



BUSINESS PLAN

We're Branching Out"

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This document was approved by the Central Wisconsin Windshed Partners Board on August 29, 2005 as a guideline to be followed, allowing flexibility as customer needs and business trends change, and is subject to periodic review and updates.

Mission Statement

The vision of the Central Wisconsin Windshed Partners (CWWP) is to use conservation and preservation methods to control wind erosion on cropland, and to protect farmsteads, residential areas, roads, and highways in Central Wisconsin, through the establishment of windbreaks, shelterbelts, and living snow fences. An additional CWWP focus is providing services to develop various wildlife habitats.

The CWWP seeks solutions to wind erosion and wildlife habitat enhancement through the implementation of the three following beneficial public services to clients:

1. Windbreak Establishment Service

A full service windbreak planning, planting and three year maintenance program guaranteeing a 95% survival rate is offered to customers in Central Wisconsin. Member counties and Federal programs may offer cost sharing at a rate up to 70% of the installation and maintenance costs, and 100% of planning and administration costs for customers in the partner counties of Adams, Juneau, Portage, Waushara, and Wood, working with Langlade, Marathon, Marquette, Waupaca, and other counties requesting the services of the CWWP.

2. Wildlife Habitat Development

To provide and/or improve habitats for a variety of wildlife species, services such as native grass seedings and wildlife plantings are offered.

3. Information and Education

Provide an increased awareness and understanding of the problems caused by wind erosion and solutions, such as conservation tillage and windbreak establishment. This will help achieve the vision of the CWWP.

A Brief History

In 1986, citizens petitioned the Portage County Land Conservation Committee (LCC) to act on controlling wind erosion. A series of educational and policy meetings were conducted by the LCC, seeking input from growers, citizens, and government.

In March 1988, a Wind Erosion Conference was held to gather the people of the Golden Sands region to formulate an action plan to control wind erosion. A committee was then formed, and they developed a detailed program design and organizational structure called the Wind Erosion Control Project, which was administered through Golden Sands Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D).

In 1989, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) allocated Soil and Water Resource Management (SWRM) funds to Golden Sands RC&D for a Wind Erosion Control Specialist.

In 1990 a legislative bill was passed, funding the Wind Erosion Control Pilot Project for four years. The project received a one year extension through 1995. The Project used a combination of conservation tax credits, conservation tillage demonstrations, and educational programs to encourage wind erosion control. During 1994 and 1995, ten windbreak demonstration plantings were established on area farms.

In 1995, a Wind Erosion at the Crossroads Conference was held to evaluate the Project and determine the need for, and design of, any future wind erosion control programs. It was felt that the Project was effective in getting growers to increase their use of conservation tillage, cover crops, windbreaks, and vegetative strips. Area growers, processors, landowners, citizens, and government agency representatives recognized the need for a continued wind erosion control effort, thus forming a private/public sector coalition, now known as the Central Wisconsin Windshed Partners.

Executive Summary

One word describes the current situation of the CWWP – surviving. Funding of the program has been decreasing over the past several years. At the end of 2006, an \$85,000 staffing grant ceased, making it necessary to increase fees and find alternate ways to replace the lost revenues. The CWWP now relies almost exclusively on windbreak sales for revenues. Residential windbreaks, shelterbelts, living snow fences, wildlife plantings, custom hand and machine tree planting, and other seeding services are sources of revenue which are being promoted, but remain to be fully tapped.

The products offered by the CWWP offer numerous benefits to the participating landowners. Those who are not adopting the philosophies of the CWWP feel they are able to live without the benefits of erosion control technologies. One main problem that the CWWP must overcome is the lack of perceived need that some landowners associate with erosion control. This is difficult because there is limited compensation or incentive for landowners to adopt erosion control practices. It is the responsibility of the technical staff to make nonparticipating landowners aware of the urgency and need using an aggressive personal sales approach.

The public image of the CWWP has improved through the use of fabric, maintenance, more communication, and one on one contacts. The challenge is going to be polishing the CWWP's image and increasing visibility and awareness of its services to the targeted public.

