

McLeod Soil & Water Conservation District

2011
Annual Plan

McLeod SWCD
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2011 ANNUAL WORK PLAN
MCLEOD SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
2570 9th Street East
Glencoe MN 55336
Phone: 320-864-5176 Fax 320-864-5737
Web site: www.mcleodswcd.org

District Supervisors

CHAIRMAN District II	Roger Schultz Glencoe and Helen Townships
VICE-CHAIRMAN District I	Charles Mathews Winsted and Bergen Townships
SECRETARY District IV	John Adamek Hale, Hutchinson and Rich Valley Townships
REPORTER District III	Jeremy Bolland Sumter, Penn, Round Grove, Collins and Lynn Twps
TREASURER District V	Mark Schnobrich Acoma and Hassan Valley Townships

SWCD Employees

District Program Director	Ryan Freitag	ryan.freitag@mn.nacdnet.net
Administrative Assistant	Kari Becker	kari.becker@mn.nacdnet.net
PF Farm Bill Biologist	Mike Schultz	mschultz@pheasantsforever.org

NRCS Employees

District Conservationist	Clayton Schmitz	clayton.schmitz@mn.usda.gov
Conservation Technician	Keith Trudell	keith.trudell@mn.usda.gov

Cooperation with Agencies and Organizations

NRCS

The district works closely with the NRCS to achieve various conservation goals. Implementation of the Food Security Act, together with ongoing conservation programs are a joint effort of the NRCS and SWCD.

FSA

The district will provide technical assistance in the planning and application of conservation practices for which FSA handles cost-sharing. The district will also assist with promotion and implementation of CRP. The district will also assist with implementation of the 2002 and 2008 Farm Bill.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

The district will cooperate with the wildlife, waters, and fisheries departments. In combination with these departments to implement various conservation practices.

Extension Service

The district will cooperate in education and informational activities that concern soil, water and related resources whenever it feels it is in the public interest to do so and district manpower and finances make it practical.

Fish & Wildlife

The district will work with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife to restore wetlands on CRP lands and will direct landowners to the USFWS for their services.

County Agencies

The district will work with various county departments. This has become very important as we assist with implementation of the Comprehensive Water Plan and State Wetland Conservation Act. Also to work with the Assessors office as they change to a soils based assessing system.

Prairie Country RC&D

The district works closely with RC&D and will assist RC&D sponsors in the identification of other RC&D projects.

CROW Organization of Waters

The district works closely with the CROW on project with combined funding. We also help promote their cost share and programs that are available.

High Island Watershed Project

The district works with the High Island Project. We help promote their cost share and incentive programs that are available.

Rush River Watershed Project

The district works with the Rush River Project. We assist in promoting their cost share and incentive programs that are available.

Introduction

This Annual Work Plan has been developed by the McLeod Soil and Water Conservation District as a guide and goal setting tool. By recognizing the existing natural resource conservation problem areas within our boundaries and establishing a progressive method of solving them, we will better be able to serve our cooperators. Programs such as CRP and RIM Reserve are discussed within this plan. We have also addressed Water Management Planning. These programs have given us an opportunity to strengthen our overall conservation program. It is our intent to establish goals for the next twelve months which will bring us closer to our ultimate goal of solving the problems of soil erosion, sedimentation and ag pollution. Our Annual Plan will be centered around our "Mission Statement" which is:

To assist the landusers of McLeod County in efficiently and effectively using the natural resources in order to increase the productive use of the cropland, pastureland, woodland, urbanland, wildlifeland, and recreationland, while maintaining and improving the soils base, water quality, tree production, wildlife and the quality of life in the County.

Policies of the District

For the purpose of handling routine administrative affairs and to divide the work load, district supervisors will have responsibility for specific areas as follows (a county/ district map is located on page 15 of this work plan):

- District IWinsted and Bergen Townships
- District II.....Helen and Glencoe Townships
- District III.....Sumter, Penn, Round Grove, Collins and Lynn Townships
- District IV.....Hale, Hutchinson and Rich Valley Townships
- District V.....Acoma and Hassen Valley Townships
plus Hutchinson City precincts

The supervisors will coordinate all conservation programs in McLeod County. They will work for a balanced program of the needed practices, such as grassed waterways, filterstrips, conservation cropping system, terraces, minimum tillage, fertilizers, tree planting, wildlife practices, drainage and pollution control systems. These on-going programs must also be balanced with new opportunities and responsibilities brought on by the 1985, 1990, 1995, 2002 and 2008 Farm Bills, Conservation Reserve (CRP) Program, Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Program, Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Farmed Wetland Program (FWP) and the Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan.

