

JACKSON SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

OPERATIONAL POLICY HANDBOOK

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PURPOSE AND ADMINISTRATION

Purpose

The purpose of this Operational Policy Handbook is to provide a uniform, comprehensive and efficient system of operational administration for the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District (hereinafter referred to as the “District”).

These policies are designed to be a working guide to the administration of the District’s programs and mission. These policies are subject to change, revocation, modification or amendment at anytime the District deems necessary.

Management Rights

The District Board has the sole authority to approve, modify, reject, or approve as modified these policies by resolution at any time it deems necessary.

Administration

The District Director, who is directly accountable to the District Board, shall administer these policies. The Director shall develop policies as necessary, and gain approval from the District Board by resolution. The approved policy will be added to the current policies, and will be kept on file with the District.

Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District Policies

Check Signing Policy

Approved: January 20, 2009

Amended: March 17, 2014

Amended: February 18, 2025

The District shall require two (2) signatures on each check that is written. These signatures may consist of any combination of: two (2) members of SWCD Board, and two (2) staff authorized by the District Board.

Compensation and Expense Reimbursements

Approved: January 20, 2009

It shall be the policy of the District to compensate the District Supervisors on a monthly basis.

Reimbursable Supervisors expenses will be processed on a bi-monthly basis. Expense reimbursements need to be made within 60 days after the expenses were incurred, or they are considered personal income, and need to be taxed according to the IRS Publication 15.

Drill (no-till) Lease

Approved: August 27, 2007

Amended: November 21, 2016

Amended: February 18, 2025

The District Policy shall set the rates for the no-till Drill rental at \$10.00 per acre with a \$100 minimum. Seed Drill must be returned greased and ready for the next landowner.

Employee Personnel Policies

Approved: January 20, 2009

Employees hired by the SWCD, regardless of the source of funds, are District employees. They are hired by and responsible to the SWCD Supervisors. District employees are subject to the employment policies of Jackson County as well as state and federal employment laws.

Environmental Fair - Busing

Approved: September 10, 2004

Amended: February 18, 2025

The District shall reimburse \$5.00 per student attending the Environmental Fair for transportation reimbursed to each school that attends the Environmental Fair with or without a request.

Long Lake Conservation Camp Scholarships

Approved: December 20, 2004

The District will pay 100% of the registration cost to a Long Lake Conservation Camp session for the Jackson County 4-H Conservation Award Winner.

Mileage Policy

Approved: February 21, 2012

The District has established the mileage policy as following the current rates set by the Jackson County Board of Commissioners.

Rock Inlet Policy

Approved: March 24, 2003

The District will cost-share up to 50% or \$200.00 (which ever is less) on the installation of an approved design of a Rock Inlet where a surface tile intake exists. A District technician or the District Manager must approve each site. The cost-share funds for the rock inlets will be requested from Jackson County Local Water Management funds.

Supervisor’s Compensation

Approved: February 20, 2007

District Supervisors shall receive a compensation rate of \$75.00 per Board meeting. Board meetings are defined as those meetings where at least three members (quorum) are in attendance.

District Supervisors will receive \$75 for meeting not classified as Board meetings that take the following into consideration:

1. The activity involves a committee meeting or other scheduled event or training.
2. The activity involves subject matter that is included in our district mission or work plan.
3. The subject matter is important to our district operations.
4. You will be representing the District.
5. You will speak on behalf of the District.
6. Our input can be better provided by a Supervisor than by a staff member. The maximum per diem amount a Supervisor can receive is \$75.00 per day, no matter how many meetings are held on that day.

Tree Program

Approved: January 20, 2009

Amended: February 18, 2014

Amended: November 26, 2018

Amended: February 18, 2025

The SWCD sells only top quality stock which is locally grown. Once your order is placed, they are yours and you are responsible for the cost of the order.

Trees and shrubs should be soaked to the depth of five inches. One and two year old plantings will need water of some source at least once a week – more if it is an extra dry year.

Trees and shrubs purchased from the SWCD are guaranteed to start growing. Trees or shrubs that have failed to start growing should be reported to us no later than September 1st in the year purchased. Replacements will be provided the following spring. Replacements order after the September 1st deadline will be at our cost the following spring.

Special Orders are not guaranteed. We will not replace any stock that has not been properly cared for. We do not replace any stock that has died out due to drought, drowning, animal damage, or poor care. Keeping trees growing is the landowner's responsibility. Trees or shrubs planted in sod are not guaranteed.

The Jackson SWCD tree planting service is as follows:

Minimum \$100.00

50 cents per machine planted bare root tree or shrub

\$1.00 per machine planted potted evergreen

Landowner provides tractor and driver

Wetland Conservation Act

Amended Resolution 2014-01: April 21, 2014

Approved by Resolution 2008-1: October 22, 2008

Implementation of the Wetland Conservation Act, including decision authority for exemption, no loss, wetland boundary and type, replacement plan, sequencing determinations, and wetland banking determinations are placed with the Director.

Use of District Credit/Debit Cards

Approved: February 21, 2012

Original, dated, itemized receipt for every purchase made with the SWCD's credit/debit card shall be submitted to verify purchase was made for a public purpose.

Regular State Cost-Share

Approved: February 21, 2012

Amended: November 21, 2016

The District shall cost-share with land occupiers at the maximum rate of 75 percent of the eligible costs of a project. Total cost-share provided from all state and federal funds must not exceed 75 percent of the total project cost. Beginning with FY2017, total cost share from state and federal funds may equal 100 percent of the total project cost, providing the state cost share payment is partnered with federal EQIP program payment.

State Cost-Share Partial Payments

Approved: February 21, 2012

The District may authorize a partial payment in cases where weather or other unanticipated circumstances beyond the control of the land occupier forces postponement of completing the project until the following construction season. Every request for partial payment shall be considered on its own merit.