Since the level of competition is low in the field, gaining public approval through personal contact is a major step toward success. Since there are few competitors to draw away clientele, this will increase the revenue of the tree program and polish the public image, both of which are priority goals.

Business Description

The CWWP is a cooperative venture of the Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association; the vegetable processing industry; the Land Conservation Committees and Departments of Adams, Juneau, Portage, Waushara, and Wood Counties, working with Langlade, Marathon, Marquette, Waupaca, and other counties requesting CWWP's services; the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP); the Golden Sands Resource Conservation and Development Area; the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); the University of Wisconsin; and the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Service.

The CWWP seeks to assist growers with wind erosion and snow control, landscaping, prairie grass seeding, wildlife planting, and livestock protection through three primary activities: 1) Offering a full-service windbreak establishment and maintenance program, 2) Providing services for wildlife habitat development, and 3) Providing education and information to customers through their experiences in these areas.

The CWWP is located at the Hancock Agricultural Research Station, N3909 CTH V, Hancock, Wisconsin. Office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Market Assessment

Wind erosion in Central Wisconsin is a severe problem. The need and demand for planting trees and practicing other means of controlling wind erosion is important. Vegetable and potato growers are easy target customers because of their big, wide open fields. Other farmers, rural landowners, processors, and wildlife and conservation organizations are also potential customers for windbreaks and shelterbelts. State, County, and Town highway departments, as well as County parks departments are logical targets for living snow fences. The three year maintenance program and other services definitely set the CWWP apart from other organizations with similar services.

Wildlife and conservation organizations are prospective customers for wildlife and prairie seedings, another service provided by the CWWP. The interest in food plots for deer and turkey has been increasing in recent years. Rural landowners are important target customers to provide with these services.

The CWWP area consists of five member counties in Central Wisconsin: Adams, Juneau, Portage, Waushara, and Wood Counties. The CWWP's services are also made available in Langlade, Marathon, Marquette, Waupaca, and other interested counties. Due to the number of potato growers and the similar sandy soils as in Central Wisconsin, Langlade County is a potential market area. The Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association, an important partner in our organization, is based out of Antigo in Langlade County.

Competitive Analysis

The competition in this field is quite low. No other business includes the level of planning, installation, and maintenance services offered by the CWWP. Because the CWWP is a non-profit organization, there is a relatively low markup for products and services. The three year maintenance program and the ability to offer cost sharing (from member counties and agencies) to customers sets the CWWP apart from competitors.

Customer Profile – Target Customers

Farm Operators: This person is the primary decision maker of what happens on the farm. They may or may not be the farm owner. This is the person that should be the most heavily targeted if they make the decisions concerning the farm well being. They need to recognize the CWWP's goals and the magnitude of the wind erosion problem in the Central Sands Region. If the farm operator is convinced, he or she will spread their influence to the farm owner concerning the beneficial services being offered by the CWWP. The use of a cost-benefit analysis is beneficial in creating urgency for this customer group.

Processors: This includes the fieldmen, raw product managers, factory managers, and perhaps others to be identified. They have an important role in deciding many of the agronomic practices and in some cases, are the primary decision makers. This is the second most important group to target, because of the fact that they may make decisions for the farming practices, or if they do not, they will be influential in a debate over farming practices.

Farm Owners: This is the person who actually owns the agricultural land. It may, or may not be, the same as the farm operator. This is the third most targeted group because they made an investment into the land and in no way would they want the fertile land to become desolate due to the lack of minerals because of topsoil erosion.

Farm Employees: These are the hired hands that work on the farm. Some are allowed to make important decisions, others are not. If they are not, they will carry an opinion that the decision-maker will consider because of trust and perceived expertise. For that reason, this should be the fourth most heavily marketed group.

Farm Families: This is the next generation of farmers that will be taking over the agricultural land. These people need to see the urgency and troubles that topsoil erosion can bring about in the proceeding years.

