

WELLS COUNTY
WATER QUALITY
EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROJECT

PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

Project Name: Wells County Water Quality Education and Outreach Project

Lead Project Sponsor: Wells County Soil Conservation District

Local Contact Person: Anne Ehni, Wells Co. SCD Manager
P.O. Box 7
Fessenden, ND 58438
Phone: 701-547-3622 ext. 5

State Contact Person: Greg Sandness
North Dakota Dept. of Environmental Quality
918 E Divide Ave, 4th Floor
Bismarck, ND 58501
Phone: 701-328-5150

State: North Dakota

Watershed: James River Headwaters Watershed -
Upper Sheyenne River Watershed

Project Type: Education **Waterbody Type:** Rivers / Streams

NPS Category: Agriculture

Major Goals:

The primary goal is to increase participation in future watershed-based projects by broadening producer and landowner knowledge regarding the positive impacts that various resource management practices and systems can have on water quality. This will be accomplished by providing information and educational activities throughout the county that are focused on local NPS pollution issues and solutions.

Project Description: Water quality has been identified as a priority resource concern in locally led conservation meetings in Wells County. The Wells County Soil Conservation District has systematically sponsored EPA-319 watershed projects across the county since 1995. Currently, some sections of the James and Sheyenne Rivers and their tributaries remain impaired.

To address this persistent environmental concern, it is necessary to try a new approach to achieve participation in an NPS watershed restoration project. To do this, the Wells County SCD will implement a two-year Information and Education project that will provide a means to measure outreach to watershed residents and their response/desire to participate in a future project designed to improve water quality in the James and Sheyenne River watersheds in Wells County.

Funding:

FY 2021 319 Funds Requested: **\$64,980**

Local / Producer Match: **\$43,320**

Total Project Costs: **\$108,300**

2.0 STATEMENT OF NEED

- 2.1 The Wells County Soil Conservation District has sponsored watershed based NPS pollution management projects within the county since 1995. Despite the accomplishments of these projects, there are still water quality impairments due to NPS pollution in the James and Sheyenne rivers and their tributaries. One factor that prevented the full success of previous projects is limited/declining producer participation. Initially, participation was variable between seasons, but good overall. However, that previous level of interest declined and was consistently low in recent years. To turn that trend around and strengthen producer participation in future watershed projects, a focused education and outreach effort is needed. These educational efforts will need to focus on evaluating why producer participation declined as well as the dissemination of information to increase producer understanding and awareness of feasible practices that can be implemented to reduce water quality impacts associated with agricultural sources in Wells County.

This project will educate landowners, producers, and the public about water quality issues in the county and how to mitigate potential nonpoint source pollution impacts to the beneficial uses of the waterbodies in the county. This focus aligns with the educational goal of the state's NPS Pollution Management Program to increase public awareness and understanding of water quality and beneficial use impairments associated with NPS pollution.

This project will strengthen the delivery of the State NPS Pollution Management Program by educating landowners and producers in Wells County about the connection between land management and water quality and about agricultural practices and management systems that can be effective in reducing nonpoint source pollution.

- 2.2 The primary target audience of this I & E project will be the agricultural producers within Wells County.

The project will organize and conduct educational events to disseminate information on feasible agricultural solutions to NPS pollution. The project will also coordinate outreach with partners to obtain direct input from landowners and agricultural producers to determine if there is interest and buy-in to advance to a watershed assessment and implementation project. This will be accomplished through one-on-one contacts and communication as well as mass mailings, digital access to resources and tours/workshops that will broaden the knowledge base of the audience.

3.0 Project Description.

3.1 Project Goals.

The primary goal is to increase participation in future watershed-based projects by broadening producer and landowner knowledge regarding the positive impacts that various resource management practices and systems can have on water quality. This will be accomplished by providing information and educational activities throughout the county that are focused on local NPS pollution issues and solutions.

Objective 1: Provide technical support to develop and implement the project's educational events and activities.

Task 1: Employ a project coordinator located in Wells County.