Equal Opportunity Statement

The McLeod SWCD and NRCS prohibit discrimination in all programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.

Use of SWCD Employees

The district will continue to provide as much technical assistance as is possible with the District and Natural Resources Conservation Service manpower that is available.

Objective 1

To reduce soil erosion to tolerable levels as prescribed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, by planning and applying land management systems. About 89,000 acres of McLeod County cropland is a water erosion concern. Wind erosion is a problem on about 23,000 cropland acres. This amount of soil loss reduces the productive value of the cropland and is therefore of great concern to the District.

Actions Planned

1. Inform and educate the public on the need for erosion control and its benefits. Specific education programs are discussed in Objective # 9.
2. Increase acres of cropland under conservation tillage system by 300 acres.
 - a. Promote the use of conservation tillage as a moisture conservation tool
 - b. Promote conservation compliance with conservation tillage systems
 - c. Utilization of Ag BMP dollars
 - d. Promote through newsletters and news articles
 - e. Complete tillage transect survey
3. Establish 4.0 acres of grassed waterways and/or critical area planting; provide technical and cost-share assistance.
4. Assist with field windbreaks and living snowfence if applicable.
 - a. Promote through District Tree Program
 - b. Provide technical and cost-share assistance
 - c. Provide trees and planting service at reasonable cost through District Tree Program
5. Plant 1 acre of farmstead shelterbelt.
 - a. Provide design and layout plans
 - b. Provide trees and planting service at reasonable cost through district tree program
 - c. Promote through local media, newsletters, sportsmen clubs
6. Encourage the use of resource management systems when developing conservation plans.
 - a. Provide assistance to producers to establish planning on entire farms vs. small parcels.
7. Enroll 150 acres into the RIM/WRP program.
 - a. Promote through local media, newsletters, and sportsmen's club.
 - b. Assist landowners with the application and processing process.

- c. Work with NRCS and BWSR to streamline the process for securing the easement.
8. Enroll 200 acres into the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
 - a. Promote through our newsletter
 - b. Promote through our quarterly "Conservation News"
 - c. Promote through the monthly radio show.
 - d. Assist landowners with seeding plans, and seeding information.

Objective 2

To maintain and improve water quality of both surface and ground water resources. Water quality issues are of great importance. Legislation encouraging water management planning provides a vehicle in which to focus our efforts pertaining to water management. The County Board of Commissioners has implemented a Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan. The Soil and Water Conservation District is actively involved in the implementation of the Comprehensive Water Plan with the county.

Actions Planned

1. Assist the McLeod County Board with implementing the Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan
2. Actions referred to in Objective 1 and 3 also apply to water quality
3. Assist McLeod County with implementation of the State Wetland Conservation Act
4. Assist with Wetland Reserve Program, Farmed Wetland Program and EQIP
5. Assist with CRP, Riparian Buffers and Filter Strip Practices
6. Assist with High Island Watershed Project
7. Assist with C.R.O.W. Joint Powers
8. Assist with Rush River Watershed Project
9. Include water quality in information and education programs

Objective 3

To reduce agricultural pollution caused by feedlot runoff, thus improving water quality of lakes and streams. The feedlot inventory showed 470 active feedlots in the county in 2004. Approximately 42 of these are within 1000 feet of a lake or 300 feet of a stream. Reducing the amount of runoff entering water resources of the district will help improve water quality.

Actions Planned

1. Provide technical assistance to interested persons for pollution prevention systems on feedlots causing significant pollution problems

2. Assist county with feedlot inspections for permits and complete MN Farm evaluation on problem sites
- 3 Assist landowner with plans etc. that received a Feedlot Grant or EQIP funds.

