

Soil Health Cost Share Grant Policy

From the Board of Water and Soil Resources, State of Minnesota

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Policy Statement

The Soil Health Cost Share Grant is to be implemented in a manner consistent with the cost-sharing provisions of Minnesota Statutes, section 103C.501. Cost share funds are to be used for activities that further the adoption of practices that improve soil health.

District boards are responsible for the administration and decisions concerning the local use of these funds in accordance with: Minnesota Statutes, §103C.321 and §103C.331; BWSR policies; grant agreement; and all other applicable laws. BWSR will use grant agreements as contracts for assurance of deliverables and compliance. Failure to comply with relevant statutes, rules, and policies may lead to imposition of financial penalties on the grant recipient.

Reason for the policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide specific requirements for the implementation of funds appropriated to BWSR associated with the Soil Health Cost Share Grants.

BWSR's Grants Administration Manual (<http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/grants/manual/>) provides the primary framework for local management of all state grants administered by BWSR.

Eligible Activities and Program Requirements

1. Eligible and Ineligible Activities

Soil Health Cost Share Grants provides Soil and Water Conservation Districts with funds for the implementation of core soil health practices and associated technical and administrative responsibilities. Funds used from this policy for cost share must follow the BWSR Erosion Control and Water Management Program Policy with the following exceptions.

Eligible activities must be identified in the work plan.

1.1 Eligible Core Soil Health Practices. The following core soil health practices are eligible statewide:

- ◆ Cover Crops
- ◆ Strip-till / No-till
- ◆ Perennial Crops
- ◆ Stand Diversification
- ◆ Perennial Strips
- ◆ Agroforestry
- ◆ Rotational Grazing

****Please see the Soil Health Cost Share Grant Profile for a guide of NRCS practice standards that fall under the Core activities listed above****

Eligible practices are NOT limited to those above. In addition, local priority or supporting soil health practices may be eligible but grantees need identify those activities in the workplan submittal process.

For Example: Nutrient Management (NRCS Standard 590) practice(s) would be eligible in the following scenario. The Stormy SWCD is struggling with nitrate concentration increases in several public water supplies. They are proposing Nutrient Management practices emphasizing improvement of organic matter as a BMP, and since the area has a high incidence of confined animal facilities, they specifically want to implement Manure Management plans in addition to cover crops for operators who apply manure or other nitrogen fertilizer within the Stormy public water supply.

2. Grant Work Plan

Work Plans are required for the Soil Health Cost Share Grants. Work plans shall be developed in eLINK and must be approved before execution of the grant agreement and before work can begin or grant funds spent. Work plans shall reflect each eligible activity that will be implemented, a description of the anticipated activity outcomes or accomplishments, and grant funding amounts to accomplish each of the activities. If utilizing the percent-based option for projects, local/landowner contributions must also be included. A local cost share policy that includes such information as payment rates, contract terms, etc. should be part of the work plan or referenced and attached.