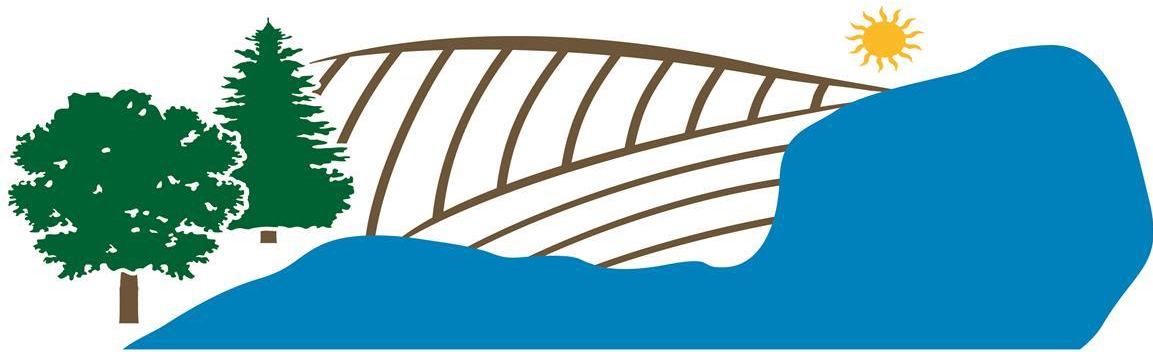


ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK

2026

POPE SOIL & WATER



CONSERVATION DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

Working with Landowners and Citizens for the Conservation, Protection, and Enhancement of Pope County's Natural Resources.

Vision Statement

The vision of the Pope Soil and Water Conservation District is to promote, guide, and provide high quality technical assistance for Pope County and for the enhancement and protection of land and water resources through implementation of projects that will lead toward effective conservation of soil and water

2026 PLAN OF WORK AND OPERATIONS

PLANNING

The purpose of the Annual Plan is to identify resource issues within Pope County and the role and responsibilities of implementation for the Pope Soil and Water Conservation District.

The Annual Plan outlines specific goals to resolve these resource problems which are tied to the three Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans (North Fork Crow River, Sauk River, and Chippewa River watersheds) and the Pope County Water Plan.

A full copy of the Sauk River, North Fork Crow River, and Chippewa River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans can be found at www.popeswcd.org.

OVERALL ACTIONS:

1. Conduct a meeting with the three-policy committee's quarterly to provide background on progress and other activities.
2. Complete and publish an Annual Report with activities completed to address the priorities listed in the Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans and County Water Plan.
3. Set an annual plan of work and budget for planning activities that coincide with priorities listed in the Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans.
4. Review this plan annually by the Pope SWCD Board and staff.

PARTNERSHIP ACTIONS:

1. Coordinate work with the Pope County Land & Resources Management Department to protect and educate the public about water resource concerns and implement the activities in the Pope County Water Plan and the three Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans (North Fork Crow River, Sauk River, and Chippewa River).
2. Work with the Chippewa River Watershed Association, Sauk River Watershed District, and North Fork Crow River Watershed District, and Pope County Land & Resource Management Department to provide information to help promote conservation.
3. Participate on Technical Advisory and Policy Committees for watershed projects with a One Watershed One Plan (Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan).

4. Coordinate work with partners to protect and educate the public about water resource concerns and implement activities identified as priorities in the Chippewa River, Sauk River, and North Fork Crow River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans.
5. Provide support to water quality monitoring programs: Pope County Lake Monitoring, Chippewa River watershed, North Fork Crow River watershed, and Sauk River watershed monitoring of lakes and streams.
6. Participate in the JPA with the West Central Technical Service Area Engineering Team and provide guidance on annual workload.

TRAINING & CERTIFICATIONS:

Note: For SWCD employees, Job Approval Authority ratings shall be recommended by the SWCD Manager and the District Conservationists. The District Conservationist will review the recommendations and provide additional information as needed to the Area Resource Conservationists who will delegate the appropriate JAA rating. The SWCD board should concur with JAA ratings for SWCD employees when recommended by the District Manager and District Conservationist. SWCDs performing reimbursable work as TSPs must have employees with the appropriate JAA. The District Manager will work with each staff member to determine which JAA will be necessary for each employee based on their job description and programs being implemented by that employee. Each staff member JAA for practices will be kept in their personnel file and reviewed annually during planning for the SWCD. Additionally, JAA designations and needs will be discussed with engineering staff to best utilize the skills and abilities of SWCD personnel and the WCTSA engineering staff. Efficiency in getting practices implemented and quantity of implemented practices will be a major consideration in determining what JAA will be achieved and by which SWCD staff.

