

Sherburne SWCD



2019 Highlights Book





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Our Mission

The Sherburne Soil & Water Conservation District is dedicated to working directly with landowners and agencies in order to promote the wise and sustainable use of our land and water related resources; to educate and inform the public about these uses; to help solve the resource problems within the District and to serve as a county wide natural resource information referral center.





Conservation Fast Facts

Sherburne County, Minnesota



In 2019 Sherburne SWCD celebrated 75 years of conservation in Sherburne County



Water Testing for Nitrates in 2019

- 125 water samples were tested for nitrate levels during 8 clinics
- 20 water samples were tested at the SWCD office.

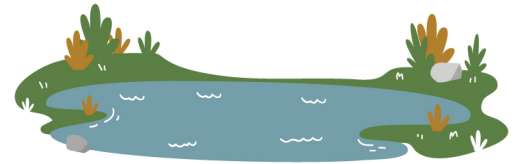


The SWCD had 12 residents participate in the Minnesota Volunteer Precipitation Observing Program. The data measurements they collect was used for weather, water supply and flood forecasts.



2019 was a great year for AIS volunteers and monitoring:

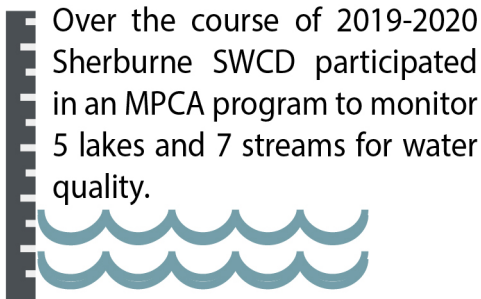
- 32 Active Volunteers
- 252 Volunteer Hours



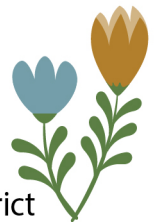
During the summer of 2019, volunteers tested water in 16 Sherburne County lakes for Zebra Mussels and spiny water flea. We are happy to report all of the Lakes tested clear of these!



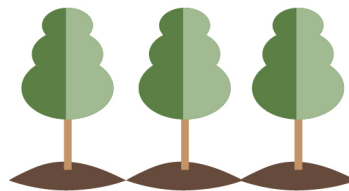
In 2019, over 53,000 acres of Sherburne county are planted with crops of potatoes, soybeans and corn.



Over the course of 2019-2020 Sherburne SWCD participated in an MPCA program to monitor 5 lakes and 7 streams for water quality.



In 2019, the District helped cost share 14 acres of native prairie.



Over 20,000 trees were distributed during the SWCD's annual Tree Sale in 2019.

During 2019, the District completed wetland delineations on over 11.5 miles of future projects.

Over 20 site visits were conducted to assist landowners with tree management and disease.





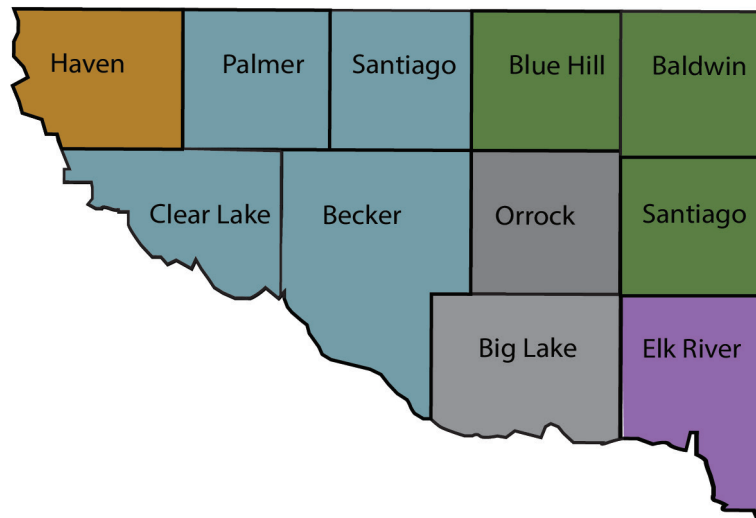
2019 Elected Supervisors



The Board of Supervisors is comprised of five members elected to staggered four year terms in county wide elections, but representing different nominating Districts throughout the county.

The Board of Supervisors is responsible to set the goals, policies and priorities of the District and employ a staff to work toward those goals.