Product: Project coordinator. 20-hours per week. ½ FTE

Cost: 20 hours/week; \$30 per hour (all inclusive), two years (104 weeks) **\$62,400**

Travel, equipment, training, networking. This includes purchase or lease of a vehicle for the exclusive use of the project, if one is not available from NRCS. **\$16,660**

Task 2: Clerical Support

Product: SCD support and assistance with correspondence, bookkeeping, mailing, and other clerical support, as needed.

Cost: **\$7,200**

Task 3: SCD Meetings

Product: Additional SCD meeting time as necessary to oversee this project.

Cost: **\$1,200**

Objective 2: Identify feasible agricultural practices/management systems and the extent of producer interest/ability to address water quality concerns on agricultural land in the county.

Task 4: Contact producers in the county to initiate one-on-one discussions regarding agricultural practices and systems that can improve soil conservation and water quality on their farms. Through these discussions, feedback will also be obtained regarding their interest in participating in future watershed projects. The producers will also be asked to identify NPS management practices that might work on their farms as well as challenges that could prevent the implementation of certain practices or systems.

Product: Report on the outcomes of producer contacts, including their feedback on acceptable/feasible practices and interest in participating in a future watershed project.

Cost: *Costs are included under Task 1*

Task 5: Utilize producer contacts, mapping tools and software to identify how the water quality impairments align with the landuser interest and willingness to mediate those impairments. Data will be compiled county-wide but delineated by watershed.

Product: County-wide watershed priority map based on landowner interest and water quality conditions.

Cost: *Included under Task 1*

Objective 3: Increase landowner/producer understanding and awareness of NPS pollution impacts in the county and options to minimize the movement of NPS pollutants from their land.

Task 6: Design a website that contains a link to pertinent information on water quality assessment, management and protection. Promote this resource through newsletters, mailings and social media outreach.

Product: Website

Cost: **\$2,500**

Task 7: Conduct I / E workshops addressing NPS and water quality issues.

Product: At least one workshop will be conducted each year during the project term. The workshop(s) will be designed to help watershed residents learn about their water resources and how they may become involved in local watershed protection and management activities. Attendance may include county-wide stakeholders: local and state elected officials, state and local wildlife and recreational organizations, as well as agricultural and non-agricultural landusers. Major topics might include conservation planning to consider livestock waste management, fencing and watering options, buffers and fertilizer application.

Cost: **\$5,400**

Task 8: Conduct I / E tours to show producers local examples of alternative management practices and systems for NPS pollution reduction.

Product: At least one tour will be conducted each year during the project term. The tour(s) will illustrate feasible on-the-ground agricultural practices that reduce or manage impacts to water quality and the soil resource. The tours will educate attendees on the sources and causes of non-point source pollution impairments and provide an overview of water quality and watershed management needs in Wells county. They will address local water resources but will be applicable to all waters in the region. Practices to be showcased might include ag waste systems, grazing systems and cover-crops seeded after harvest.

Cost: **\$6,000**

Task 9: Prepare newsletter articles and direct mailings to local land users, general public, and media. The main topics will promote tours and workshops, as well as provide written data supporting positive impact that agricultural and recreational practices can have on water quality. The Harvey Reservoir is used heavily for fishing, boating and swimming. Addressing this impact on water quality will promote buy-in from non-ag stakeholders who value water quality.

Product: 8 newsletters, 8 articles and 5 direct mailings (exclusive from SCD newsletters)

Cost: **\$7,000** (Postage, printing and paper expenses to deliver newsletters and direct mailing to postal patrons in Wells County. Postage alone will be about \$5,000)

3.3 Milestone Table.

See attached milestone table on page 7.

3.4 Permits.

All necessary permits will be secured. None are anticipated.

3.5 Appropriateness of the Lead Sponsor.

Wells County Soil Conservation District SCD will be the lead sponsor of the Wells County Water Quality Education and Outreach Project. The SCD has staff presence, as well as an established working relationship with producers and conservation partners including: NDSU Extension, ND Dept. of Environmental Quality, ND Game and Fish, ND Fish and Wildlife, NRCS and local civic, park and recreation boards and wildlife clubs.

