Director, ASCS
Regional Director, USFWS
District Engineer, USCOE
Corrine Miller



April 5, 1990

TO: Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Health
Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Commissioner, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Commissioner, Minnesota State Planning Agency
Chairman, Minnesota Environmental Quality Board
Director, Minnesota Geological Survey
Director, Minnesota Office of Waste Management

Southbridge Office Building
155 South Wabasha St., Suite 104
St. Paul, Minnesota 55107

(612) 296-3767
Fax (612) 297-5615

Regional Offices

Northwest Region
1106 Paul Bunyan Drive, NE
Bemidji, MN 56601
218-755-3963

Northeast Region
394 South Lake Avenue
Room 402
Duluth, MN 55802
218-723-4752

West Central Region
503 Washington Street
Brainerd, MN 56401
218-828-2604

South Central Region
Box 756
New Ulm, MN 56073
507-354-2196

Southeast Region
Friedell Bldg., Room 100
1200 S. Broadway
Rochester, MN 55904
507-285-7458

Southwest Region
Box 111
1400 E. Lyon Street
Marshall, MN 56258
507-537-7260

East Central Region
Southbridge Office Building
155 South Wabasha Ave., Suite 104
St. Paul, MN 55107
612-296-3767

On April 1, 1990 the Morrison County Board of Commissioners submitted its Comprehensive Local Water Plan to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) for final review. Pursuant to Minnesota Rules, Chapter 9300.0170 the BWSR is transmitting a copy of the Morrison County water plan for your agency's review and comment. Your agency has 45 days from receipt of this letter to submit comments in writing to the BWSR identifying the portions of the plan that the agency has determined to be inconsistent with state law.

The Morrison County water plan document itself is being sent to your agency's 110B Technical Review Committee Member under separate cover. The 110B Technical Review Committee Members are:

MDA, Greg Buzicky
MDH, Judith Ball
MDNR, Tom Lutgen
MPCA, Kathy Svanda
MSPA/EQB, Marilyn Lundberg
MGS, Barb Palen

Thank you for your agency's assistance and commitment to make comprehensive local water the success that it has been. We also look forward to working with your agency as counties begin implementation of their water plans.

Sincerely,

Jim Birkholz
Executive Director

cc: Members BWSR
Staff BWSR
Molly MacGregor
110B Technical Committee
State Conservationist, SCS
State Executive Director, ASCS
Regional Director, USFWS
District Engineer, USCOE
Debbie Ginder



April 11, 1990

TO: Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Health
Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Commissioner, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Commissioner, Minnesota State Planning Agency
Chairman, Minnesota Environmental Quality Board
Director, Minnesota Geological Survey
Director, Minnesota Office of Waste Management

Southbridge Office Building
155 South Wabasha St., Suite 104
St. Paul, Minnesota 55107

(612) 296-3767
Fax (612) 297-5615

Regional Offices

Northwest Region
1106 Paul Bunyan Drive, NE
Bemidji, MN 56601
218-755-3963

Northeast Region
394 South Lake Avenue
Room 402
Duluth, MN 55802
218-723-4752

West Central Region
503 Washington Street
Brainerd, MN 56401
218-828-2604

South Central Region
Box 756
New Ulm, MN 56073
507-354-2196

Southeast Region
Friedell Bldg., Room 100
1200 S. Broadway
Rochester, MN 55904
507-285-7458

Southwest Region
Box 111
1400 E. Lyon Street
Marshall, MN 56258
507-537-7260

East Central Region
Southbridge Office Building
155 South Wabasha Ave., Suite 104
St. Paul, MN 55107
612-296-3767

On April 9, 1990 the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners submitted its Comprehensive Local Water Plan to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) for final review. Pursuant to Minnesota Rules, Chapter 9300.0170 the BWSR is transmitting a copy of the Aitkin County water plan for your agency's review and comment. Your agency has 45 days from receipt of this letter to submit comments in writing to the BWSR identifying the portions of the plan that the agency has determined to be inconsistent with state law.

The Aitkin County water plan document itself is being sent to your agency's 110B Technical Review Committee Member under separate cover. The 110B Technical Review Committee Members are:

MDA, Greg Buzicky
MDH, Judith Ball
MDNR, Tom Lutgen
MPCA, Kathy Svanda
MSPA/EQB, Marilyn Lundberg
MGS, Barb Palen

Thank you for your agency's assistance and commitment to make comprehensive local water the success that it has been. We also look forward to working with your agency as counties begin implementation of their water plans.

Sincerely,

Jim Birkholz
Executive Director

cc: Members BWSR
Staff BWSR
Molly MacGregor
110B Technical Committee
State Conservationist, SCS
State Executive Director, ASCS
Regional Director, USFWS
District Engineer, USCOE
Steve Hughes