Roger Nelson, Larry Goenner, Michael Schroeder, Jason Selvog, Kerry Saxton



Roger Nelson
Treasurer
District V



Larry Goenner
Secretary
District III



Michael Schroeder
Chair
District I



Jason Selvog
Reporter
District IV



Kerry Saxton
Vice Chair
District II



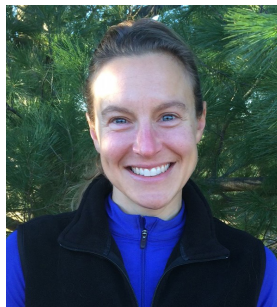
SWCD Staff



The friendly and professional staff of the SWCD works cooperatively with private landowners on soil and water related projects, such as cost share programs, lakeshore protection, soil survey, and pasture management to name a few. It is our goal to coordinate plans that will enable landowners to utilize their natural resources while improving water quality, conserving soil integrity and promoting plant and animal health.



Francine Larson
District Manager



Gina Hugo
Forest Resource Specialist



Dan Cibulka
Water Resource Specialist



Franny Gerde
District Technician



Miranda Wagner
District Technician



Bill Bronder
District Technician



Andie Bumgarner
Marketing/Admin Assistant





75 Years of Conservation

Sherburne SWCD Celebrates 75 years of Growing Conservation

For three-quarters of a century, Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District has worked hand-in-hand with Sherburne County landowners to implement conservation practices designed to protect and preserve Sherburne County's natural resources. We celebrated this milestone August 2nd at the Sherburne History Center in Becker.

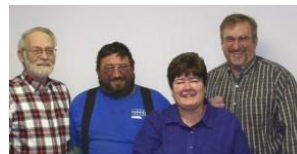
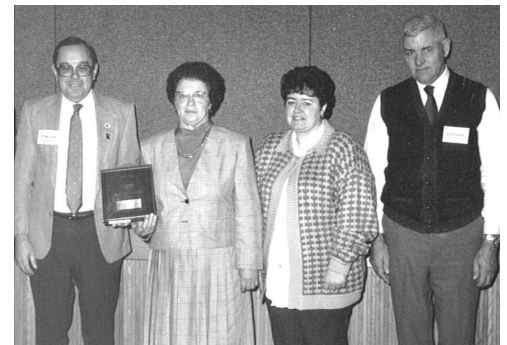
To mark the anniversary, the District sponsored a free Conservation Discovery Day. The education event provided information on the importance of conservation and brought out the adventurous, curious, compassionate side to over 70 people in attendance. The day started with five different stations where SWCD employees were able to share their expertise on soil health, forestry, aquatic invaders, native plants and local farmers shared information about their sustainable produce operation. Each station included a small presentation along with fun and educational activities for all ages. The day ended with booths and activities. Participants learned more about the honey bee, explored the Sherburne History Museum, and enjoyed a pollinator ice cream sundae. Event sponsors included: USDA NRCS, Friends of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge, Sherburne County, Sherburne History Center, and Farm Friends Barn.



75 Years of Conservation



In 1944, the Soil and Water Conservation District formed, forever changing the landscape of Sherburne County. In the 75 years since that time, wetlands have been restored, prairies have been planted, and an estimated one million trees have been planted in the County. These accomplishments took years of planning and countless hours of cooperation between the District, landowners, and partners in conservation like the Natural Resources Conservation Service.





Forest Management

2019 Tree Health Consultations

Over 20 site visits were conducted to assist landowners with management of tree diseases in landscapes and throughout wooded rural residential properties. Oak wilt has been a prevalent problem throughout the County for several decades and the trend continued in 2019.

SWCD tree health consultations are meant to provide a diagnosis of the problem and options for solutions. During the evaluation, the SWCD staff will monitor soil moisture, inspect trees for visible signs of distress or disease and identify pests if present. An unbiased recommendation as to corrections and the future care of your trees will be provided.



Citizen Pruner Program

The citizen pruner program started in 2014 to increase the capacity of city parks in their maintenance efforts. The SWCD hosts volunteer events at parks selected by the cities that need structural pruning. This pruning is essential, especially for younger trees in order to prevent hazardous branches as the trees mature. Pruning efforts take place in late fall and early spring, when pest and disease risks are at their lowest.

