Working in Support of the State Soil and Water Conservation Policy (M.S. 130c.005).
The Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) supports the State Soil and Water Conservation Policy. The MASWCD works to maintain and enhance soil and water quality for environmental and economic benefits, preventing degradation, and restoring degraded soil and water resources with the understanding that these soil and water resources contribute to the health, safety, economic well-being, and general welfare of the state and its citizens. The MASWCD supports the administration of sound soil health management principles to help control and prevent erosion, sedimentation, siltation, and related pollution, ensure and enhance continued soil productivity, protect water quality, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, reduce damages caused by floods, conserve wildlife, protect the tax base and protect public lands and waters.

Recognizing the Benefits of Managing Soil as an Ecosystem
The MASWCD recognizes the living biological soil ecosystem as the critical key component of Minnesota’s diverse above ground ecosystems. The productivity of Minnesota’s agricultural and forest ecosystems cannot be sustained unless the biological health of the soil ecosystem is researched, understood, maintained and improved. The four basic manageable soil health principles include armoring the soil by covering it for as long as possible, minimizing soil disturbance, utilizing above ground plant diversity to maximize the soil’s biological diversity, and maintaining a living root in the soil not only in the growing season but as long as feasible. Implementation of these basic principles advances the goal of soil and water conservation and protection by minimizing nutrient and soil loss by effectively storing and cycling soil water, carbon and nutrients.

Local Technical and Resource Capacity
The MASWCD supports efforts and resources to develop and enhance the capabilities of all Minnesota SWCDs to provide technical support to all stakeholders through individual districts or shared resources. This includes allowing Districts to access appropriate resources for technical training and assistance through local, state and federal initiatives. Funding and expertise must be directly accessible to those performing the on-the-ground work of soil health implementation. This should include funding for initiating and implementation of soil health practices by landowners. Funding should also be available to Soil and Water Conservation Districts to provide the technical expertise necessary for implementation of soil health practices.

Locally Led/Locally Administered
The MASWCD supports local stakeholders, with guidance from local SWCD staff, to assess their soil’s biological health, set soil health goals and develop long term soil health management plans utilizing available programs and strategies to implement these plans and measure success.