Objective 4

To reduce flooding within the District. Spring floods occur annually in parts of the District. The Crow River and Buffalo Creek Watersheds receive the brunt of the flooding problems. Flood waters take approximately three weeks to recede back within the channel banks following a major snowmelt flow. Storms with heavy rains occurring in the county or upstream watershed also causes flooding. A trend toward using flood plain as cropland is also of concern to the District. Flood damage can be extensive, especially to cropland.

Actions Planned

1. Promote the wetland restoration opportunities offered through CRP, RIM, and WRP. Wetland restoration will re-establish storage areas for flood waters. Encourage enrollment of flood plain cropland into CRP and RIM/WRP where appropriate.
2. Assist with potential mitigation and wetland banking sites
3. Assist with implementation of the State Wetland Conservation Act
4. Practices previously mentioned in Objective # 1 reduce flooding by reducing runoff and sedimentation
5. Encourage appropriate use of land within the flood plain

Objective 5

To improve wildlife habitat by providing food, cover and sources of water. The enactment of the Food Security Act has greatly facilitated the improvement of wildlife habitat. Sod and swampbuster provisions have slowed the conversion of wetlands, woodlots and pastures to cropland. CRP, RIM Reserve, WHIP and FWP have allowed cropland to be converted to prime land for wildlife habitat development. With these tools an increase in wildlife populations is anticipated.

Action Planned

1. Promote wetland restoration opportunities through CRP, WHIP, and RIM/WRP. Also promote the WHIP Program
2. Plant 5 acres of wildlife tree plantings combined with CRP and Living Snowfence
3. Encourage additional tree rows on farmstead shelterbelts and multi-row field windbreaks to provide better cover

4. Encourage use of species useful to wildlife for critical area plantings
5. Encourage use of tree and grass species most beneficial to wildlife for CRP, RIM/WRP and other areas where grass and tree cover are used.
6. Provide technical assistance to persons interested in wildlife ponds

Objective 6

To minimize the negative effects of urban development, and reduce loss of prime farmland. Loss of agricultural land, especially prime farmland is a district concern. Because the district is located near a large metropolitan area, a random development of the country side in the form of rural residence is common. In addition the communities of Hutchinson and Winsted are experiencing considerable growth. It is the desire of the district that this urban development be planned using soils information to assure minimum impact on the soil and water resources of the area. We are also concerned with the development of rural homesteads on prime farmland.

Action Planned

1. Encourage use of digitized soils information in initial planning of rural and urban developments
2. Provide information to Planning & Zoning Committee, Township Boards and Watershed Boards on perpetual wetland programs

Objective 7

To assist with implementation of the Food Security Act. The Farm Bill addressed soil and water conservation as the major concern we know it to be. Implementation of its many conservation provisions at the local level is necessary to a strong conservation program.

Action Planned

1. Assist with CRP and FWP as addressed in Objective # 1 and Action # 11
2. Provide clerical and technical assistance in Sodbuster, Swampbuster and Conservation Compliance provisions

Objective 8

To improve the recreational and aesthetic value of our natural resources. Lakes, rivers and parks provide much enjoyment and recreational value. Pollution of lakes and rivers directly affects their recreational value. Currently there is much interest in improving the water quality in some of the lakes in the county. In addition the County Parks have asked for assistance in developing for recreational and wildlife use.

Action Planned

1. Assist with Crane Creek Restoration Project

2. Perform those activities outlined in Objective # 2
3. Provide assistance to other clubs, organizations and individuals interested in improvement of natural resources for aesthetics and recreation
4. Assist High Island Creek Watershed Project
5. Assist C.R.O.W. Joint Powers
6. Assist Rush River Watershed Project
7. Assist Cedar Lake Working Lands Initiative area.

Objective 9

To educate the public about soil and water conservation concerns, district programs and activities. This objective is important to all objectives previously mentioned. A good education and information program is essential in meeting the other goals of the district.

Action Planned

1. Annual Report – Notify the following that our Annual Report is located on our website and provide them with a link: NRCS offices - area, state, federal; BWSR; Board Representative; County Commissioners; Auditor and other interested parties
2. Newsletter - Publish 1 newsletter. The newsletter will be used to: keep county residents informed about district activities, to educate the public about conservation issues, to promote district events, cost-share programs, and tree program
3. Educate on use and interpretation of soil information. Provide soils information to those who request it
4. Hold conservation presentations for 6th grade students and promote poster contest
5. Make presentations upon requests if possible
6. Hold Nature Field Days (2) for 4th grade students
7. Promote education activities with donations and help when feasible
8. Use an e-mail distribution list to forward information on to those that are interested.
9. Use conservation farm model at Nature Field Days, fair booth, schools and other informative sessions
10. Participate in Rain Gauge Program
11. Create a monthly "Service Center" e-newsletter that will be distributed to those that have indicated their interest in receiving them.