1. Work towards/Maintain Job Approval Authority for staff.
 - a. Ecological Sciences practices that
 - i. 342 Critical Area Planting, 643 Restoration of Rare and Declining Natural Communities, 645 Upland Wildlife Habitat Management, 327 Conservation Cover, 314 Brush Management, 340 Cover Crop, 393 Filter Strip, 512 Forage and Biomass Planting, 666 Forest Stand Improvement, 449 Irrigation Water Management, 118 Irrigation Water Management plan-written, 146 Pollinator Habitat Plan-written, 338 Prescribed Burning, 329 Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till, 391 Riparian Forest Buffer, 528 Prescribed Grazing, 612 Tree/Shrub Establishment, 657 Wetland Restoration, 660 Tree Shrub Pruning, 490 Tree Shrub Site Preparation, 644 Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management, 380 Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment, 484 Mulching, 315 Herbaceous Weed Control, 590 Nutrient Management
 - ii. ARCGIS, ARCMAP, RUSLE, Toolkit, Soils, Lidar, Conservation Desktop
 - b. Engineering
 - i. Hydrology, Watershed
 - ii. 638 Water and Sediment Control Basin, 410 Grade Stabilization Structure, 412 Grassed Waterway, 468 Lined Waterway or Outlet, 580

Streambank and Shoreline Protection, 620 Underground Outlet, 360
Waste Facility Closure, 351 Well Decommissioning

- iii. Alternative Rock Intakes
 - c. Shoreland Training
 - d. Conservation Planning Training
 - e. Pesticide Applicator
 - i. Category A and C
 - ii. Category J
2. Other training as identified as a part of the job requirements.



2026 Board and Staff

Board Pictured Top Left: Keith Nygaard, Randy Pederson, Tom Talle, D. Gary Reents,
Randy Mitteness

Staff Pictured Top Right: Holly Kovarik, Mason Stewart, Christopher Borash, Kimberly
DeMorett, Katie Disrud, and Nicole Brede



SUPERVISORY BOARD 2026

REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE: 8:00 A.M. ON THE 3RD TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH
January to March 2026. April till October 2025 7:00 a.m., and November and December 2026
8:00 a.m.

LOCATION: POPE SWCD OFFICE, 1680 N. FRANKLIN ST., GLENWOOD, MN

CHAIR Keith Nygaard 27820 180 th Street Starbuck, MN 56381 320-760-4745	DISTRICT 1	RE-ELECTION 2026
VICE-CHAIR Tom Talle 17553 295 th Street Glenwood, MN 56334 320-278-3770	DISTRICT 3	RE-ELECTION 2026
SECRETARY Randy Pederson 131 E. Minnesota Avenue Glenwood, MN 56334 320-634-4737	DISTRICT 2	RE-ELECTION 2028
TREASURER D. Gary Reents 15821 Co. Rd 29 Villard, MN 56385 320-554-3328	DISTRICT 5	RE-ELECTION 2028
PUBLIC RELATIONS Randy Mitteness 32060 325 th Street Benson, MN 56215 701-238-0932	DISTRICT 4	RE-ELECTION 2026

The goals and objectives of the Pope Soil & Water Conservation District are defined as:

1. Conservation, Protection, and Enhancement of Surface Water
2. Conservation, Protection, and Enhancement of Ground Water
3. Conservation, Protection, and Enhancement of Soil Health and Productivity
4. Research, Education, and Outreach
5. Conservation, Protection, and Enhancement of Lands

Conservation, Protection, and Enhancement of Surface Water

Improve water quality and help reduce erosion in our lakes, streams, ditches, wetlands, and water resources.