Service Providers: These are the individuals like field scouts and co-op representatives. These people tend to communicate with growers on a frequent basis and have a major impact on the way things are managed at the farm. They need to be convinced that conservation tillage and windbreak establishment are good practices so they can spread those ideas to the farms they visit. Education of benefits and services provided by the CWWP is the key to targeting this group of individuals.

Rural Residents: Also included in this category are wildlife organizations, such as Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, Turkey Federation, Whitetails Unlimited, etc. and equestrian groups. Rural residents seem to have a certain kind of bond and tend to influence each other quite heavily. This group is usually concerned with the quality of life and is aware of many wind erosion issues. However, they need to be more educated and informed so they can spread that influence to neighbors and other farmers by word of mouth. These are individuals that may be interested in the other various products besides windbreaks and conservation tillage. Supplying information is also important to this target market, because they are funding the program with their tax dollars.

Urban Residents: These are the people that do not need to be targeted for urgency, but for informational purposes. The main reason is that these are the individuals that are using their tax dollars to fund this program. They need to become more aware of the issues that will affect them and the question of why needs to be answered. They should also be educated on the other various plantings besides windbreaks that the CWWP has to offer. This target market has potential customers for some of the other assorted services offered by the CWWP.

Land Conservation Departments: The participating counties need to be well informed about the CWWP in order to promote its services and make recommendations to landowners. Nonparticipating counties are a source for potential business as well.

Local, State, and National Public Officials: These groups are important because of budgeting and funding. They need to realize a need for the CWWP. Without a perceived need for action, funding will be decreased or even erased. Local and State officials decide on the plantings of road windbreaks for snow control, which is a market being explored further.

Marketing Plan

Products/Services: This is one of the elements that the CWWP strongly possesses. The tree and shrub stock offered are of great variety and are selected to fit the needs of the customer. Custom windbreak designs and plans, and tree planting are among the services provided. The fabric laying service is unique and greatly increases survival and growth rates. The CWWP is the only organization to offer this particular type of weed control. With the three-year windbreak maintenance program, which includes hand weeding, mowing, pruning and replacement of dead or missing plants, no competitor even comes close to offering a service of this caliber. The CWWP is the only entity that offers cost sharing for the total package of planning, installation, and maintenance service to consumers. Additional services offered are a variety of prairie plantings for wildlife cover and food plots. The CWWP will perform these seeding services, or rent the equipment to customers if they prefer to do it themselves. Information and Education on wind erosion solutions and seeding services are provided to the public and agencies through media releases, brochures, field days, and information booths at conferences and fairs. All of these products and services are a strong marketing benefit of the program.

Price: Since there is little to no markup on any of the products sold by the CWWP, the prices that are being marketed to consumers are in a comfortable range. There is the possibility of a slight markup, which in no way will make the prices of the CWWP outrageous when compared to the product competition. Also, the cost share program definitely makes the services of the CWWP affordable to the agricultural producers in the area. A cost comparison needs to be presented to the customers so that they can see that the CWWP is the only choice for the services desired. There should be no skepticism in the minds of consumers concerning prices of the services after personal sales contact.

Placement: Placement deals with methods of contacting customers and the way customers perceive the organization. The CWWP is doing an average job of finding customers for the services and products. However, there is room for leaps of improvement. Only a slight number of potential clients in the agricultural target audience have been contacted, and hardly any of the other indicated target audiences have been explored. The CWWP needs to place itself into other target markets and expand in its existing markets. The placement component will be greatly improved with renovations to promotional efforts.

Promotion: This is the element that is somewhat lacking in the marketing mix. Setting up the display and giving presentations at conferences, conservation fairs, field days, etc. is one way the CWWP markets its services. Tours of our projects have also been conducted in the past. The internet is a marketing resource and an effective way to publicize the CWWP. The web page link through Portage County is: <http://www.co.portage.wi.us/planningzoning/Windshed/index.htm>. The CWWP needs to implement a plan that will further increase public awareness, establish a positive public image, and become much more aggressive in recruiting clientele. This should be done using a personal sales approach in the early fall and winter months. With the use of public relations and marketing, the lack of promotion from the CWWP will be overcome, and additionally strengthen aspects of the other three marketing components.

