KENT CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Conservation Cost-Sharing Program General Guidelines
Fiscal Year 2027

The Kent Conservation District will develop the annual objectives and priorities for using the State Conservation Cost-Sharing funds. Recommendations will be based upon a quarterly review of these guidelines and the current conservation needs in Kent County. Final objectives and priorities of the program will be determined and approved by the District Board of Supervisors, in accordance with the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) through the District Conservationist and DNREC's Division of Watershed Stewardship.

Objective		Funding Priority
I. Water Management Practices (See details attached.)	6.00%	$ 30,600.00
A. Open Ditching B. Tile Drainage		
II. Animal & Agricultural Waste Management Systems (See details attached.)	7.00%	$ 35,700.00
A. Poultry Composter B. Animal Mortality Freezers C. Poultry Manure Storage Structure D. Dairy Waste Systems E. Equine Manure Storage Structure F. Heavy Use Area Protection (Concrete Pads) for Poultry G. Spray Irrigation Equipment H. Heavy Use Area Protection for Dairy I. Large Animal Mortality		
III. Water Quality Practices (See details attached.)	70.00%	$357,000.00
A. Drainage Ditch Impoundments B. Ponds – Type 3 CRP CP3A & CP 23 C. Cover Crops (See attached guidelines)		
IV. Erosion and Sediment Control Practices (See details attached.)	1.00%	$ 5,100.00
A. Water and Sediment Control Basins B. Critical Area Treatment C. Structures D. Sod Waterways E. Windbreaks		
V. Administrative & Technical Assistance	16.00%	$ 81,600.00
Total Cost-Share Allocation:		**$510,000.00**

EQIP – If available, EQIP may be combined with District cost-share to attain the maximum cost-share percentage. District cost-share and EQIP combined cannot exceed the highest authorized percentage of the two programs. All EQIP requirements and policies pertaining to these practices will be required for District cost-share, except as noted.

Special Projects - The District reserves the right to develop special projects as may be deemed desirable at any time during the program year.

Public Notice - The program will be announced to the public through existing newsletters and publications. Applications will be received and evaluated on critical need and/or a first-come, first-served basis. Based upon the demand, needs, and necessary funding for implementation, the Kent Conservation District Board of Supervisors, with the advice of the District Conservationist, will determine the following:

1. Cost-share - Rate is as shown, depending upon the degree of need and public benefit. The rate is that of the total bill and will reflect any co-cost-share from any other source such as the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

2. Submission of Applications – First-come, first-served, dependent on benefit to public and critical need.

3. Implementation - All available funds should be committed by the end of the fiscal year.

4. Program adjustments - Based upon advice from the District Conservationist and the technical staff, the Board of Supervisors may adjust the funding objectives, cost-share percentages, and priorities to assure that available funding is committed within the fiscal year.

Awarding of cost-share - For each cost-share application, a conservation plan will be developed including a nutrient management plan if needed for animal waste, technical specifications and necessary designs, time schedule, and requirements for applicant contributions.

1. A signed Cooperators Agreement and technical certifications will be required in all cases.

2. The Board reserves the right to deny any cost-share application based on noncompliance or past history of noncompliance.

Program reporting - The Kent Conservation District will provide reports to the Division of Watershed Stewardship as requested.

Program approval - Program and special project approval will be in cooperation and coordination with the Division of Watershed Stewardship.

Policies (additional policies are stated under various conservation practices):

1. All practices require a site visit by a Board Supervisor prior to the application being presented for Board review. The Board of Supervisors reserves the right to waive this requirement as deemed necessary.

2. All applications will be completed in ink and signed by the landowner and authorized technician prior to Board review. At a minimum, all landowner information at the top of the cost-share form and Items A-F will be completed prior to Board review.

3. Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) Liens will be filed with the Kent County Recorder of Deeds for all conservation practices with the exception of drainage practices. All fees associated with UCC Liens will be the responsibility of the cost share applicant/recipient for filing financing statements, amendments, assignments, and terminations of UCC Liens for the life of the practice. The KCD fee will equate to the current Kent County Recorder of Deeds fee rounded up to the nearest five dollars.