Woodpecker Activity Survey

The Sherburne SWCD partnered with Wright and Stearns counties along with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) on a tri-county effort for early detection of the emerald ash borer. There is a strong correlation between woodpecker activity and the presence of the emerald ash borer beetle. Volunteers canvas local areas with known populations of ash trees to observe any signs of heavy woodpecker activity. Suspect trees are reported to the MDA and monitored periodically. A similar training is planned for 2020.





Intensive Watershed Monitoring

In 2019 Sherburne SWCD participated in a Minnesota Pollution Control Agency program to assist in collecting detailed water quality data for the Mississippi River St Cloud Watershed. Over the course of 2019-2020, five lake sites and seven stream sites will be monitored. The results of the monitoring will supply the science behind decision-making processes including the WRAPS and 1w1p.



Watershed Pollutant Load Monitoring Network



A Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) lead project that is designed to obtain long term water quality trends statewide. The MPCA utilizes local partners to collect water quality samples at specific monitoring sites. The Sherburne SWCD monitors 3 of these sites for the WPLMN project. The data will be used to assist with impaired waters assessments, watershed and water quality studies and reports, watershed modeling efforts and measuring ongoing effectiveness of major watershed and restoration plans. Each site is sampled for total suspended solids, total phosphorus, nitrate-nitrite nitrogen and total Kjeldahl nitrogen. Flow data is also collected at each site. The flow data and sample results are used to calculate pollutant loads. The calculation results in daily and annual pollutant load concentrations that can be used to determine whether a stream needs pollution reduction. The Sherburne SWCD has been a part of the statewide monitoring network since 2015.

Wetland Conservation Act

During 2019, the District completed 9 County wetland delineations comprising 11.5 miles of future road projects and one County Park delineation. We also wrote 2 Restoration Orders to correct wetland violations and attended 17 Technical Evaluation meetings with the County, City of Elk River, and the City of Big Lake. We also completed approximately 36 on site visits to review landowner applications





Water Resources

AIS Education

Sherburne SWCD provides educational opportunities to school groups, lake groups, elected officials and other interested parties on the topic of aquatic invasive species. In 2019, nine educational events were held, reaching approximately 150 adults and 540 children / teenagers.

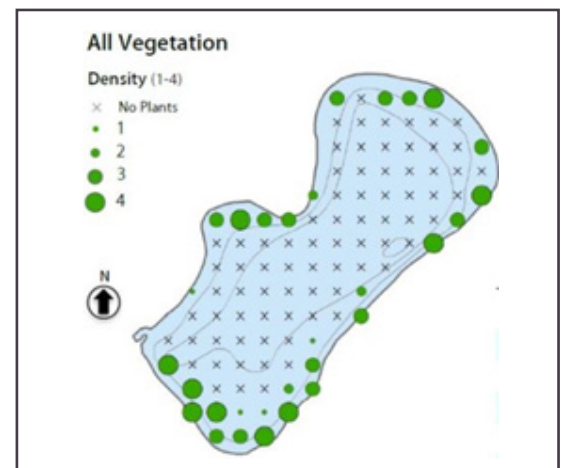


AIS Early Detection Monitoring

Sherburne SWCD partners with the Sherburne County Coalition of Lake Associations to complete monitoring work for aquatic invasive species. In 2019, 16 Sherburne County lakes were assessed in this program. The work leveraged 32 volunteers who completed over 470 hours of time.

AIS Grant Program

The Sherburne SWCD Aquatic Invasive Species Grant program continues to grow! 2019 was the third year the program has been providing assistance to groups for AIS monitoring, lake vegetation plan creation, AIS management, and AIS education. In 2019, 10 applications were approved for \$16,910 in funding. This funding helped to leverage \$50,173 in additional expenditures towards aquatic plant studies, AIS control and AIS education projects.



Water Resources



Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan

In 2019 Sherburne SWCD continued to utilize funds provided through the State of Minnesota to prevent the introduction and spread of AIS in Sherburne County. This was the fifth year of active AIS prevention through this program. Many local and regional partners played crucial roles in these initiatives, including many volunteers. A dedicated group of 16 members and advisors in the AIS Task Force examined the existing 5-year plan and made recommendations for an updated 5-year plan. The new 2020-2024 AIS Prevention Plan was created by the SWCD and spells out the ways the County and its stakeholders will implement AIS programs such as education, monitoring, early detection, coalition building, and financial assistance. A summary of 2019 activities are outlined below.