Objective 10

To insure that conservation practices applied in the past using State Cost-Share funds are maintained. In addition to assist technical personnel in evaluation effectiveness of various projects.

Action Planned

1. Spot-check 50% of state cost-share practices applied during past 5 years
2. Spot-check 20% of state cost-share practices applied from 5-10 years ago
3. Cost-share practice inspections will be completed as specified in the Cost-Share Manual

Objective 11

Assist with detailed soil survey information for McLeod County.

Action Planned

1. Supply soil survey data at request
2. Provide information on the digital soil survey

Objective 12

Support Prairie Country RC&D Programs which encourage economic growth through the development, conservation and planned utilization of the natural resources in the district. This objective is important as it is a local people's rural development program that helps local communities help themselves through better use of natural resources, expanding economic opportunities, and improving quality of life.

Action Planned

1. Assist RC&D sponsors in the identification of other RC&D projects
2. Assist with getting information out on new RC&D programs or projects.

Cost-Share Program Requirements

High Priority Erosion

Problems Present estimates indicate that 89,000 acres are a water erosion concern in the county. Refer to Map 2F on page 14 of this plan to see general location of where these high priority erosion problems are most likely to occur. On site investigation is needed to determine exact locations. High priority practices are Terraces, Grassed Waterways, Erosion Control

Structures, Critical Area Stabilization, Diversions and Field Windbreaks. The District has also adopted Well Sealing as a cost-share practice at 50%.

High Priority Sedimentation

Present estimates indicate that 23,000 acres are most likely to experience high priority sedimentation. Exact locations will be determined by field investigations. High Priority practices include Erosion Control Structures, Grassed Waterways, Critical Area Stabilization, Riparian Buffer Strip and Sediment Retention Erosion & Water Control Structure. The Streambank, Lakeshore and Roadside Stabilization practice could be used to decrease high priority sediment problems within the district. The District also adopted Well Sealing as a practice at 50%

High Priority Feedlots

Present board policy provides cost-share assistance for Ag Waste Systems under set guidelines and each application will be reviewed on an individual basis. The district goal is to assist with pollution prevention systems on feedlots which meet the "high priority" status. Clean Water Diversions may also be part of the pollution prevention system.

Secondary Priority Erosion

Present estimates indicate that 23,0000 acres have a significant erosion problem. Refer to Exhibit # 1 of Annual Work Plan to see general location of problem areas. Practices used to minimize secondary priority erosion are the same as those used in high priority areas. A 50% cost-share rate is used to reduce secondary priority erosion.

Cost-Share Spending Plan

The District received \$20,609.00 for the cost-share program. On high priority projects the SWCD will cost-share up to 75% or an amount to be determined by the Board of Supervisors. The District will spend 80% of its allocation or \$18,197.60 for high priority projects. The remaining 20% or \$4,321.80 will be used toward cost-share services, or may be considered to fund secondary priority projects at a 50% rate. Definitions of High Priority Erosion and practices are found in the Cost-Share Handbook in the District office.