4. All practices must meet or exceed Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) standards and specifications.

5. Applicants will agree that any misuse of funds or services will terminate funding, and funds previously received will be returned.

6. All practices will be inspected by a District representative and/or District Conservationist to assure compliance with engineering designs and policies before funds are disbursed.

7. All practices must have a useful life span of ten (10) years, with adequate maintenance as outlined in the conservation plan with the cooperator. District staff will perform annual maintenance inspections.

8. The District reserves the right to change any of the yearly program practices or priorities and cost-share policies as necessary to implement special projects or important conservation needs.

9. No cost-share will be provided for standards that are considered to be optional and are not necessary for the practice to be constructed to meet NRCS specifications.

10. No cost-share will be provided for any items beyond the minimum standard necessary to solve the problem.

11. Cost-share must be approved prior to installation/construction/purchase.

12. Cost-share is not available for tax ditches or projects that are eligible for 3921 Matching Funds unless there are no 3921 Matching Funds available at the time of request and the request is to resolve a critical issue. Requests will be addressed by the Board of Supervisors on a case-by-case basis.

Technical Assistance - A fee not to exceed 6% will be charged against the cost-share portion of the best management practices, and paid for out of the Cost Share Program funds, when necessary, to provide technical assistance not available through the NRCS. This fee will be subject to change pending actual need.

I. Water Management Practices

A. Open Drainage Ditches
B. Tile Drainage

The purposes of these practices are to provide water management for efficient and proper use, management, conservation treatment, and maintenance of soils.

Apply practices in this category to problem areas on farms and urban areas according to the needs.

Policies for these practices are as follows:

1. Cost-sharing is authorized:
   a. for existing cropland that has been tilled at least three (3) years out of the past five (5) years;
   b. for private urban landowners; and
   c. for necessary excavation, spreading of the spoil, and seeding as specified.

2. Cost-sharing is not authorized:
   a. for disturbance of wetlands unless all state and federal wetland laws have been complied with;
   b. for fencing, necessary clearing, and pipes; or
   c. for land slated for development

3. The structure shall be maintained for a minimum of ten (10) years following the calendar year of installation. This includes a minimum width of four (4) feet of vegetation adjacent to all ditches.

Specifications for all work under this category must be performed according to a plan prepared by the Kent Conservation District prior to installation using standards and specifications of the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service. The District or NRCS must inspect and document completed work before any cost-sharing payments will be disbursed.

Note: Open Ditching - A minimum four (4) foot permanent vegetative strip must be established and maintained adjacent to all open drainage ditches through a cropland field.

Maximum District Cost-Share

75% of the cost of excavation and spoil spreading, not to exceed $3,000 per applicant per year.

75% of the actual estimated cost for tile systems, not to exceed $4,000 per applicant per year.

II. Animal & Agricultural Waste Management Systems

A. Poultry Composter
B. Poultry Manure Storage Structure (PMSS)
C. Dairy Waste Systems
D. Equine Manure Storage Structure
E. Heavy Use Area Protection (HUAP) for Poultry Houses and Poultry Manure Structures
F. Spray Irrigation Equipment
G. Heavy Use Area Protection for Dairy/Beef Operations
H. Large Animal Mortality

The purpose of these practices is to reduce the pollution of ground and/or surface water and to conserve water.

Apply the practices in this category to areas of farmland where nutrients, sediments, and agricultural wastes constitute a potential pollution hazard.

Policies for this practice are as follows:

1. Applicant must apply to NRCS for EQIP cost-sharing first, if available.

2. Animals include poultry and dairy/beef. Equine and other production animals may be eligible based on the Board's discretion, at the time of application.

3. A nutrient management plan is required for all animal waste cost-sharing.

4. The practice shall be maintained for a minimum of ten (10) years following the calendar year of installation. HUAPS are installed for the operation of the animal waste structure. Approval of a HUAP for an animal waste structure will require that structure to begin a ten (10) year maintenance period that coincides with that of the HUAP, regardless of the age of the structure or life of prior maintenance period.