| Public Awareness / Education | AIS Monitoring & Inspections | Community Capacity |
|--|---|--|
| At the Sherburne SWCD's 75th Anniversary event, kids and adults got to visit an aquatic plant booth where live plants were on display. Attendees learned about AIS as well as many interesting native plants, such as the "bladderwort" – a carnivorous aquatic plant. | 14 volunteers participated in early detection monitoring of zebra mussels and spiny water flea in 16 County lakes. No new occurrences were found in 2019. | The Sherburne Coalition of Lake Associations (COLA) co-sponsored a "Starry Trek" AIS monitoring day with the SWCD in mid-August. 16 volunteers signed up for the event and scoured 10 lakes for potential AIS, with no new AIS being documented. |
| Nine events were held regarding AIS as a major topic. These events included presentations by experienced professionals, direct learning of AIS topics, or in-the-field monitoring of lakes and streams | 2,537 total watercraft inspections occurred at nine lake public access points. Data shows 96% compliance with AIS transport laws. | 2,537 total watercraft inspections occurred at nine lake public access points. Data shows 96% compliance with AIS transport laws. |
| 36 individuals from three lake associations volunteered 164.5 hours to conduct direct outreach and education at lake public access locations. 1,461 boaters were engaged. | Five local law enforcement officers were trained on AIS laws. These officers made positive connections with 1,083 watercraft operators about AIS concerns and water safety. | 16 members and advisors sat through five meetings in 2019 to review activities occurring in 2014-2019 and make recommendations for a 2020-2024 AIS Prevention Plan. |





Water Resources

Sherburne County Coalition of Lake Associations (COLA)

Formed in 2017, the Sherburne County COLA includes membership from 11 lake organizations in Sherburne County. Through partnerships, networking, and addressing shared goals together the group hopes to advocate for the protection and restoration of Sherburne County lakes and streams.



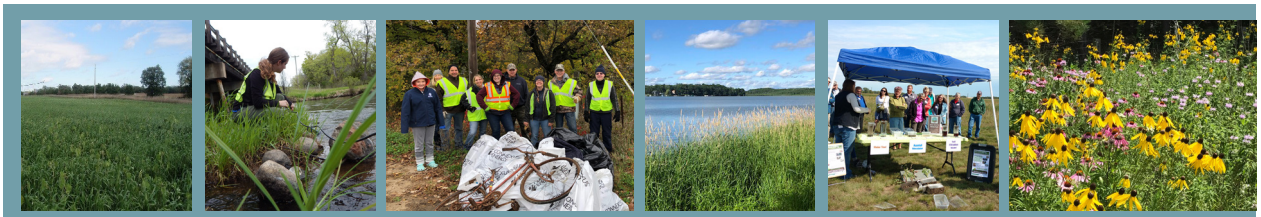
The Sherburne SWCD has partnered with the COLA in a number of ways to increase conservation including:

- Developing a streamlined mass communication system
- Increasing education and outreach with shared presentations
- Developing opportunities for “bulk purchase” or other efficiency scales for common lake protection projects
- Partnering with a boy scout candidate to construct AIS monitoring tools for each lake group to use



Zebra Mussel Early Detection Program

Early detection of aquatic invasive species (AIS) is very important. Finding an infestation early can result in quick management to control or severely limit the presence of AIS in a lake. Early detection also allows for managers to monitor potential transport to other lakes, which limits further spread of the AIS. In 2019, volunteers collected water samples in 16 lakes to look for the larval stage of zebra mussels (called “veligers”) as well as another invasive, spiny water flea. These organisms are microscopic and float within the lake. Sampling occurs with a very fine mesh net, and samples are sent to a lab for analysis under a microscope. In 2019, no zebra mussels were found in the 16 Sherburne County lakes.

