



ISANTI SWCD EROSION CONTROL AND WATER MANAGEMENT POLICY

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Isanti SWCD Cost-Share Program Policies

The Isanti SWCD offers grants for projects that provide benefits to water quality. The following are local guidelines for the use of grant funds and are specific to Isanti Soil and Water Conservation District. In addition to these local policies, all projects must be consistent with the administrative requirements of the funding source.

These guidelines will be reviewed and edited and/or amended as needed.

Policies applied to all Funding Programs:

General

- All funding program contracts and requests for payment require the approval of the Isanti SWCD Board of Supervisors.
- All funding programs are subject to fund availability and may be discontinued or subject to program policy revisions by the SWCD Board as it deems appropriate.
- Prior to offering design assistance—all heads of the household (i.e. both husband and wife or partners) must be present for the initial on-site meeting (a phone call by a head household member may substitute). Additionally, if the SWCD is using a grant to pay for design assistance, the landowner must agree to install the project by signing an intent to install agreement form.
- If USDA project funds or technical assistance are being used on a joint project, the applicant must sign an Information Release Authorization form that allows the District access to applicable information within the applicant's project case file in order to be eligible for District funds.
- The applicant may be required to obtain three quotes for the proposed conservation work if the total project cost exceeds \$25,000 prior to contract approval by the board.
For projects that receive a flat rate payment (for example, cover crops) 1099 tax information must be supplied before a final payment will be issued.
- It is a District goal to fund voluntary conservation projects. Projects that are completed to meet regulatory requirements are not eligible for funding. However, portions of a project may be eligible for funding if that portion is voluntary and exceeds regulatory requirements. Verification that the project is voluntary may be required from the applicant or applicable regulatory agency.
- For projects using state and federal funds, additional specific requirements may apply, including but not limited to Minnesota prevailing wage, BWSR Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines, and project signage requirements. No exotic species or nursery-derived cultivars will be eligible for cost-share reimbursement
- The entire practice shall be installed according to project design requirements, including seeding, mulching, erosion control blanket, or other erosion control devices. Any changes from the approved design requirements shall be agreed to in writing prior to practice certification
- Each practice will have an Operations and Maintenance Plan developed to meet the applicable practice standard that is specific to the site and practice installed..
- Project inspections will be conducted to meet minimum State requirements. The current inspection schedule includes:
 - Compliance inspections at years 1,3,6 and 9 for typical projects under a 10-year contract.
 - Annual compliance inspections for non-structural land management practices.

- At its discretion, the board may consider compliance to the terms of the previous Cost-share contract as a subsequent cost Share contract with an applicant.

Payment Process

- The technician with the proper Job Approval Authority shall verify if the practice is complete and meets standards and specifications before final payment is issued.
- The Landowner/Applicant is responsible to pay, in full, all receipts and invoices directly to the contractor or vendor unless otherwise specified in the contract.
- For percent of installation cost share payments, the applicant must submit invoices or receipts of actual costs in sufficient detail for the District's review. Requests for reimbursement shall include an applicant signed Voucher and Practice Certification Summary Form.
- For flat-rate contract payments, the applicant must certify, by signing the Flat Rate Voucher and Practice Certification form, that the practice was completed according to plans and specifications developed by the District.
- Reimbursement payments for nonstructural land management practices are identified under the program specific policies.
- A cost share reimbursement payment will be approved by the District Manager and certified by the District Board upon certification that the project has been installed and completed to specifications.

Noncompliance

If the practice has failed prior to the 10-year term due to improper maintenance, or if the applicant fails to implement a nonstructural practice for the term of their contract the applicant will be responsible for the necessary repairs. If the landowner decides not to repair the practice to the original specifications, they shall be obligated to reimburse funding in accordance with the approved cost share contract and grant policies.

Project Selection

A list of projects/interested parties will be kept on file. The District Staff will prioritize projects based on local and state priorities, the potential to provide water quality benefits, or other as identified by the funding source (See Program Specific Policies).

Local Priorities

1. Priority issues and resources are identified in the Lower St. Croix and Rum River Comprehensive Watershed Plans.
2. Strategic planning by the SWCD Board identified that water quality restoration and projection is favored. The following criteria are used to assist with prioritization.
 - a. Projects identified in completed or underway subwatershed analyses (aka stormwater retrofit analyses),
 - b. Projects beneficial to a lake, stream, or river that meet standards and/or are in satisfactory condition to the residents and the larger population of county citizens.
 - c. Projects identified in completed or underway TMDLs.