General Journal Entries

Approved: February 21, 2012

The SWCD shall maintain supporting documentation for each journal entry. Journal entries shall be reviewed and approved by someone other than the person making the entries. The reviewer shall sign the record of each entry to show approval.

Financial Account Reconciliation

Approved: February 21, 2012

Financial account statements shall be reviewed by someone other than the person making the reconciliation. The reviewer shall sign the statement to show approval.

Signing Authority – Authorized Representative

*Approved: February 21, 2012
Amended: March 17, 2014
Amended: February 18, 2025*

The District Director shall be granted signing authority and is assigned to be the Authorized Representative for the SWCD Board in instances where action is required prior to the next meeting of the SWCD Board. This may include BWSR grant agreements, cost-share contracts, cost-share vouchers as well as other timely District business.

JAA Approval

Approved: February 21, 2012

The District shall recognize the Job Approval Authority for Ecological Sciences and Engineering as granted by the USDA-NRCS as inventoried in eLINK and in employee file.

Capitalized Assets

Approved: February 21, 2012

The District uses a threshold of \$1,500 for capitalizing assets purchased. Those physical assets under \$1,500 are expensed directly and not capitalized.

Abandoned Well Cost Share Program Policy

*Approved: October 15, 2012
Amended: December 17, 2012
Amended: October 12, 2018
Amended: February 18, 2025*

- Effective 01/01/2025: The maximum cost share on each well will be 50%, but shall not exceed \$1,000. The remaining costs of properly sealing the well are the responsibility of the owner; total cost share maximum of \$7,500 per fiscal year.
- All well sealing must be completed by a well driller or well sealing contractor possessing all appropriate licenses from the Minnesota Department of Health. All well sealing shall

be completed in accordance with the Water Well Code requirements contained in the Minnesota Rules, chapter 4725 and appropriate Minnesota statutes.

- Upon completion of well seal, the well sealing cost-share application, Well Abandonment Report, and paid receipt shall be presented to the Jackson SWCD Board of Supervisors for payment approval.

Applications are available at:

Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District 507-662-6682 ext 3

Jackson County Planning & Zoning Office 507-662-6682 ext 4

Nonstructural Land Management Practices (NLMP) Policy

Approved June 18, 2018

State Cost-Share funds up to 75% not to exceed \$7,500.00 may be used on Practice Standard 382 – Fence, Practice Standard 516 – Livestock Pipeline and Practice Standard 642 – Water Well when partnered with federal funds. The land must have a cropping history and/or be expiring CRP or other program. The Cost-Share contract shall be equal to the federal contract length or be maintained for 20 years whichever is longer. The eligible land shall be 10 acres or more supporting a minimum 10 animal units. All federal practice standards must be maintained or the contract holder will be responsible to return all Cost-Share funds up to 150%.

Conservation Use Acres Policy

Amended May 24, 2022

Conservation Use Acres (CUA) Policy provides for acres seeded in conservation use for construction of practice. CUA Policy utilizing available funds, providing for 150' width and 100' past and above planned waterway, up to \$300 per acre, on a case-by-case basis. Staff will help determine number of acres needed for construction use, payment will only be made if construction of conservation practice is completed between June 1 and September 10. Technician has final decision on the number of acres to be planted.

Nonstructural Agricultural Practices Policy

Amended November 21, 2022

Amended February 20, 2024

State Cost-Share funds may be utilized to implement Practice Standard 340 – Cover Crop, Practice Standard 345 – Residue and Tillage Management (Reduced Till), and Practice Standard 329 – Residue and Tillage Management (No Till). Each contract will consist of a 3-year contract period that includes an up front, lump sum payment, along with an operation and maintenance (O&M) plan. To be eligible, the land must have a cropping history with a conventional farming practice. Also, contracts will require a minimum of 10 acres for consideration but will not allow for more than 160. The board of supervisors may consider ineligible submissions on a case-by-case basis.

I. Priority

- a. First priority will be given to producers who do not have a history of incorporating soil health practices in their farming operations.
- b. Second priority will be given to producers who have cropland within environmentally sensitive areas. These areas may include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Areas susceptible to erosion
 - ii. Floodplain
- c. If the first two priorities are not met, applications will be reviewed on a first come first serve basis.

II. Cost Share

- a. Flat rates will be used for implementation of practices.
- b. The district will enter into one contract with each individual land occupier for a three-year period.
- c. The land occupier will be paid one lump sum up front upon contract approval.
- d. Practices will be completed under the O&M plan and will be inspected annually by a technical representative.
- e. Payment rates will follow the NRCS EQIP payment rates for Practice Standards 340, 345, and 329.

III. Practice Standards

- a. All practices must be consistent with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG). 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.

IV. Non-Compliance

- a. The district, after learning of potential non-compliance, will:
 - i. Review applicable law and rule.
 - ii. Review project file contents, contract, and O&M plan.
 - iii. Conduct a site investigation, including pictures.
 - iv. Interview the land occupier.
 - v. If compliance is determined by the board of supervisors, staff will document the decision and follow up is unnecessary.
 - vi. If non-compliance is determined by the board of supervisors, a corrective action plan will be developed and delivered to the land occupier. The corrective action plan will make reference as to why the practice is not in compliance and specify what the land occupier must do to gain compliance.
 - vii. Staff will assist and/or follow up with land occupier to gain compliance.
 - viii. If land occupier fails to implement the corrective action plan, the land occupier will be considered in a “violation” status. The district will contact the Board of Water and Soil Resources and proceed jointly with the state.

District Lease Threshold

Approved November 21, 2022

District Lease threshold effective FY2023 to establish threshold for lease agreements at \$5,000.