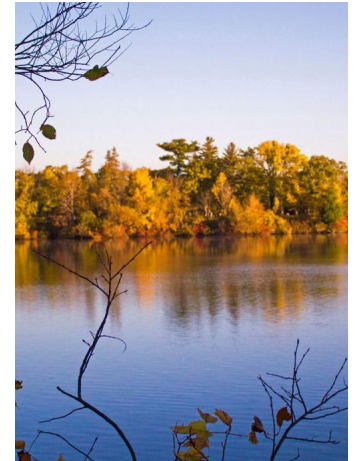


Water Resources

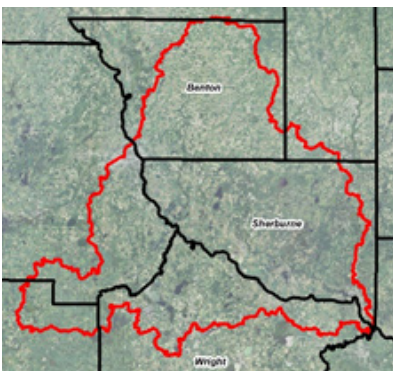


Elk River Watershed Association

The Elk River Watershed Association is a Joint Powers Board of Sherburne and Benton Counties and SWCDs. The board was formed in 1994 to initiate projects to improve and protect water resources within the Elk River Watershed, which spans over 611 square miles in size and comprises 71% of Sherburne County and 67% of Benton County. In addition to each county/district pursuing projects on their own, collaboration occurred to identify shared projects that impacted the watershed as a whole. 2019 marked the last year of the ERWA Joint Powers Board, though the partnership will continue to collaborate on projects to improve the resources of the watershed. New sources of opportunity will be pursued in statewide programs, including the Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) and One Watershed, One Plan (1w1p) programs.



Mississippi River St. Cloud Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies



The Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) project is sponsored by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). The MPCA has adopted a “watershed approach” to addressing the state’s 81 major watersheds. Sherburne County is within two of these watersheds. In 2019, project partners with Stearns, Benton, Wright and Sherburne County began a WRAPS for the Mississippi River St. Cloud watershed. The project includes water quality assessments, watershed analysis, civic engagement, and planning. The information obtained will serve as a precursor for One Watershed, One Plan for this watershed.



Rum River One Watershed, One Plan

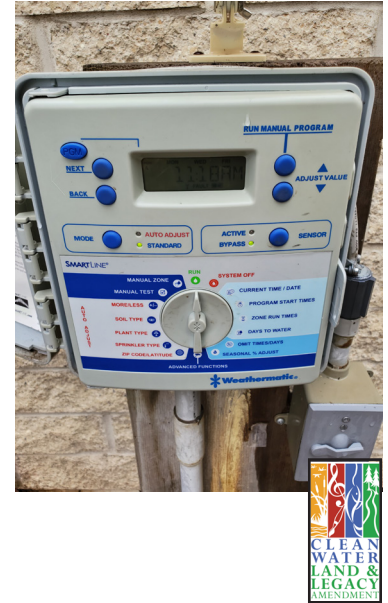
One Watershed, One Plan (1w1p) is a comprehensive planning process to bring upstream and downstream partners together to manage water on a watershed basis. Sherburne County and SWCD are taking part in this initiative for the Rum River Watershed, which covers portions of 10 counties. The plan, comprehensive in nature, will identify and prioritize resources and issues in the watershed while setting measurable goals for protection and restoration. The project began in spring 2019 and includes 18 local governmental units along with a variety of state and federal agencies to support local efforts. Aiming for a June 2021 completion date, the plan will specify top project for completion along with funding sources for each project.



Water Resources

Metro Campus Groundwater Conservation Protocol

The 11 county metro area received a Clean Water Fund grant to develop a groundwater conservation protocol that can be easily followed and implemented by non-engineer SWCD planning staff. Using and improving upon existing protocols, a group of metro area water planners (including Sherburne SWCD staff) developed a methodology to use in our region. In 2019, the Sherburne SWCD partnered with the City of Elk River to use the protocol on City Hall, Police and Fire Department Buildings. Direct measurements were made of all water using features and a water budget was developed using standard water use assumptions and accounting for the number of personnel using those water features. The study found over 30 water conservation projects that had an estimated payback period shorter than the estimated lifespan, making water conservation an environmentally friendly AND financially friendly endeavor. If implemented, these practices could reduce groundwater use by 115,000 gallons and correspond with a reduction of \$6,380 in annual costs. The protocol that was developed can now be utilized on other campuses in Sherburne County to identify cost-effective projects for water conservation.



Stormwater Education and Permitting

Since 2014, Sherburne SWCD has worked with Sherburne County and other Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permitted governmental units on permit documentation and outreach. Annual events are held each year to provide education, including activities focused on elected officials, lake property owners, and school-aged children. When feasible, projects are pursued to help reduce pollutants from entering stormwater conveyance systems.