Specific Conservation Practice Requirements

The primary purpose of projects funded is to assist with structural, vegetative, or non-structural land management practices to correct existing water quality problems. The following elements must be met to be eligible for cost share.

Hard-Armor: Riprap should only be used where necessary and never to replace stable, naturally vegetated shoreline. The District will consider funding hard armoring such as rock rip-rap if it is determined by all applicable parties to be the best solution. Should riprap be approved, the site must be enhanced with a vegetative buffer.

Iron Enhanced Buffers: For shoreline projects that opt for installation of an iron-enhanced filter least 20% of the total project area must be planted as native vegetation for habitat. At least 10% of the area should be directly adjacent to the shoreline. An additional 10% should be within 100 feet of the water.

Eligible Expenses

Eligible expenses are those expenses that are eligible for grant reimbursement or, if provided by the landowner, count toward the landowner's required project contribution. Only expenses identified as necessary to successfully complete the project for its designed use are eligible for reimbursement. Once the project has been verified complete by the SWCD any further expenses are exempt from reimbursement.

Materials:

- Native plants and seed
- Erosion control blankets and bio-logs
- Shredded Wood Mulch
- Landscaping fabric
- Stakes or anchors
- Herbicide
- Tool or machine rental
- Lawn edging
- Soil amendments
- Retaining wall block (rain gardens only)
- Drainage materials (rain gardens or other applicable infiltration practice only)
- Rock, if deemed necessary (See [Project Requirements](#)-Hard-Armor)
- Others as approved by the District Board.

In-kind Labor: Unless specified otherwise by Minnesota prevailing wage statutes, the value of labor, equipment, materials and/or services that are proposed to be provided by the applicant to complete the project, shall be estimated using the best available information and periodically updated using sources such as the Iowa Farm custom Rate Survey. The rates below are subject to change:

- General Labor rate of \$32 per hour . Date, times and activity must be documented. (Based on 2021 values for MN by the [Independentsector.org](#))
- Heavy equipment operation such as skid steers, tractors, backhoes, and scrapers (including labor) at \$75 per hour. Date, times and activity must be documented.

- Other equipment rates as listed on the most recent Iowa State University – Iowa Farm Custom Rate Survey – Average Charge rate.
- Professional or semi-professional services, such as engineering, labor rate at \$100 per hour. (Date, times and activity must be documented)
- Others items: Fair market value with prior approval by the District Board.

NOTE: In-kind labor is non-reimbursable. This is to be used ONLY as match for the grant.

Staff Credentials

The Isanti SWCD will ensure staff has the necessary skills and training to install and maintain projects according to standards and specifications. Building credentials and maintaining or seeking certifications to retain knowledgeable staff is a high priority.

The following is a documentation of staff skills, training, credentials along with description of other means the District will use to ensure projects meet the requirements of local guidelines and are installed and maintained according to standards and specifications.

Todd Kulaf: Assigned Job Approval Authority to design, install, and sign off on ecological practices relating to stabilizing shoreland (critical area planting 342) on November 18th, 2020 by John Crellin, Area Resource Conservationist with NRCS. On January 14, 2021 Todd was given TAA for Streambank and Shoreline restoration (580 engineering practice).

Matthew Remer: Was assigned Job Approval Authority to design, install, and sign off on ecological practices relating to Cover Crops (NRCS Practice340) on January 3, 2022 by John Crellin, Area Resource Conservationist with NRCS.

When professional engineering is required or specific conservation practices require expertise above current technical capacity, the District will utilize professional engineers or staff from surrounding SWCDs, consultants, local municipalities, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources or the USDA NRCS.

Delegation

The District Board annually delegates signing of all State Grant Contracts, reports, contract documents and vouchers to the District Manager.

Cost Share Rates

The cost-shared rates are specific to the funding source. The SWCD Board reserves the right to set a limit on funding at their discretion.

Structural Practices: Generally, the Isanti SWCD will provide up to 75% cost-share to landowners for approved State practices (See [Design Standards](#)). Non-state funding sources may be used to fund any project at 100% if consistent with the administrative requirements of the funding source. Where necessary, structural practice rates are described in the Program Specific Policies attached to this document.

Nonstructural Practices: Generally, these practices are incentivized with a flat rate payment. Rates and other policies are specific to the funding source and are described in the Program Specific Policies attached to this document.

Program Specific Policies

Program specific guidelines and policies are found on the following pages. New ones will be amended to this document as needed.