1. Assist with the implementation of the Wetland Conservation Act as a member of the Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP).
 - a. Attend TEP meetings monthly with partners.
 - b. Assist with the preparation of Restoration Orders and Replacement Plans as identified in statute and rule and fulfil the role required for the SWCD TEP member.
2. Support landowners seeking compliance with the Buffer Law and establishing buffers.
 - a. Complete inspections on 10% annually or review buffer parcels for compliance once per three years.
 - b. Send notification of noncompliance to the County and BWSR on sites identified.
 - c. Send notice to County and BWSR on sites compliant.
 - d. Work with landowners to bring them into compliance working with the County and BWSR through this process.
3. Improve land stewardship through Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Program.
 - a. Sign up at least 5 landowners per year into the program or 1,000 acres certified.
 - b. Educate the public on the program by providing materials to 20 new producers.
 - c. Write at least 2 articles to be used in newspaper or newsletter publications and social media.
4. Protect surface water through Cost Share Program.
 - a. Install 25 water and sediment control basin/erosion control structures.
 - b. Implement structural conservation practices with a goal of reducing 2,702 tons sediment/year, 548 lbs. of total phosphorus/year, and 8,754 lbs. of total nitrogen/year. (Chippewa River CWMP EB-1 & MC-1)
 - c. Complete applications for Clean Water Fund or other grants to complete projects.
5. Protect surface water through implementing an Urban Conservation Program.
 - a. Coordinate a project (implementation) with the City of Glenwood to improve storm water quality management and to protect Lake Minnewaska (Chippewa River CWMP MC-5)
 - b. Coordinate a project (implementation) with the City of Lowry to improve storm water quality management. (Chippewa River CWMP MC-5)
 - c. Educate the public about rain gardens, retention ponds, pervious vs. impervious surfaces through at least 2 articles and a workshop.
 - d. Complete applications for Clean Water Fund or other grants to complete stormwater or conservation projects as needed.
6. Protect surface water through implementing a Tree and Native Grass Sales Program.
 - a. Install 5 miles of weed control fabric.
 - b. Produce 2 annual publications which promote the District's Conservation Tree Program.
 - c. Promote conservation trees at the Pope County Fair.

- d. Promote native grass plantings and install at least 100 acres.
 - e. Establish 12 tree plantings including all practice types.
 - f. Provide a variety of quality certified seed mixes to ensure germination rates.
 - g. Provide all landowners assisted with knowledge of how to establish and maintain their own plantings by creating and distributing fact sheets on these practices.
7. Protect surface water through implementation of a **Shoreline Enhancement and Restoration Program**.
- a. Educate and Promote Lakescaping to interested landowners.
 - b. Conduct three shoreline restoration projects for stormwater runoff control.
 - c. Implement stream riparian area and ditch system water quality projects with a goal of 54 linear feet enhanced annually (Chippewa River CWMP EB-8 and MC-8).
 - d. Implement shoreland restoration projects with a goal of 3 projects completed annually (Chippewa River CWMP EB-9 and MC-9).
8. Assist Pope County Land and Resource Management and the Pope County Feedlot Officer on feedlot issues.
- a. Complete applications for Clean Water Fund or other grants to promote and cost share feedlot best management practices to reduce water pollution.
 - b. Implement bacteria management practices 2.9 projects implemented annually.
 - c. Assist in implementation of projects (Chippewa River CWMP EB-6 and MC-6).

Conservation, Protection, and Enhancement of Ground Water

Improve water quality and help reduce impacts in groundwater and other water resources.

1. Protect groundwater through a **Cost Share Program**.
 - a. Install 2 alternative tile intakes.
 - b. Implement a **Well Sealing Program** with the funding allocated through the water plan funding and the Natural Resources Block Grant and CWMPs where applicable.
 - i. Cost share the sealing of 5 wells annually.
2. Implement the **DNR Observation Well Monitoring Program**
 - a. Complete paperwork and groundwater monitoring for 29 Observation Wells.
3. Safeguard drinking water by protecting groundwater from nitrate sources.
 - a. Promote and conduct at least 3 Nitrate Testing Clinic(s) partnering with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture for private well owners.
4. Implement an **Irrigation Management Program**
 - a. Secure enrollment of 10 pivots in the Irrigation Management Program.
 - b. Implement irrigation conservation measures with a goal of 371 acres managed annually (Chippewa River CWMP EB-7 and MC-7).
 - c. Promote the Irrigation Management Program in 2 articles (newspaper or newsletter) or on social media.
 - d. Contact and send Irrigation Management Program information to Pope County Irrigators through the Irrigation Association of Minnesota
 - e. Organize and execute an Irrigation Clinic for producers.

- f. Promote project implementation for the RCPP Irrigation program available to landowners by writing at least 2 articles.
- g. Write 6 conservation plans for irrigation practices including final certification, plan, and construction inspection.

Conservation, Protection, and Enhancement of Soil Health and Productivity

To reduce soil erosion by promoting conservation tillage, cover crops, and soil health practices and increasing the acres implemented.

