

EXHIBIT C: Woodland Stewardship Plan Policies (amended from LSCWP)

The Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership (LSCWP) provides cost-share on woodland stewardship plans that are identified as priority areas within the Lower St. Croix Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. Landowners within the Lower St. Croix drainage area must first contact the Washington Conservation District to determine if they are eligible for LSCWP funding. For properties located within SWWD but in areas that are not eligible for LSCWP funding, SWWD will provide financial support. Funding provided will be up to the current Minnesota Department of Natural Resources cost-share rate for woodland stewardship plans. All plans must be written in accordance with the Minnesota DNR Woodland Stewardship Program standards and with a clearly identified emphasis on water quality benefits of forest management with practices that enhance or maintain water quality.

Funds for this program can be utilized in one of two ways. The first is to reimburse the landowner the agreed amount after receiving the proper documentation of a paid invoice from a private forester with plan writer certification. Secondly, if the plan is to be written by WCD or LSCWP staff with plan writer certification, the funds can be utilized to reimburse staff time in writing the plan.

By signing the contract, landowners agree to enroll in a recognized land protection program within the first year of the plan. Recognized land protection programs include the Sustainable Forest Incentive Act (SFIA), Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) easement program, Minnesota Land Trust (MLT) easement program, Trust for Public Lands (TPL) land acquisition program, Washington County Land and Water Legacy Program, or the Minnesota 2c tax classification for a minimum of five years. Other programs may be proposed for consideration by SWWD.

By signing the contract, landowners are additionally required to implement an active practice with water quality benefits, identified in their plan, within the first five years. Active implementation practices include tree/shrub planting, brush management, habitat establishment/improvement, forest stand improvement, thinning, and timber harvest. This is not an exhaustive list of allowable practices, and program staff can assist landowners in identifying active implementation practices recommended in each plan.

If the landowner fails to meet the requirements of the contract, they are liable to SWWD per the terms of the agreement, unless the failure was caused by reasons beyond the land occupier's control.

Funding for woodland stewardship plans is limited. Distance from priority waterbodies and other factors will be considered when prioritizing funding for eligible properties.