Local Cost Share Policy for Sibley SWCD

Effective Date: FY25 Grants and Beyond

1. Overview

a. The Sibley Soil and Water Conservation District (hereafter referred to as District) administers the Minnesota Erosion Control and Water Management Program (ECWMP) through the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) through Minnesota Statutes, section 103C.501 Erosion Control and Water Management Program - cost sharing with land occupiers for the installation of soil and water conservation practices.
b. The District will abide by these rules and guidelines.
c. The District will review this program policy at minimum, biennially, or as requested.

2. Project Requirements

Projects and practices must meet the appropriate technical standards of the most current USDA Field Office Technical Guide and meet all applicable local, state and federal regulations. Projects and practices will have sign-off by staff with the appropriate level of Job Approval Authority (JAA) for design and certification or other professional sign-off such as but not limited to the Technical Service Area (TSA) or a professionally licensed engineer.

2.1. Operation and Maintenance: Every project will have an operation and maintenance plan that meets the applicable standard for the project type. It must be approved by a professional with appropriate JAA or professional credentials for the project and signed by the contract participant. Permanent easements and/or access agreements may be required to provide access necessary for inspection and maintenance.

Maintenance responsibilities are assigned to the property owner. Maintenance of all cost share practices will be performed by the property owner unless otherwise specified via agreement.

2.2. Inspections: Inspections will be conducted by the District to meet the minimum requirements of applicable grants.

2.3. Non-compliance: Contract non-compliance will be reviewed by the Board. Unresolved issues will follow procedures outlined by the funding source of the project. BWSR grant non-compliance procedures are outlined in their Grants Administration Manual (GAM).

3. Cost-share for Structural Practices

All structural practices will be cost shared at 90%. Other funding sources may be used to increase cost-share up to, but not exceed 100% and must follow all administrative requirements of the funding source.

Drainage Water Management (DWM) is a unique practice that will require completion of two phases as follows;

3.1. Drainage Water Management Plan (DWMP): The first phase will follow NRCS P.S. 130. A Drainage Water Management Plan (DWMP) will document soil, topographic, and drainage system maps of the site, and identify the number and location of water control structures that are needed to implement drainage water management according to field office technical guide standards. The DWMP will also provide guidelines for management of the water control structures to achieve desired resource outcomes. Contract holders are required to hire a certified Technical Service Provider (TSP) to develop this plan. The plan will be ready for implementation with structural measures and management actions. The contract holder will be paid out even if it is determined unfeasible for their operation, but still satisfies all planning/plan requirements of P.S. 130.

Written Plan	90% of the total cost

3.2. Structure for Water Control and Drainage Water Management: The second phase will follow NRCS P.S. 587 and P.S. 554. Structures are paid out based upon the type and number of structures installed to complete the system. Both structure types have a minimum expected life of 20 years.

An in-line flashboard riser-based structure composed of metal or plastic is used in order to convey water, control the direction or rate of flow, or maintain a desired water surface elevation. The water surface elevation is controlled by addition or removal of slats or "stoplogs". The other form of structure is the installation of an inline flap gate structure or in-line structure. These structures include a float operated head pressure valve that maintains a one-foot increase in water elevation between the downstream and upstream sides of the valve.

Drainage Water Management is defined as the operator going out to the field in order to adjust water control structure(s) according to their DWMP. While on site, the date and adjustment information will be recorded/logged (see attachment A). Management is paid to landowners/occupiers once after first year of successful completion.

In-Line Flap Gate or Flashboard Riser	90% of the total cost
Management and Recordkeeping	$500 per year, 3 years of payments

4. Incentives for Non-Structural Practices
Eligible practices include non-structural practices and activities that supplement or exceed current minimum State standards or procedures for protection, enhancement, and restoration of water quality or that protect groundwater from degradation.

4.1. Cover crops: Contracts can be up to three years in length. Landowners/occupiers will be paid one time, lump sum payment, no matter the length of the contract, after the successful completion of the practice following year 1. Technical representatives will conduct annual onsite inspections verifying that the practice meets NRCS P.S. 340. If signing up for more than one year, the cover crop may rotate to different fields to accommodate crop rotations, as long as the contracted acreage is maintained in all years of the contract. There will be a 240 acre cap, per contracted year. Landowner/occupiers will have up to 5 years of contract eligibility, no matter the grant fund source, outside of WBIF.