1. Write conservation tillage and soil health practices newsletters and articles to be published in our local county-wide newspapers or on social media.
2. Promote implementation of soil health programs available to landowners.
3. Apply for funding as available to assist landowners with implementation of soil health practices.
4. Assist and conduct Tillage Workshops as needed.
5. Conduct Tillage Transect Survey as needed.
6. Implement Soil Health and Wind Erosion Practices with a goal of 989 acres annually (Chippewa River CWMP EB-2 EB -4, MC-4, and MC-2).
7. Protect and Enhance soil health and productivity through Equipment Rental Program
 - a. Provide no-till drills and a packer to landowners for rent with a 500-acre goal.
 - b. Promote practices that improve soil health.
 - c. Write 6 conservation plans for soil health practices including final certification, plan, and construction inspection.

Research, Education, and Outreach

Improve water quality and help reduce erosion in our lakes, streams, groundwater, ditches, wetlands, and water resources through research, education, and outreach.

1. Surface Water Monitoring
 - a. Partner with the MN Pollution Control Agency to do monitoring as needed.
2. Rosholt Research Farm
 - a. Partner with MN Department of Agriculture and the University of Minnesota to implement a field trial researching nitrogen impacts on ground water.
 - i. Hire, supervise, and oversee daily workplan for an intern completing daily water quality monitoring of lysimeters.
 - ii. Coordinate efforts with the MN Department of Agriculture and the University of Minnesota for a field day to demonstrate new technology and techniques.
 - b. Partner with the MN Department of Agriculture and the University of Minnesota to conduct Irrigation Research at the farm.
 - i. Hire, supervise, and oversee daily workplan for an intern completing daily water quality monitoring.

- ii. Coordinate with the MN Department of Agriculture and the University of Minnesota for a field day to demonstrate new technology and techniques.
 - c. Coordinate with other entities to utilize the research facilities for education and training.
- 3. Youth Education Program
 - a. Educate students about conservation through Conservation Day and a Water Festival Day.
 - b. Provide educational materials and give presentations to 3 elementary schools for an annual poster contest.
 - c. Participate and assist in the planning and organizational efforts of the Area II Envirothon/Jr. Envirothon/Poster Contest.
- 4. Adult Education Programs
 - a. Promote conservation programs through displays at events including the Pope County Fair, Area Ag Show, Community Expo and other events as appropriate.
 - b. Provide and distribute Soil Stewardship materials to local churches.
 - c. Distribute a quarterly newsletter to Pope County landowners promoting all the programs available.
 - d. Work with local sportsmen groups to promote wildlife habitat through programs and attend their meetings annually.
 - e. Partner with sportsman groups at local banquets by providing program information at events.
 - f. Promote conservation practices in the news media with 5 articles and social media postings.
 - g. Select an Outstanding Conservationist for the year.

Conservation, Protection, and Enhancement of Lands

Promote land conservation programs

- 1. Complete grant applications to complete projects.
- 2. Implement practices to increase perennial cover with a goal of 117 acres (Chippewa River CWMP MC-3 & EB-3).
- 3. Implement practices to increase perennial cover with a goal of 117 acres
- 4. Restore wetlands and expand floodplain connectivity with a goal of 50-acre feet of storage added annually (Chippewa River CWMP (EB-11 and MC-11).
- 5. Add or re-enroll land in protection programs with a goal of 138.4 acres added/re-enrolled annually (Chippewa River CWMP EB-12 and MC-12).
- 6. Promote land conservation programs with partners. These programs include but are not limited to the:
 - a. Continuous Conservation Reserve Program
 - b. Conservation Reserve Program
 - c. Conservation Enhancement Reserve Program
 - d. Environmental Quality Incentive Program

- e. Grassland Reserve Program
 - f. Wetland Reserve Program
 - g. Conservation Stewardship Program
 - h. Reinvest in Minnesota Program
 - i. Walk-In Access Program
7. Promote and Administer the Cooperative Weed Management Program.
- a. Digitize all data points into new GIS shapefile.
 - b. Monitor sites of infestations of priority invasives from plan.
 - c. Adopt annually a strategic management plan for treating invasives.
 - d. Write at least 1 article per month for the weed of the month articles in the newspaper during the summer months and posts to social media.
 - e. Maintain pesticide applicator licenses for 2 SWCD staff.
 - f. Coordinate with the City of Glenwood and Buckthorn Brigade on buckthorn treatment and removal in Barsness Park including applying for applicable grants.