The SCDs annual and long-range plans, along with the input of the Locally Led Conservation Group, help to prioritize and guide the priorities of the SCD. The Wells County SCD has legal authorization to employ and receive and expend funds. They have a track record for personnel management and addressing conservation issues for their constituency. The Wells County SCD Board of Supervisors will manage personnel and funding associated with this project.

4.0 Coordination Plan.

4.1 Cooperating organizations, roles agreements.

- a) Wells County Soil Conservation District (SCD) – The Wells County SCD will be the lead agency responsible for administration of the Section 319 contract. They will provide clerical assistance, access to equipment and supplies as well as annual financial support. The SCD board will oversee implementation of the scheduled project activities and provide for staff time if feasible.
- b) Wells County Commission – The board of Wells County commissioners has endorsed this project and will support the efforts of the project.
- c) Wells County Water Resource District – The Wells County WRD has endorsed this project and will support the efforts of the project by contributing \$10,000 for each year of the project term. These funds will ensure all project goals and objectives are achieved.
- d) North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality (NDDEQ) - The NDDEQ NPS information and education (I / E) coordinator will assist the project staff in development and implementation of the projects I / E activities. It will provide sponsor oversight to ensure proper management and expenditure of Section 319 funds.
- e) USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – The NRCS will provide technical assistance as needed and will provide office space, use of computer, copier and other means to assist in the accomplishment of project goals and objectives.
- f) North Dakota Extension Service (EXT) – Local and State Extension personnel and educational materials will be utilized to compliment the projects' activities. This will include such things as publications and assistance with workshops and information meetings. The specific role of EXT will be dependent on the type of I&E activity being implemented and availability of staff and materials.

4.2 Local Support.

The Wells County SCD, Wells County Water Resource District Board, and Wells County Commission support providing information and education described herein to assess producer interest in participating in future watershed assessment/implementation projects in the James and Sheyenne Rivers watersheds in Wells County

Letters of support from the Soil Conservation District, County Commissions, Water Resource Districts and NRCS are attached in the appendix of this proposal.

4.3 Coordination with other NPS efforts.

The project will work with other NPS efforts to share resources, successes and challenges. This network will optimize the information and strategic foundation of the project. Other NPS educational projects in the area include: TREES, Eco Ed, NDSU Extension Livestock Environmental Nutrient Management Education Program.

4.4 Related Activities.

The annual work plans of the Wells County SCD has prioritized water quality as a long-range resource concern. In 2018, the SCD hosted a locally led conservation meeting with local producers and elected officials. Water quality was identified as one of the top primary environmental concerns and education was identified as one of the main drivers to improve natural resources.

The Wells County SCD has participated in EPA 319 watershed projects since 1995. This I&E project will follow-up on improvements implemented and open the discussion to implement a new project in this region.

5.0 Evaluation and Monitoring Plan.

- 5.1 Evaluation of the project will be conducted by the project coordinator and SCD staff. Evaluation tools will track number of educational events and attendees, producer contacts, percentage of produce interest, challenges/roadblocks for practice adoption. This evaluation will indicate whether the goal of this project has been reached.

6.0 Budget.

- 6.1 The attached Part I & II budget tables identify the funding sources and estimated costs per year to complete the project.

MILESTONE TABLE FOR WELLS COUNTY WATER QUALITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROJECT

TASK/RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATION	OUTPUT	QTY	YEAR 1		YEAR 2	
			07/21	06/22	07/22	06/2023
Objective 1 – Technical Support for I & E project Task 1 – Employ project coordinator Task 2 – Clerical Support Task 3 – SCD Meetings	Staff presence to provide technical assistance for conservation planning.	1				
	Establish rapport / working relationship with landowners/operators	80				
	Report of producer contacts, mapping tools and outreach response.	1				
Objective 2: Identify feasible extent of producer interest Task 4 – In-person contact with producers in project area	Provide up-to-date, locally driven digital/electronic resource	1				
	Educate and illustrate on-the-ground BMPs and benefits	4				
Objective 3: Increase public awareness of NPS impacts Task 6 - Design website - digital/electronic outreach	Highlight key components of EPA-319 project opportunities.	8				
	Task 7 and 8 – Workshops and Tours					
Task 9 - Quarterly Newsletters						

