

161A.73 Voluntary establishment of soil and water conservation practices.

1. The division shall establish voluntary financial incentive programs which shall provide for the following:

a. The allocation of cost-share moneys as financial incentives provided for the purpose of establishing permanent soil and water conservation practices, including but not limited to terraces, diversions, grade stabilization structures, grassed waterways, and critical area planting. The financial incentives shall not exceed fifty percent of the estimated cost of establishing the practices, or fifty percent of the actual cost, whichever is less.

b. The allocation of moneys as financial incentives provided for the purpose of establishing management practices to control soil erosion on land that is row cropped, including but not limited to no-till planting, ridge-till planting, contouring, and contour strip-cropping. The division shall by rule establish limits on the amount of incentives which shall be authorized for payment to landowners upon establishment of the practice.

c. The allocation of cost-share moneys as financial incentives provided to establish practices to protect watersheds above publicly owned lakes of the state from soil erosion and sediment. The financial incentives shall be awarded to watersheds which are of the highest importance based on soil loss as established by the natural resource commission pursuant to section 456A.33A. The financial incentives shall not exceed seventy-five percent of the estimated cost of establishing the practices as determined by the commissioners or seventy-five percent of the actual cost of establishing the practices, whichever is less.

d. The allocation of cost-share moneys as financial incentives to establish permanent grass and buffer zones, including an erosion control structure or an erosion control practice to mitigate the effects of concentrated runoff on surface water quality. The financial incentives shall not exceed one hundred percent of the estimated cost of establishing a zone, as determined by the commissioners, or one hundred percent of the actual cost of establishing the zone, whichever is less.

e. The allocation of cost-share moneys as financial incentives for the same purposes that are supported from the soil and water enhancement account of the resources enhancement and protection fund as provided in section 455A.19, or by the water protection practices account of the water protection fund established pursuant to section 161C.4. The financial incentives shall not exceed fifty percent of the estimated cost of establishing the practices, or fifty percent of the actual cost, whichever is less.

2. The commissioners of a district may establish voluntary financial incentive programs which shall provide for the following:

a. The allocation of cost-share moneys as financial incentives under a special agreement with owners of land in the district who promise to adopt a watershed conservation plan as provided by rules which shall be adopted by the division. The watershed conservation plan shall be in conjunction with the owners' respective farm unit soil conservation plans. The funding agreement must provide for the funding of a project which includes five or more contiguous farm units which have at least five hundred acres of agricultural land and which constitutes at least seventy-five percent of the agricultural land located within a watershed or subwatershed. The financial incentives shall not exceed sixty percent of the estimated cost of the project as determined by the commissioners or sixty percent of the actual cost, whichever is less.

b. The allocation of cost-share moneys as financial incentives to encourage summer construction of permanent soil and water conservation practices. The practices must be constructed on or after June 1 but not later than September 15. The commissioners may also provide for the payment of moneys on a prorated basis to compensate persons for the production loss on an area disturbed by construction, according to rules which shall be adopted by the division. The commissioners shall not allocate cost-share moneys to support summer construction during a fiscal year in which applications for cost-share moneys required to establish permanent soil and water conservation practices, other than established by summer construction, equal the total amount available to support the nonsummer construction practices. The financial incentives shall not exceed sixty percent of the estimated cost of establishing the practice as determined by the commissioners, or sixty percent of the actual cost of establishing the practice, whichever is less.

3. *a.* The division may reimburse private landowners for a portion of the cost of fencing materials and installation for permanent fence used to protect forest land from domestic livestock grazing, if the division determines that the grazing has caused excessive soil loss. For purposes of this subsection, forests shall be considered as agricultural land eligible for cost-share moneys. The total expenditure of reimbursement moneys shall not exceed fifty percent of the total landowner expenditures. Expenditures for boundary and road fence construction and for repair and replacement of existing fences are not eligible for reimbursement unless the complete fence is replaced.

b. A landowner shall sign an agreement with the division as a condition for receiving cost-share moneys. The agreement shall provide that the landowner shall maintain the fence for a minimum of ten years and shall follow written professional forester recommendations relating to land protected by fencing. The recommendations must be approved by the state forester or the forester's designee.

c. A landowner who violates the maintenance agreement shall maintain, repair, or reconstruct the damaged fence, or shall pay the division an amount equal to the amount of cost-share moneys reimbursed.

d. The division shall adopt rules to administer this subsection, including rules relating to procedures required to receive reimbursement, and eligibility requirements such as the minimum forest acreage required, and the maximum reimbursement amount allowed.

92 Acts, ch 1184, §8; 92 Acts, ch 1239, §51, 52; 96 Acts, ch 1083, §5; 98 Acts, ch 1040, §1