5. Cost-sharing is authorized:
   a. for animal waste storage facilities such as aerobic or anaerobic lagoons, liquid tanks, holding ponds, collection basins, settling basins, manure bunker-type structures, poultry carcass composters, and pesticide containment pads. Also includes diversions, channels, waterways, outlet structures, rain gutters, piping, land shaping, and similar measures needed as part of a system to manage nutrient, sediment, animal and agricultural wastes.
   b. for permanently installed equipment needed as an integral part of the system.
   c. for fencing for dairy and beef operations for exclusion and rotational purposes and for vegetative cover (including mulching needed to protect the facility).
   d. for leveling and filling to permit the installation of an effective system.
   e. only if the storage and diversion facilities will contribute significantly to maintaining or improving the soil or water quality.
   f. if a manure management plan is developed for each waste structure. Incidental use of the waste structure is not restricted, provided that the manure management plan is strictly followed.
   g. for permanently installed pumps and portable pumps whose primary use is for waste.
   h. HUAP's (40' X 40' unless site conditions warrant another size) at both ends of poultry houses and one end of poultry manure structures. Due to funding restrictions, HUAP funding for poultry operations is limited to projects that do not exceed 5 acres of disturbance and/or including up to 3 new or replacement poultry houses and 1 new or replacement poultry manure structure.
   i. heavy use area protection (concrete, stone) for dairy/beef operations.
   j. for large animal mortality for cow/horse/pig (no harness horses).

6. Cost-sharing is not authorized:
   a. for measures primarily for the prevention or abatement of air pollution unless the measures also have soil and water conserving benefits.
   b. for animal waste facilities that do not meet local or state regulations.
   d. for installation primarily for the operator's convenience.
   e. for that portion of the practices that are eligible for EQIP cost-sharing including the landowner's share for EQIP cost-shares when EQIP funds are available.
   f. for HUAP's if producer does not have a dead bird composter and PMSS on-site as a part of their operation.
   g. for HUAP's on houses if there is no existing HUAP at either end of the PMSS.

h. for a new PMSS unless a HUAP is also installed at either end of the structure at time of construction.
i. for HUAP's on poultry operations that exceed 5 acres of disturbance and/or includes 4 or more new or replacement poultry houses and 2 or more new or replacement poultry manure structures.

Specifications for all work under this category must be performed according to a plan prepared by the Kent Conservation District prior to installation. Standards and specifications of the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service will be followed. Certification of proper practices upon installation will be required for any cost-sharing payments.

Maximum District Cost-Share

75% of the cost of poultry composters, not to exceed $15,000

75% of the cost of animal mortality freezers, not to exceed $30,000

75% of the cost of poultry manure storage structures, not to exceed $30,000

75% of the actual estimated cost for dairy waste systems must be agreed to by the District prior to beginning installation. There is no cap on these systems.

75% of the cost of equine manure storage structures, not to exceed $10,000. Equine Manure Structure Guidelines must be followed (see next page).

75% of the cost of 40' X 40' concrete HUAP's, not to exceed $2.63 per square foot or $3,156 per pad. Pads for both ends of the poultry houses and one end of manure structures are eligible.

65% of the cost of spray irrigation equipment for dairy, swine and beef operations, not to exceed $10,000.

75% of the actual estimated cost for fencing for dairy/beef operations for exclusion and rotational grazing

75% of the cost of heavy use area protection for dairy/beef operations, not to exceed $2.63 per square foot or $5,000 per concrete project per applicant and $7,500 per stone project per applicant.

$60 of the cost of the removal of the cow is the responsibility of the landowner; the remaining cost is paid by the District effective October 1, 2021.

$120 of the cost of the removal of the horse (no harness horses) is the responsibility of the landowner; the remaining cost is paid by the District effective October 1, 2021.

Guidelines for Horse Manure Structures

Landowner must be a District Cooperator.

Applicant must have a two-year history of qualifying for a nutrient management plan under state requirements in order to qualify for District Cost-Share on horse manure structures.

Storage time must coincide with land area.

Manure must be stored in the structure at all times. The only time the structure is permitted to be empty is when all the manure has been applied on a crop field, and no manure is being stored outside.

At no time should any of the following be stored in the manure storage structure: large tractors, combines, lawn mowers, boats, personal recreational equipment, automobiles, hay wagons, etc.