II. 2026 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January (Board Meeting 3rd Tuesday)

1. Approve current bills
2. Approve minutes
3. Review fund balances
4. Election of Officers and oath of office
5. Appointments to special committees
6. Begin work on Annual Report
7. Approve official newspaper for publications/bank accounts/annual information
8. Grant reports
9. Staff written reports
10. Review Personnel Policies
11. Review MCIT Insurance Coverage
12. Review billable rates

February (Board Meeting 3rd Tuesday)

1. Approve current bills
2. Approve minutes
3. Review fund balances
4. Review Tree Program Revenues and Expenses
5. Approve Agreements and Existing Programs
6. Review and approve Agency Objectives Report
7. Staff written reports
8. Publish and distribute Newsletter/Annual Report

9. Participate in Irrigators Association Annual Conference
10. Review Rosholt plans
11. E-link Reporting Due February 1st

March (Board Meeting 3rd Tuesday)

1. Approve current bills
2. Approve minutes
3. Review fund balances
4. Approve agreements
5. Review Tree Planter Safety
6. Review RIM, CREP, WRP, & PWP programs
7. Staff written reports
8. Attend Legislative Day at the Capitol/Complete virtual meetings with legislators on SWCD programs and projects
9. Discuss tree pickup
10. Discuss safety at the workplace
11. Attend Area II meeting
12. Complete presentation for conservation poster contest and distribute materials for the contest either in person or virtual.
13. Fundraising for Water Fest as needed
14. Promote Calendar Photo Contest
15. Hold Irrigators Clinic

April (Board Meeting 3rd Tuesday)

1. Approve current bills
2. Approve current minutes
3. Review fund balances
4. Review First Quarter District progress
5. Review State Cost Share Program
6. Discuss and Select Outstanding Conservationist
7. Notify ministerial organization of Soil Stewardship week and refer them to information
8. Participate in Community Expo with Booth
9. Staff written reports
10. Annual Tree Pick up day

May (Board Meeting 3rd Tuesday)

1. Approve current bills
2. Approve minutes
3. Review fund balances & budget to actual income and expenses
4. Staff written reports
5. Envirothon held in May

6. Judge poster contest
7. Attend Awards Ceremonies and present Poster Contest Certificates at schools

June (Board Meeting 3rd Tuesday)

1. Approve current bills
2. Approve minutes
3. Review fund Balance and budget
4. Approve Agreements
5. Staff written reports
6. Attend Area II meeting
7. Review prices for programs, trees and planter rates for budget

July (Board Meeting 3rd Tuesday)

1. Approve current bills
2. Approve minutes
3. Review fund balance & budget
4. Approve agreements
5. Review BWSR Capacity Application
6. Review Draft County Appropriation Request
7. Plan County Fair display
8. Review State Cost Share
9. Publish quarterly Newsletter

August (Board Meeting 3rd Tuesday)

1. Approve current bills
2. Approve minutes
3. Review fund Balance & Budget
4. Booth at the Pope County Fair
5. Hold Rosholt Field Day
6. Approve agreements
7. Staff written reports
8. Submit budget request to County Commissioners

September (Board Meeting 3rd Tuesday)

1. Approve current bills
2. Approve minutes
3. Review fund balance and budget
4. Approve agreements
5. Staff written reports
6. Co-host Water Fest with Stevens SWCD
7. Co-host Conservation Day with Stevens SWCD
8. Attend County Commissioners meeting to discuss allocation request

9. Publish quarterly Newsletter

October (Board Meeting 3rd Tuesday)

1. Approve Current bills
2. Approve minutes
3. Review fund YTD budget vs. actual I & E
4. Approve Agreements
5. Staff written reports
6. Discuss attending MASWCD Convention

November (Board meeting 3rd Tuesday)

1. Approve current bills
2. Approve minutes
3. Review fund balance & budget
4. Approve 2027 Calendar
5. Approve Agreements
6. Attend Area II meeting
7. Staff written reports
8. Arrange to attend MASWCD State Convention

December (Board Meeting 3rd Tuesday)

1. Approve current bills
2. Approve minutes
3. Review fund balances & budget
4. Approve agreements
5. Review Plan of Operations with NRCS
6. Conduct Staff Annual Reviews
7. Approve 2027 Calendar of Events
8. Discuss 2027 Seasonal Staffing
9. State Convention held
10. Staff written reports
11. Review Memo of Understanding with NRCS

III. 2026 Budget (see attached)