Legal, Financial Organization

The activities of the CWWP are overseen by the Board of Directors, consisting of two farmers, one member of the Land and Water Conservation Department and one member of the Land and Water Conservation Committee from each member county; two representatives from the Wisconsin Vegetable Growers Association; one representative from the Golden Sands RC&D Council; and one representative from the UW-Hancock Agricultural Research Station. One representative of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and one representative from Golden Sands RC&D serve as advisors on the Board of Directors.

The CWWP has been registered with the State of Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions since August 2003 as a Non-Stock Corporation. Administrative services for the CWWP are handled by the Portage County Land Conservation Division, with payroll services provided by Golden Sands RC&D. Personnel consists of a full time Project Manager, a seasonal Field Supervisor, and one or more seasonal limited term employees.

The following is a brief biography for Shannon Rohde, Project Manager for the CWWP:

Growing up on a dairy farm in Central Wisconsin, I was exposed to natural resources very early. I attended UWSP and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree, majoring in General Resource Management, with minors in Soil Science, Geology, and Natural Science. I have worked with two different County Land Conservation Departments, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. In February of 2003, I became the Project Manager of the CWWP. Since then, I have been learning about the way of life and farming in Central Wisconsin, dealing with the major problem of wind erosion. Since the vegetable farmers and potato growers have been my main clients, I have also been learning the vegetable industry since it is quite different than dairy farming. I have done a range of activities, from attending conferences, meetings, and trainings, to planting trees, harvesting potatoes, and doing other various jobs in the field. There are many people to work and deal with on a day to day basis.

Stan Ewan is the current Field Supervisor. Stan is a retired gentleman who has been working for the CWWP since 1997. He knows the CWWP inside and out. He knows exactly what needs to be done, and when, and he knows where all the projects are that the CWWP has worked on since he joined. He is a great resource to have and if there is any question about anything, he will most likely know the answer.

Seasonal Limited Term Employees generally start work in April and work until windbreak plantings and maintenance are completed.

CWWP Budget

	2006		2007		2008		2009		2010		2011
	13.2 miles Budget	Actual	14.74 miles Budget	Actual	17.4 miles Budget	Actual	15.2 miles Budget	Actual	9.9 miles Budget	Actual	16.6 miles Budget
Expenses											
Salaries/Wages (Project Manager)	43770	43770	45687	45690	47668	47487	50902	50883	52449	52442	53843
Fringe Benefits (Project Manager)	16216	16111	16455	16690	17614	17669	18881	18791	19816	19697	20678
Administrative Services	6619	6313	4272	4746	6278	5948	4766	4389	4854	7594	4689
LTE Consulting Services	28500	51194	40000	37989	36500	41150	36500	35994	36500	29262	30000
Telephone	2600	2203	2600	2148	2200	2141	2120	2050	2120	1915	2120
Repairs/Maint.-Equipment	3000	4719	3000	2067	500	3003	250	582	750	108	750
Vehicle Labor Costs	0	0	0	0	0	0	1000	115	500	48	500
Service Equipment Repair	0	0	0	0	0	0	1000	1167	750	224	750
Office Supplies	0	0	0	0	0	4	50	673	50	25	50
Postage	100	0	20	0	20	0	20	0	20	0	0
Photocopying	100	18	30	46	30	6	30	8	30	12	30
Publications/Dues/Subscriptions	450	405	450	433	450	415	450	425	450	400	450
Travel Expenses	200	61	200	150	281	160	250	473	300	3	300
Meals-Nonovernight	25	0	25	16	25	0	25	25	25	0	25
Meals-Overnight Stay	0	0	0	0	0	0	125	59	75	86	75
Lodging	0	0	0	0	0	0	250	73	250	120	250
Operating Materials/Supplies	500	81	200	88	100	700	50	121	50	95	50
Small Equipment/Furniture	200	0	200	0	100	46	100	0	100	40	100
Advertising	300	219	100	378	100	0	100	5	100	0	100
Operating Supplies/Field	500	219	500	363	300	284	300	445	400	241	400
Tree/Shrub Expense	9250	9581	9500	12330	9750	12144	10238	11913	10238	8541	10238
Fabric	19875	16903	20419	19742	20419	23317	21440	17447	21440	18800	21440
Staples	1800	2083	2500	1874	2000	2557	2100	2580	2500	1847	2500
Signs	200	180	200	181	200	88	200	126	200	90	200
Seeding	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	36	80	21	80
Fuel	2250	4856	4500	4777	4500	5965	5500	3717	5500	3060	5500
Oil/Grease	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	146	100	195	100
Tires/Batteries	0	0	0	0	0	0	150	599	300	55	300
Information/Education	1200	567	700	481	500	127	500	155	500	130	500
Education/Activities Report	300	198	200	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rebates/Incentives	0	0	0	5807	50000	38020	11980	1800	0	0	0
Conferences - In State	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	143	200	125	200
Training	750	725	750	490	500	222	25	0	100	0	100
Vehicle Insurance	1599	3092	3200	3284	3500	3422	3524	2322	3000	2379	2500
Building/Office Rent	2400	600	2400	4200	2400	2400	3000	3000	3000	3000	3000
Machinery	2000	950	0	23809	3335	0	0	3200	0	0	0
TOTAL	144704	165048	158108	187779	209270	207275	176026	163462	166750	150555	161818