Hay, straw, bulk saw dust, and seed can become combustible when stored in a manure storage structure; therefore, these items are not permitted in the structure at any time.

It is not permitted at any time to change, retrofit or construct an addition to the manure storage structure unless approval from the District Board of Supervisors has been granted.

Kent Conservation District and Natural Resources Conservation Service cannot and will not be held liable for any damages to the manure storage structure caused by mismanagement, or acts of God.

It is required that the manure storage structure be covered by hazard insurance in case of fire, wind, or other possible damages for the maintenance period of the structure.

Nutrient testing of the stored manure once every three years is required.

Soil testing of the cropland on which the manure is to be applied is required routinely every three years by a University of Delaware soil test or equivalent.

Calibration of the manure spreader to ensure the rate of manure applied is consistent with best management practices is required.

Any manure shall be stored in the manure structure or spread on farmland at a rate, which the Cooperative Extension Service determines is appropriate for the crop being grown. No manure will be stored outside the manure structure; unless, the structure is filled to capacity, and the manure stored outside is properly covered.

Maintenance requirements as stipulated on the Kent Conservation District cost-share application must be agreed to.

(Supplement to Kent Conservation District Cost-Share Guidelines)

III. Water Quality Practices

A. Ditch Impoundments
B. Ponds – Type 3 CRP CP9
C. Cover Crops (See attached guidelines)

The purpose of these practices is to reduce the pollution of ground and/or surface water, and/or enhance wildlife habitat.

Apply the practices in this category to areas of farmland where nutrients, sediments, and agricultural wastes constitute a potential pollution hazard.

Policies for this practice are as follows:

1. Cost-sharing is authorized:
   a. for ditch impoundments (water control structures) and the work necessary to construct them such as pipe and installation, fill, rip-rap, and other required components. A management plan will be developed by NRCS in conjunction with KCD and must be followed so that the desired benefits are obtained.
   b. for ponds that show a water quality benefit and the work to construct them such as clearing, earthmoving, core trench, concrete, pipe (including installation), rip-rap, and other required components.

2. The practice shall be maintained for a minimum of ten (10) years from the date of installation.

3. Cost-sharing is not authorized:
   a. for measures primarily for the prevention or abatement of air pollution unless the measures also have soil and water conserving benefits; or
   b. for tax ditches.

4. Ditch impoundments must not back water beyond applicant's property boundary.

Specifications for all work under this category must be performed according to a plan prepared by the Kent Conservation District prior to installation. Standards and specifications of the USDA, NRCS will be followed. Certification of proper practices upon installation will be required for any cost-sharing payments.

Maximum District Cost-Share

75% of the actual estimated cost of earthmoving, pipe, and structures, etc. not to exceed $3,500 per structure. Estimated cost must be agreed to by the District prior to beginning installation.

75% of the total cost of the construction of ponds, not to exceed $3,500 per pond

IV. Erosion and Sediment Control Practices

A. Water and Sediment Control Basins
B. Critical Area Treatment
C. Structures
D. Sod Waterways
E. Terraces
F. Windbreaks

The purposes of these practices are to control excess water runoff over agricultural fields and urban areas to prevent soil erosion and its resulting siltation, and to reduce nutrient or pesticide runoff.

Apply these practices to problem areas on farms and urban areas according to the needs of the soil.

Policies for these practices are as follows:

1. Cost-sharing will be made available to match the remaining costs of these practices that are not covered by the maximum available EQIP cost-share and landowner share for EQIP assistance. All EQIP requirements and policies pertaining to these practices will be required for District cost-share with the following exceptions:

   a. cost-sharing for urban areas is authorized.
   b. the practices must be maintained for a period of ten(10) years.
   c. see maximum District cost-share below.

Specifications for all work under this category must be performed according to a plan prepared by the Kent Conservation District prior to installation. Standards and specifications of the USDA, NRCS will be required for any cost-sharing payments.

Maximum District Cost-Share

75% of the actual estimated cost for practices A through E above must be agreed to by the District prior to beginning installation, not to exceed $3,500 per project.

75% of the actual estimated cost for practice F above must be agreed to by the District prior to beginning installation, not to exceed $1,000