BUDGET TABLE FOR WELLS COUNTY WATER QUALITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROJECT

PART 1: FUNDING SOURCES

	Year 1	Year 2	TOTAL
EPA SECTION 319 FUNDS 1) FY21 Funds (FA)	\$ 32,790	\$32,190	\$64,980
OTHER FEDERAL FUNDS	\$0	\$0	\$0
STATE/LOCAL MATCH 1) Wells County Water Resource District. (FA) 2) Local SCD (TA&FA)	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$20,000
	\$11,860	\$11,460	\$23,320
Subtotals	\$21,860	\$21,460	\$43,320
TOTAL BUDGET	\$54,650	\$53,650	\$108,300

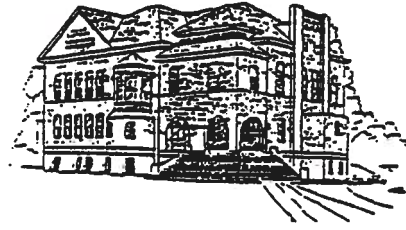
FA: Financial Assistance
 SCD: Soil Conservation District
 TA: Technical Assistance

PROJECT BUDGET TABLES

WELLS COUNTY WATER QUALITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROJECT BUDGET
Part 2 Funding Sources

	2021	2022	Costs	319 Funds	Local Match
Section 319/Non-federal Budget					
OBJECTIVE 1 & 2: <u>Personnel and</u>					
<u>Producer Interviews</u>					
Salary/Fringe (\$30/hr, 20 hr/wk, 104 weeks)	\$31,200	\$31,200	\$62,400	\$37,440	\$24,960
Travel	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$6,000	\$3,600	\$2,400
Equipment/Office Supplies/Postage	\$3,800	\$3,800	\$7,600	\$4,560	\$3,040
Coordinator workshops/training/network	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$3,000	\$1,800	\$1,200
Subtotals	\$40,000	\$39,000	\$79,000	\$47,400	\$31,600
OBJECTIVE 3: <u>Increase public awareness of NPS impacts</u>					
Design/maintain and publish website	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$2,500	\$1,500	\$1,000
Conduct workshops/tours	\$5,700	\$5,700	\$11,400	\$6,840	\$4,560
Publish quarterly independent newsletter	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$5,000	\$3,000	\$2,000
Promotion and advertising	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$1,200	\$800
Subtotals	\$10,450	\$10,450	\$20,900	\$12,540	\$8,360
ADMINISTRATIVE					
Clerical support (\$30*10 hr/mo*24mo)	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$7,200	\$4,320	\$2,880
Meetings	\$600	\$600	\$1,200	\$720	\$480
Subtotals	\$4,200	\$4,200	\$8,400	\$5,040	\$3,360
TOTAL 319/NON-FEDERAL BUDGET	\$54,650	\$53,650	\$108,300	\$64,980	\$43,320

Wells County Water Resource District
Tammy Roehrich, Secretary
700 Railway St N #244
Fessenden, ND 58438
Phone: 547-2537
Cell:341-1359
Fax: 701-547-3188
troehric@nd.gov



September 8, 2020

Wells County Soil Conservation District
Attn: Anne Ehni
PO Box 7
Fessenden, ND 58438

Dear Anne~

The Wells County Water Resource District recently met and voted to continue their financial support for 2021 and 2022 of the 319 Project for Water Quality Education and Outreach program.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,
Tammy Roehrich
Secretary

Wells County Auditor
Julie Krosbakken, Auditor
700 Railway St N #37
Fessenden, ND 58438
Phone: 701-547-3521
Fax: 701-547-3719

October 1, 2020

Wells County SCD
Fessenden, ND 58438

At the September 8, 2020 Wells County Commissioners meeting, the members of the Commission unanimously voted in support of the EPA-319 water quality education and outreach program.

Thank you.

Julie Krosbakken
Wells County Auditor