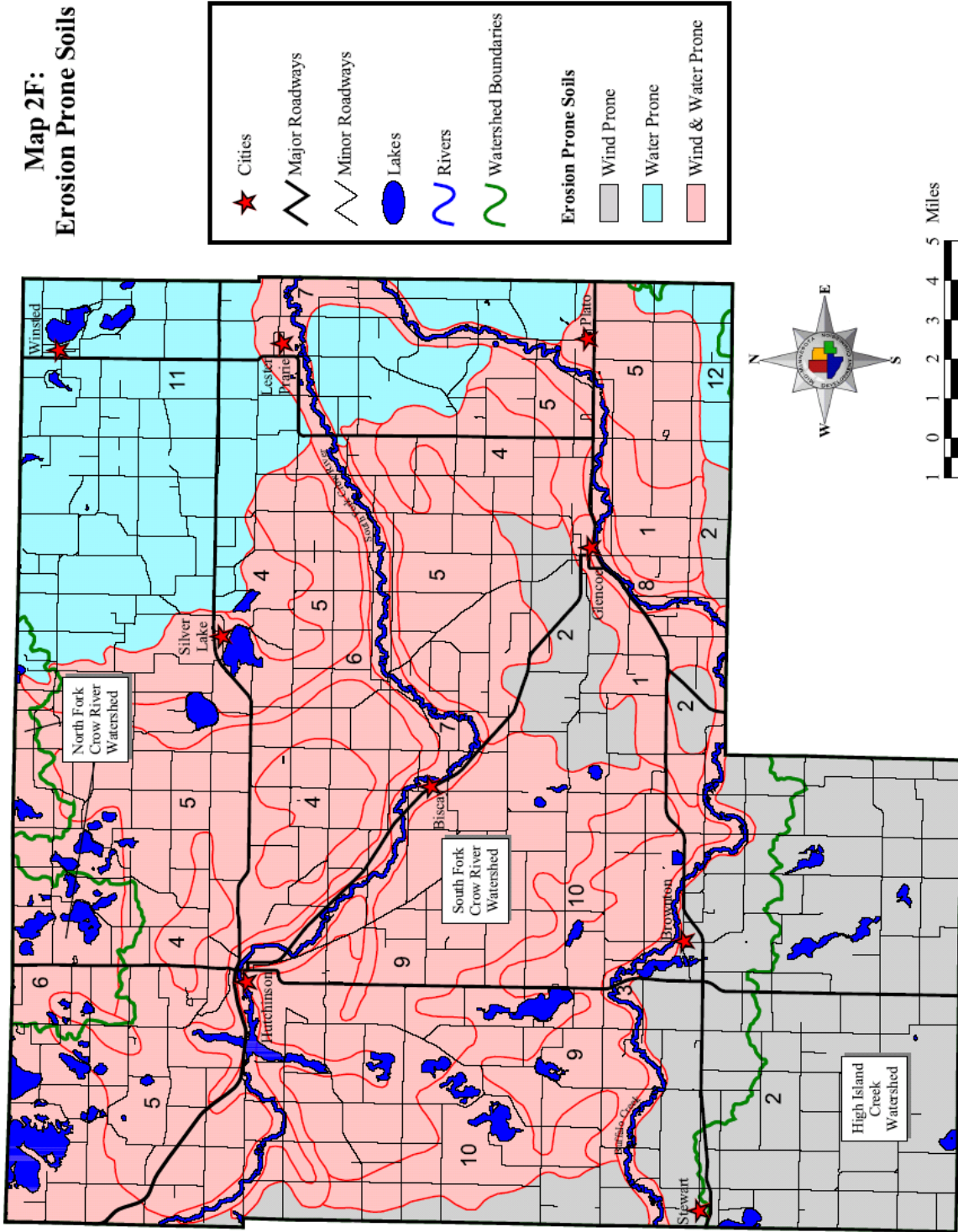
Work Load Analysis and Staff Days Available

<u>Project / Activity</u>	<u>Days Required</u>
Reduce soil erosion to tolerable levels, as prescribed by the NRCS, by planning and applying resource management systems.	130
To maintain and improve water quality of both surface and ground water resources.	130
Reduce ag pollution caused by feedlot runoff, thus improving the water quality of lakes and streams.	40
Reduce flooding within the District	10
Improve wildlife habitat by providing food, cover and source of water.	70
Reduce the amount of ag land lost to urban purposes	5
To assist with implementation of the Food Security Act	40
To improve the recreational and aesthetic value of our natural resources.	10
Educate public about soil and water conservation concerns, district programs and activities.	70
To insure that conservation practices applied in the past using State Cost-Share funds are maintained.	15
Support Prairie Country RC&D programs	10
	Total 530