In 2019, the SWCD and County hosted a county-wide stormwater annual meeting with all MS4 permitted governmental units. The meeting resulted in great discussions on challenges with stormwater management and opportunities for collaboration to meet shared goals and responsibilities. A second annual meeting is planned for 2020.



Big Eagle Lake Nutrient Budget Study

In 2019, the Sherburne SWCD partnered with the Big Eagle Lake Improvement Association and a consultant (WSB) to complete a study on Eagle Lake. The purpose of the study is to understand the contributing sources of nutrients to the lake and identify remediation approaches. SWCD staff and eight volunteers with the lake group completed field studies to assess stream and ditch inlets, in-lake water quality, and the lake outlet. WSB was contracted to compile and assess the information and make recommendations. The team hopes to pursue projects to reduce nutrient input to the lake in 2020-2021.



Briggs Chain of Lakes Water Stabilization Studies

The Briggs Chain of Lakes consists of 4 connected lakes (Briggs, Julia, Rush and Elk) near Clear Lake, Sherburne County. All four lakes experience high water levels when larger rain events occur upstream in the watershed. The SWCD partnered with lake residents to collect monitoring data in 2019 regarding water inputs to the chain lakes. In 2020, the partnership anticipates contracting with an engineering firm to complete a Phase II Water Stabilization study in hopes of identifying water storage opportunities in the watershed.



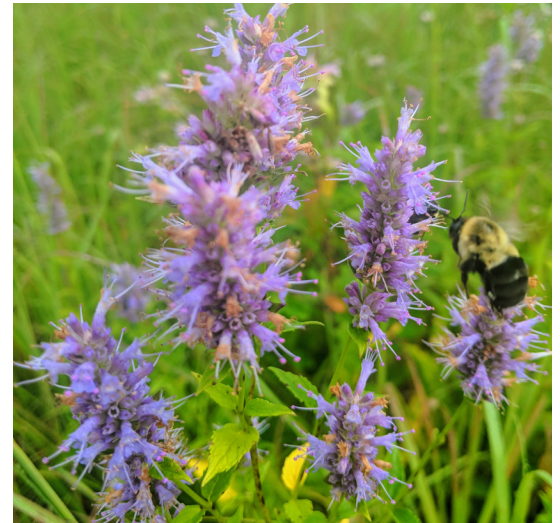
Conservation on the Land

Native Pollinator Program

The Sherburne SWCD, in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), participated in a pilot Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan process since 2018. High levels of Nitrates were detected in the 2014-2015 Township Testing program which prompted the process. A Local Advisory Team (LAT) has met a total of 6 times to discuss and identify Best Management Practices (BMPs) and Alternative Management Tools (AMTs) to implement in Sherburne County to reduce Nitrate leaching to groundwater. The Nitrogen Rule was adopted in 2019 and is now focusing on selected Drinking Water Supply Management Areas (DWSMAs) which includes Clear Lake and Becker. Efforts will continue within the townships to adopt BMPs and AMTs.

In 2019, permanent lysimeters were installed in conjunction with the Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan at a farm near St Cloud. District monitored Nitrate levels throughout the growing season and will continue to use this site for side by side comparisons of BMPs and AMTs. Water is being pulled from a 4 foot depth, below the rooting zone, and serves as a good indicator of the level of nitrates “lost.”

Furthermore, 83 acres of cover crops were seeded aurally into standing corn as a demonstration project. Nitrates will be monitored utilizing the permanent lysimeters to show the ability of an overwintered cover crop on spring Nitrate leaching.



Buffer Law



The Buffer law was passed in 2015 and requires landowners to install buffer strips along the state protected waters and public drainage ditches. In addition to providing habitat for many forms of wildlife, buffer strips filter nutrients, sediment, and other pollutants from surface water runoff. This law requires a 50-foot perennial vegetative buffer along public waters (lakes and watercourses) and 16.5 feet on public ditches.

During 2019, SWCD completed the first year of monitoring for parcels deemed compliant with the buffer law; there is a three year rotation for monitoring in place. District staff is working with the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to bring all parcels into a compliant status.



