



Non-Structural Practice Policy and Flat-Rate Cost Share Payments

Policy Title: Non-Structural Practice Policy and Flat-Rate Cost Share Payments

Policy Number: NSP-04162025

Effective Date: May 21, 2025

This policy operates in conjunction with Kanabec SWCD's Cost Share Assistance Policy (CSA-09182024), which outlines the overarching principles for prioritizing cost-effective conservation practices. All non-structural practices listed in this policy must align with the cost-effectiveness framework defined in CSA-09182024.

Flat-rate cost share payments for the installation or adoption of non-structural best management practices (BMPs) that improve or protect water quality are eligible for use of funds. The goal of these practices is ongoing landowner adoption unless otherwise approved by BWSR.

Non-structural BMPs will be planned and implemented according to the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) standards and specifications found in the Electronic Field Office Technical Guide (EFOTG). However, seeding dates for cover crops may follow the Midwest Cover Crop Council seeding guide recommendations.

For all non-structural BMP practices, cost-share funding will be provided through flat-rate payments per acre. These rates are based on the Minnesota NRCS Practice Average Annual Cost Information Spreadsheet FY2018 (or more recent, as available) and the Practice Cost Information Workbook Tool 2019 (or more recent), both found in the EFOTG.

These flat-rate payments are structured as an alternative cost method, aligned with BWSR's Grants Administration Manual definitions. They are not intended as behavioral incentives, but as standardized cost-share reimbursements based on typical costs for practice implementation.

Contract Length

Practices will be planned for 1- or 3-years of implementation.

1-year contracts are available to allow landowners to start small by trying a practice with little commitment. 1-year contracts apply to cover crops only.

For practices with 3 years of implementation:

- Practices may be implemented on the same acres for the 3-year duration (required for nutrient management and prescribed grazing);

- Practices may move with the rotation but must implement the same or greater acreage in years 2 and 3; or
- Two or more practices may be implemented on the same acres for the 3-year period, alternating years (e.g., plant cover crops after corn harvest, no-till soybeans the following year).

Contract Payments

Payments will be made after each season's certification by Kanabec SWCD, for both one-year and three-year contracts. Certification includes verification of seeding, seed mix, and rate, or other required parameters depending on the practice. The practice must be certified and inspected by Kanabec SWCD annually for three-year contracts to ensure implementation.

Eligibility

1-Year Contracts (cover crops only): Planned practices must be newly adopted and not previously implemented on the acres by the current owner/operator. They also must not have previously met NRCS standards and specifications. Up to three consecutive contracts may be applied for on the same land.

3-Year Contracts: Planned practices must be newly adopted and not previously implemented on the acres by the current owner/operator, and not previously met NRCS standards and specifications. For cover crops, a second application is eligible if the cover crop species or acreage is enhanced.

Flat-Rate Cost Share Payment Schedule

- **Cover Crops** (NRCS Practice Standard 340)
 - 1–2 species: \$50/acre/year
 - 3+ species: \$60/acre/year
 - Prevent plant acres are not eligible for this program
 - Implementation can occur on different acres within the three-year contract or on the same acres consecutively
- **Nutrient Management** (NRCS Practice Standard 590)
 - \$20/acre/year
 - Implemented on the same acres annually
- **Prescribed Grazing** (NRCS Practice Standard 528)
 - \$40/acre/year
 - Implemented on the same acres annually
- **Residue and Tillage Management – No-Till & Strip-Till** (NRCS Practice Standard 329)
 - \$20/acre/year
 - Implementation can occur on different acres within the three-year contract or on the same acres consecutively
- **Residue and Tillage Management – Conservation Tillage** (NRCS Practice Standard 345)

- \$10/acre/year
- Residue cover following a corn crop at the time of planting the subsequent crop must be 60% or greater
- Residue cover following a soybean crop: 30% or greater
- Residue cover following a small grain crop: 60% or greater
- Implementation can occur on different acres within the three-year contract or on the same acres consecutively
- **Pasture and Hay Planting** (NRCS Practice Standard 512)
 - \$150/acre one-time payment
 - 5-year contract and practice lifespan
 - Stand-alone practice
 - Annual follow-up in the fall (for duration of project lifespan) to make sure it's not overgrazed

Non-Compliance:

Once a producer is found to be in non-compliance (within their control, not including justifiable weather-related causes) with a non-structural management practice, they will no longer be eligible for any future SWCD non-structural management practice incentive payments.

Responsibility:

The Kanabec SWCD staff are responsible for implementing this policy, including evaluating applications, determining cost-share assistance amounts, and communicating with landowners about the cost-effectiveness criteria outlined in both this policy and CSA-09182024.

Updates to this policy will correspond to updates made to the same policy within the Snake River Watershed Plan Partnership. The Kanabec SWCD Board will be made aware of requested updates to this policy.

Approval:

This policy has been approved by the Kanabec Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors.

Signed:

_____ Date _____

Board Chair