



Data Practices Policy for Members of the Public

Minnesota Statutes, sections 13.025 and 13.03 (2017) requires this policy.

Right to access public data

The Government Data Practices Act (Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13) presumes that all government data are public unless a state or federal law says the data are not public. Government data is a term that means all recorded information a government entity has, including paper, email, flash drives, CDs, DVDs, photographs, etc.

The Government Data Practices Act also provides that this government entity must keep all government data in a way that makes it easy for you, as a member of the public, to access public data. You have the right to look at (inspect), free of charge, all public data that we keep. You also have the right to get copies of public data. The Government Data Practices Act allows us to charge for copies. You have the right to look at data, free of charge, before deciding to request copies.

How to make a data request

You can look at data, or request copies of data that this government entity keeps. Make your request for data to the appropriate individual listed in the Data Practices Contacts on page 3.

Make a written request for the data. You may make your request by mail, fax, or email. We recommend using the data request form on page 4.

If you choose not use to use the data request form, your request should include:

- You are making a request for public data under the Government Data Practices Act (Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13).
- Whether you would like to inspect the data, have copies of the data, or both.
- A clear description of the data you would like to inspect or have copied.

The North St Louis Soil & Water Conservation District cannot require you, as a member of the public, to identify yourself or explain the reason for your data request. However, depending on how you want us to process your request (if, for example, you want us to mail you copies of data), we may need some information about you. If you choose not to give us any identifying information, we will provide you with contact information so you may check on the status of your request. In addition, please keep in mind that if we do not understand your request and have no way to contact you, we will not be able to begin processing your request.

How we respond to a data request

Upon receiving your request, we will work to process it as follows:

- If it is not clear what data you are requesting, we will ask you for clarification.

- If we do not have the data, we will notify you in writing within 10 business days.
- If we have the data, but the data are not public, we will notify you as soon as reasonably possible and state which specific law says the data are not public.
- If we have the data, and the data are public, we will respond to your request appropriately and promptly, within a reasonable amount of time by doing one of the following:
 - Arrange a date, time, and place to inspect data, for free, if your request is to look at the data, or
 - Provide you with copies of the data as soon as reasonably possible. You may choose to pick up your copies, or we will mail or fax them to you. We will provide electronic copies (such as email or CD-ROM) upon request if we keep the data in electronic format.

Information about copy charges is on page 3. You are required to pay for copies before receiving them.

If you do not understand some of the data (technical terminology, abbreviations, or acronyms), please let us know. We will give you an explanation if you ask.

The Government Data Practices Act does not require us to create or collect new data in response to a data request if we do not already have the data, or to provide data in a specific form or arrangement if we do not keep the data in that form or arrangement (for example, if the data you request are on paper only, we are not required to create electronic documents to respond to your request). If we agree to create data in response to your request, we will work with you on the details of your request, including cost and response time.

In addition, we are not required under the Government Data Practices Act to respond to questions that are not specific requests for data.

Requests for summary data

Summary data are statistical records or reports that are prepared by removing all identifiers from private or confidential data on individuals. The preparation of summary data is not a means to gain access to private or confidential data.

We will prepare summary data if you make your request in writing and prepay for the cost of creating the data.

Upon receiving your written request – you may use the data request form on page 4 – we will respond within 10 business days with the data or details of when the data will be ready and how much we will charge.

Copy Costs – Members of the Public

North St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation District charges for copies of government data. These charges are authorized under Minnesota Statutes, section 13.03, subdivision 3(c).

You must pay for the copies before we will give them to you.

For 1 to 40 paper copies – no charge

We do not charge for copies if the cost is less than \$10.00 (40 single-sided pages or 20 double-sided pages in black and white, letter or legal-size paper only. PDF copies provided electronically are charged at the same rate as black and white copies)

For 41 or more paper copies – 25 cents per page

41 or more pages of black and white, letter or legal-size paper copies cost 25¢ for a one-sided copy, or 50¢ for a two-sided copy. PDF copies provided electronically are charged at the same rate as black and white copies.

Most other types of copies – actual cost

The charge for most other types of copies, when a charge is not set by statute or rule, is the actual cost of searching for and retrieving the data and making the copies or electronically transmitting the data (e.g. sending the data by email).

In determining the actual cost of making copies, we factor in employee time, the cost of the materials onto which we are copying the data (paper, CD, DVD, etc.), and mailing costs (if any). If your request is for copies of data that we cannot reproduce ourselves, such as photographs, we will charge you the actual cost we must pay an outside vendor for the copies, plus preparation time.

If, because of the subject matter of your request, we find it necessary for a higher-paid employee to search for and retrieve the data, we will calculate the search and retrieval portion of the copy charge at the higher salary/wage.

The cost of employee time to make copies is \$35.48 per hour.

Data Practices Contacts

Responsible Authority and Data Practices Compliance Official

Anita Provinzino, District Administrator
North St Louis SWCD
505 3rd St N, Ste 2
Virginia MN 55792

218-288-6144 phone
anita@nslswcd.org

North St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation District Data Request Form – Members of the Public

Date of Request: _____

I am requesting access to data in the following way:

Inspection

Copies

Both inspection and copies

Note: Inspection is free but we charge for copies when the cost is over \$10.00 (more than 40 single-sided pages or 20 double-sided pages in black and white, letter or legal-sized paper. PDF's are charged at the same rate).

We will respond to your request as soon as reasonably possible.

Contact information

Your Name:

Mailing Address:

City, State, Zip:

Phone number:

email address:

Note: You do not have to provide any contact information. However, if you want us to mail/email you copies of data, we will need some type of contact information. In addition, if we do not understand your request and need to get clarification from you, without contact information we will not be able to begin processing your request until you contact us.

These are the data I am requesting:

Describe the data you are requesting as specifically as possible. Use the back side if needed.