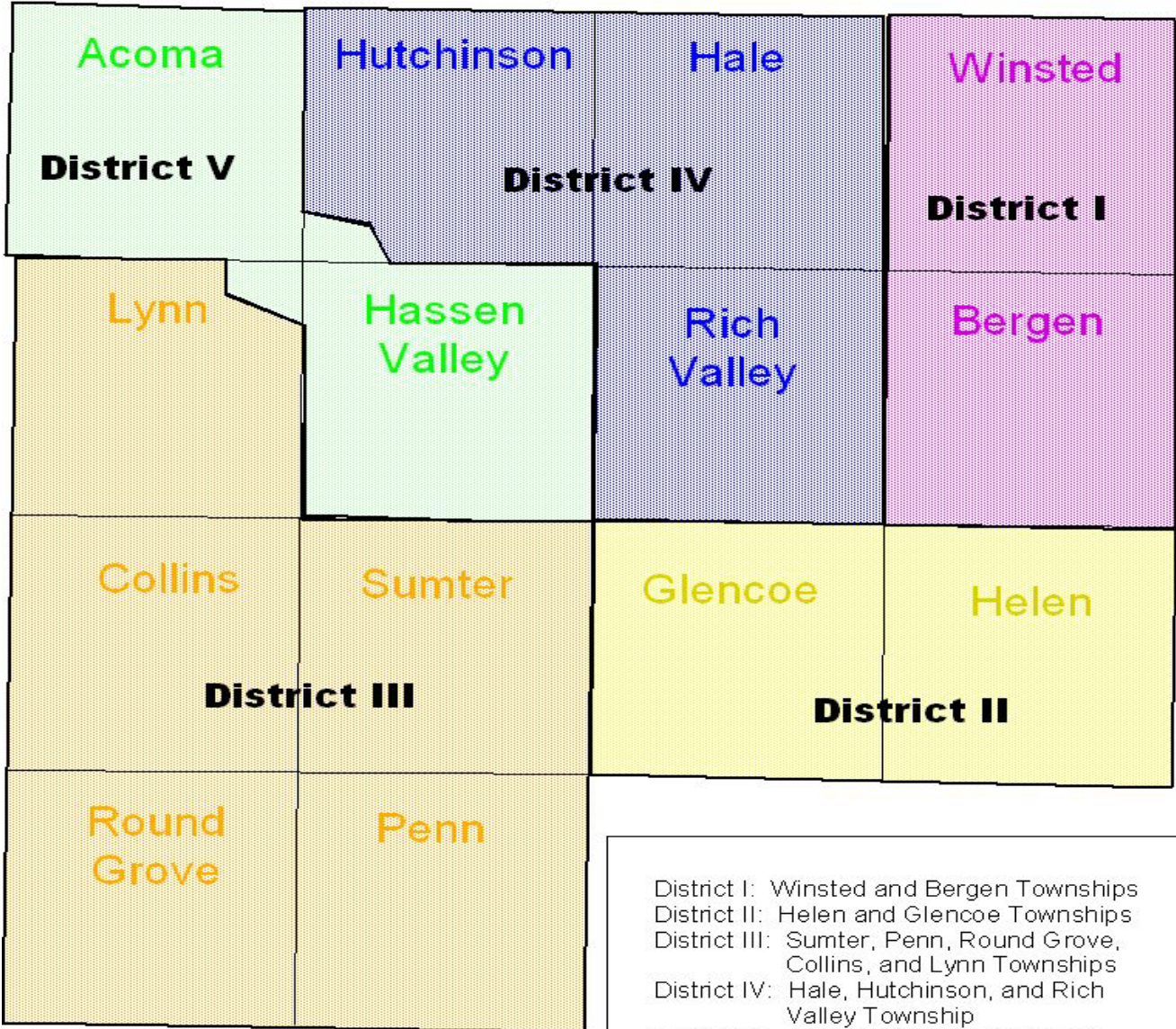
Staff Days Available

	Work Days	Paid Annual Leave	Holidays	Total
Program Director	231	19	10	260
Administrative Secretary	140	6	10	156
Total	371	25	20	416

**Map 2F:
Erosion Prone Soils**



McLeod County Nomination Districts



District I: Winsted and Bergen Townships
 District II: Helen and Glencoe Townships
 District III: Sumter, Penn, Round Grove, Collins, and Lynn Townships
 District IV: Hale, Hutchinson, and Rich Valley Township
 District V: Acoma and Hassen Valley Townships plus Hutchinson city precincts