



# Erosion Control and Water Management Program

## Program and Policy Amendments

July 2016

### Program Purpose

The Erosion Control and Water Management Program, commonly known as the State Cost-Share Program, was created in 1977 to provide funds to Soil and Water Conservation Districts to share the cost of systems or practices for erosion control, sedimentation control, or water quality improvements that are designed to protect and improve soil and water resources. Through the State Cost-Share Program, land occupiers can request financial and technical assistance from their local District for the implementation of conservation practices.

Program requires the conservation practice provide one of the following objectives:

- Control nutrient runoff
- Control sedimentation
- Divert runoff to protect and improve water quality
- Reduce wind erosion
- Control gully, rill or sheet erosion
- Control storm water runoff
- Protect or improve surface water and groundwater quality
- Alleviate water quantity problems due to altered hydrology

### Policy Amendments

Primary amendments to the Policy are as follows:

**A.** Due to 2015 Legislation, MS section 103C.501, Subd 5 (b) "A district board, with approval from the state board and consistent with state board rules and policies, may contract on a cost-share basis to furnish financial aid to a land occupier for nonstructural land management practices that are part of a planned erosion control or water quality improvement plan." Section 4.0 is modified and Section 4.2.2 is added to the Policy. This will enable SWCDs to request approval via the [Nonstructural Land Management Plan Instructions and Request Form](#) to provide financial assistance for nonstructural land management practices.

**B.** As a result of the Buffer Law, Section 4.2.1 is added to the Policy to enable SWCDs to provide financial assistance to implement buffers at a flat rate in an effort to reduce administrative burdens for SWCDs and landowners, up to \$200 per acre to establish the vegetation. Native Species must be used. Acceptable seed source requirements are summarized in BWSR's Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines. A Cropping history is required and is defined as in agricultural crop production for at least two of the last five years. Native shrub plantings (amongst native grasses and flowers) for wildlife, fruit or nut production is allowed. Allowable Activities after established include haying, seed propagation, bio-energy production, and prescribed burning, outside of the nesting season of May 15 to August 1. Alternative dates can be approved by the SWCD on

a case by case basis for weed control, tree and shrub management or emergency repairs. Grazing after successful establishment is allowed with an approved grazing management plan (Prescribed Grazing, practice standard 528).

C. Edits to Section 1 of the Policy clarify the relationship between the Policy and the Grants Administration Manual; and those edits within Section 4.1 of the Policy limits the combined state and non-state funds to 100% of the cost to implementing a project. Until now the Cost Share Policy limited the combined state and federal funds to 75% of the cost to implement a project. State funds are still limited to 75% of costs, but this is a means of achieving a higher degree of similarity between the Cost Share Policy and the Clean Water Fund Policy. The Clean Water Fund Policy allows 100% of a project to be paid for as long as the entire Clean Water Fund amount in the grant agreement has the required 25% non-state match.

Activity	Fiscal Years '14, '15, and '16	Fiscal Year '17
Practices have a 10-year Minimum Life Span	Yes, Engineered and Ecological Practices	Yes for Engineered and Ecological Practices; including Buffers
Practices are allowed to have less than 10 Year Life Span	No	Yes, ONLY Nonstructural Land Management Practices as per BWSR Approved and locally adopted NLMP Plan
Payments to adopt land management practices such as but not limited to cover crops, residue management, nutrient management, that are incorporated into a farm management plan and have erosion control or water quality improvement benefits.	No	Yes, ONLY Nonstructural Land Management Practices as per BWSR Approved and locally adopted NLMP Plan
Maximum <b>Percent Rates based on receipts or invoices</b>	State Funds cannot exceed 75% for Practices	State Funds cannot exceed 75% for Practices
	Up to 50% for Unused Well Sealing	Up to 50% for Unused Well Sealing
	State and Federal contributions to the Practice not to exceed 75%	Combined, State and <b>Non-state</b> contributions cannot exceed 100%.
Flat Rates allowed for Buffer Establishment and Non-Structural Land Management Practices	No	Yes; Up to \$200 per acre for buffers not to exceed 120' wide. BWSR approved NLMP for Non-structural land Management Practices
District Boards may set different cost share rates up to the maximum allowed by BWSR prior to receiving any applications from land occupiers for the current Fiscal Year's grant	Yes; Recommended as part of local cost share policy	Yes; Recommended as part of local cost share policy-NLMP requires incorporation into local policy
All Payments to Land Occupiers require documentation using the "Voucher and Practice Certification Form" Voucher	Yes	Yes