

## FY'23 BWSR Soil Health Cost Share Program DRAFT

Non-structural BMPs for the purpose of Soil Health will be planned and implemented according to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) standards and specifications found on the Electronic Field Office Technical Guide (EFOTG). However, seeding dates for cover crops will follow the Midwest cover crop council seeding guide recommendations. Design standards for all practices must include specifications for operation and maintenance for the effective life of the given practice, including an inspection schedule and procedure.

Nonstructural Ag BMPs (management BMPs) must be an enhancement of existing management practices that will reduce soil erosion, improve soil health from existing levels, and have a benefit for water quality. A practice must implement a higher level of conservation than what has been implemented on the field in the past 3 years.

The following practices may be implemented on the same acres for the three-year period alternating practices per year: Cover Crops, Residue and Tillage Management – No-Till & Strip Till, and Residue and Tillage Management – Conservation Tillage.

### Project Ranking Criteria

Soil health program participants will be prioritized and selected based in whether the majority of land is located in a drainage area within a Tier 1-3 water as identified in the Rum River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.

### Contracts

- Incentives to install or adopt land management practices will have the option of a 1 or 3-year contract length.
- Applicants are responsible to submit application forms, project plans and cost estimates as requested by the District in sufficient detail for the District to complete its review.
- The applicant is responsible for full installation of the project before the project installation deadline listed on the cost share contract. If a deadline extension is required to complete the project, the applicant must make the request no less than 30 days prior to the project installation deadline. All contract deadline extension request require approval by the District Board.
- Upon approval by the District Board, the applicant will receive a letter with copy of executed cost share contract stating details of the practice that has been approved, the funding amount, and time schedule to start and complete the project, and a copy of the Operations and Maintenance Plan.
- The landowner and applicant shall allow District staff access to property for which the installed conservation practice is located during the life of the contract. The installed practice will be subject to periodic inspections by District staff.

### Reimbursement

- 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.
- 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.

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- The Landowner/Applicant is responsible to pay, in full, all receipts and invoices directly to the contractor or vendor.
- One payment shall be made after certification of implementation by the technician. The practice must be certified and inspected by the Member annually (for three-year contracts) to ensure implementation. If the practice is not continued in years 2 & 3 as required, the Partner shall recover funds for those years.
- 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.

#### Practice specific policies

- **Cover Crops** - Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 340
  - Three-year contract
  - 1-2 species \$50/acre/year
  - 3+ species \$60/acre/year
  - Implementation can occur on different acres within the three-year contract or on the same acres consecutively but must be implemented on the same amount or greater acres in years 2 and 3.
  - Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 340 (except for the seeding date which will follow the Midwest Cover Crop Council Seeding Guide recommendations)
  - Seeding dates will follow the Midwest Cover Crop Council Seeding Guide recommendations (the latest date allowed to plant a cover crop is November 20th).
  - One or three-year contract option
  - Cover crop must be applied to an annual crop, eligible crops include corn, soybeans, or small grains.
  - Prevent plant acres are not eligible for this program.
  - Cover crop cannot be terminated until after January 1 of the following year.
- **Nutrient Management** - Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 590
  - \$20/acre/year
  - Implemented on the same acres annually
- **Prescribed Grazing** - Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 528
  - \$40/acre/year
  - Implemented on the same acres annually
- **Residue and Tillage Management – No-Till & Strip Till**
  - Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 329 for No-Till/Strip-Till
  - Three-year contract
  - \$20/acre/year
  - Implementation can occur on different acres within the three-year contract or on the same acres consecutively but must be implemented on the same amount or greater acres in years 2 and 3.

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- **Residue and Tillage Management - Conservation Tillage**

- Must follow NRCS Practice Standard 345 for Conservation Till
- Three-year contract
- \$10/acre/year
- Residue cover following a corn crop at the time of planting the subsequent crop must be 60% or greater.
- Residue cover following a soybean crop at the time of planting the subsequent crop must be 30% or greater.
- Residue cover following a small grain crop at the time of planting the subsequent crop must be 60% or greater.

Implementation can occur on different acres within the three-year contract or on the same acres consecutively but must be implemented on the same amount or greater acres in years 2 and 3.