	2006 (15 mi)		2007 (15 mi)		2008 (15.5 mi)		2009 (15.5 mi)		2010 (15.5 mi)		2011
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget
Revenues											
Windbreaks	58704	118687	157608	148319	158770	147744	162976	122520	161793	101626	161718
Other Services	1000	565	500	0	500	513	100	0	100	100	100
Other Grants	85000	85000	0	0	50000	50000	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	144704	204252	158108	148319	209270	198257	163076	122520	161893	101726	161818

Carryover Accounts	2006		2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
	Beginning	Ending										
Balance												
Equipment Replacement	74111	113318	113318	81329	81329	110332	77125	77125	77125	31596	31596	
Maintenance Program		51995		51995	51995		51995			51995		
Interest			6195	8975	8975	12170	10596	12170	10596	7684	7684	

Critical Risks

Internal Weaknesses/Limitations:

- CWWP has no strategic direction in marketing or public relations.
- There is no course of action for executing goals.
- The CWWP has a poor track record of implementing strategies to accomplish desired goals. (Past plans of action).
- There is a weak market image that the CWWP must overcome with increased public awareness tactics.
- Inability to finance needed changes and adaptations.
- Only a slight number of possible target markets have been explored.
- The CWWP is behind in office technology capabilities.
- Poor communication/lobbying efforts with funding sources.
- Lack of specific action items with measurable evaluation criteria.
- Inability to implement strategies because of staff time constraints.

External Weaknesses:

- There is no sense of urgency or perceived need created with clientele in the marketing of the services.
- Windbreaks are perceived as a financial and managerial burden in the minds of the agricultural producers.

Milestone Schedule

Project Goals

- Plan and establish 15.5 miles of windbreaks each year
- Maintain the current and past two years of windbreaks
- Contact prospective customers for windbreak and living snow fence sales
- Establish new contacts outside of participating counties for future windbreak service
- Develop pilot project utilizing 20 year easements
- Wildlife plantings
- Explore the relationship between conservation cropping systems and crop yield and quality
- Provide information to UWSP about the CWWP and wind erosion
- Assist with Fall Conservation Field Day
- Attend WPVGA meetings and annual conference, providing information to the industry
- Provide articles to the Badger Common Tater
- Conduct windbreak tours
- Develop yearly budget and Plan of Work
- Seek funding through grants, and other sources
- Publicize, promote, and market the CWWP