Cost Share for Cover Crop		
	Single Species	**Multi-Species**
One Year	$ 35.00	$ 45.00
Two Year	$ 40.00	$ 50.00
Three Year	$ 45.00	$ 55.00

4.2. Conservation Cover: Contracts will be based off of the NRCS P.S. 327 with the goal in mind of buffering ravine interface areas, protecting surface waters, and providing pollinator habitat. Where buffers are required by law or local ordinance, only the buffer area beyond what is required is eligible for payment. The minimum width on a ditch is 16.5'. There is no minimum size of pollinator plantings, however there is a max of 2 acres. Pollinator plantings must have a minimum of 9 pollinator friendly forbs, including 3 species from each bloom period (early, mid, late) flowering season. Areas enrolled into conservation cover must meet the current USDA definition for cropping history, except when the goal is for pollinator habitat. Landowners will be provided a seed mix following P.S. 327 and NRCS Technical Note #31, all while being tailored to site specific goals and conditions. Landowners will be eligible for payment after completion of the seeding and all associated bills have been turned in to the technical representative. Technical representatives will conduct periodic onsite inspections verifying that the practice continues to meet standards. The expected lifespan of this practice is 10 years.

Buffers and Ravine Interface:	
Conservation Cover	$3,000/acre
Seeding	$400/acre
Pollinator:	
Conservation Cover	$2,000/acre
Seeding	$1,000/acre

4.3 No-Till/Strip Till: This residue and tillage management practice addresses the amount, orientation, and distribution of crop and other plant residue on the soil surface year round. Crops are planted and grown in narrow slots or tilled strips established in the untilled seedbed of the previous crop. Contracts will follow the NRCS P.S. 329 and must be for three years in length. Landowners/occupiers may only contract once for this practice, no matter the grant fund source, outside of WBIF. There will be a 320 acre cap, per contracted year (3 years - 960 acres total). Technical representatives will conduct annual onsite inspections following Spring planting to verify that the practice meets standards. Rotational no-till/strip-till can occur on one crop in the rotation whereas continuous no- till/strip-till applies to every crop in the rotation. Landowners/occupiers will be paid a one time, lump sum payment, after the successful completion of the practice following year 1.

No-till/Strip-till	$35 per acre per year

4.4 Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation: The practice establishes and renovates windbreaks and shelterbelts and follows the NRCS P.S. 380. Those contracted this practice must have an approved design from someone with the appropriate JAA. Landowners will be eligible for payment after completion of the clearing/ grubbing and planting. All associated bills must be turned in to the technical representative. The expected lifespan of this practice is 40 years.

Percent of Total Cost	50%, not to exceed $5,000

4.5 Abandoned Individual Well Sealings: Well Sealings shall not exceed 75% cost share, with a cap of $1,000 per well. Cost share will not be available if the well sealing is being completed due to enforcement action. Well sealings will be eligible county-wide, but should shall focus on pollution sensitive areas of the County or within designated DWSMA management zones.

Percent of Total Cost	75%, not to exceed $1,000

Attachment A:

MN Job Sheet (554): DWM Annual Report

Drainage Water Management Annual Report

LANDOWNER: DATE:

COUNTY: FARM: TRACT: FIELD (ACRES):

CONTRACTOR: TOTAL ACRES PLANNED FOR DWM:

Attach contour map of field with number and location of each structure.

PLANNED TARGETS FOR TIMING AND DEPTH BELOW GROUND	
FALL LEVEL RAISING DATE (within 30 days after harvest):	WINTER DEPTH:
SPRING DRAWDOWN DATE (no earlier than 30 days before planting):	SUMMER DEPTH:
ALL TIMING AND LEVEL CONTROL OPERATIONS SHOULD CONSIDER WEATHER AND CROP PRODUCTION	

Identify all changes made in the water control gates throughout the year and why the change was made.

STRUCTURE LEVEL CONTROL ADJSUTMENTS MADE					
STRUCTURE	ELEVATIONS		FEET BELOW STRUCTURE RIM		REASON CHANGE MADE
NO.	RIM	GROUND	DATE	SETTING	

I certify that changes made to the water level control structures for management throughout the year were in accordance with my drainage water management plan.

Landowner Date