Nitrate Reduction Grant

In 2019 the District was awarded a Clean Water Funds grant from the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment. The goal of the grant is to reduce nitrates in the groundwater by promoting and implementing best management practices and alternative management tools in the priority areas of Sherburne County. Private well testing was conducted and analyzed in 6 townships: Clear Lake, Haven, Palmer, Santiago, Becker, and Big Lake Townships. In Clear Lake and Haven, 11.3% and 13.8% of the wells tested were above the health limit of 10 mg/L respectively. Palmer, Santiago, Becker, and Big Lake Townships ranged from 2.1%-8.6% above the health limit. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) has also identified Wellhead Protection Areas and Drinking Water Management Areas for the cities of Clear Lake and Becker, which are included in the project area.



In 2019, 20 acres of Kernza were planted as a demonstration project to highlight a perennial crop being researched for food and feed production. Nitrates will be measured in the 2020 and 2021 growing seasons to assess the value the crop has toward nitrate reduction.

In 2019 cost share projects included: 98 acres of cover crops, 83 acres of nutrient management, irrigation water management, and 6 acres of prairie installation. The District also assisted landowners by providing 6 Agsense units to landowners to use during the 2019 growing season. Also, the District sent out a weekly Evapotranspiration report to assist with Irrigation Water Management.

Elk River Targeted Bacteria Reduction Program



In 2018, the District received Clean Water Funds to reduce bacteria loading in the Elk River. The funds are being used to install conservation practices that reduce the amount of animal waste (manure) entering the Elk River or its tributaries from pastures and feedlots.

Two landowners completed practices in 2017. Both landowners reseeded pastures in 2019 and will plan to install manure composting bins and additional pasture seedings in 2020. Healthy pastures reduce the amount of water and nutrients running off the pastures into nearby surface waters. Secondly, healthy pastures promote healthy animals and higher quality habitat.



Conservation on the Land

Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan

In 2019 the District received funding to assist and promote conservation practices that protect water and soil and provide wildlife habitat. A portion of these funds are allocated to providing incentives to landowners for establishing diverse native prairie. Since the year 2000, the SWCD has been establishing native prairie on residential property through incentives that include technical assistance, cost share, and affordable planting services.

The benefits of the program improve habitat by providing a diverse plant community that supports the lowest levels of the food web up through feeding and nesting cover for song birds, upland game birds and small mammals. Prairie also sequesters carbon from the atmosphere, reduces soil erosion, builds soil health, and improves water quality. In 2019, the District helped cost share 14 acres of native prairie.

Furthermore, 83 acres of cover crops were seeded aurally into standing corn as a demonstration project. Nitrates will be monitored utilizing the permanent lysimeters to show the ability of an overwintered cover crop on spring Nitrate leaching.



Plant Materials Learning Center



The Plant Materials Learning Center (PMLC) is a cooperative effort between the Natural Resources Conservation Service Plant Materials Center in Bismarck, the University of Minnesota Extension Service, and the Wright, Stearns, Benton, and Sherburne SWCDs. Established in 1996 on the University of Minnesota Sand Plain Research Farm in Becker, more than 100 species of trees and shrubs have been evaluated for suitability for use in soil conservation practices such as field windbreaks. Over the years, the PMLC has assisted in developing and promoting over a dozen new conservation plants.

In 2019, the existing site was sold to make way for a new industrial park. The University Research Station has also been moved to a new location 3 miles south. We are hoping to re-establish the plant materials evaluation plantings at the new location within the next several years.

Outstanding Conservation Cooperator

Diamond A Farm LLC

The District is proud to recognize Diamond A Farm LLC as our 2019 Conservation Cooperator of the Year. This centennial family farm is located near St. Cloud MN and grows irrigated corn, soybeans and seed corn. The operation was certified through the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program in 2017 and continues to be excellent stewards of the land today.

The operation has a unique interest in farm education and outreach, hosting a farm field day annually to bring individuals from all walks of life to spend a weekend on the farm. In 2019, topics included llamas, foraging, drones and soil health. Diamond A also has been an active member of the Local Advisory Team for the Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan since its inception in 2017. In spring of 2019, they partnered with MDA and Sherburne SWCD to install permanent lysimeters to monitor nitrates in shallow groundwater. Eager to try new conservation approaches, in 2019 the farm undertook interseeding cover crops into corn, no-till, different forms of Nitrogen and tirelessly manages their prairie for pollinators and wildlife.



Lynn Ayers, Diamond A Farm LLC





Education and Outreach

Nitrate Clinics

In 2019, the District hosted 8 nitrate testing clinics around Sherburne county, partnering with townships and cities. We tested approximately 125 samples at clean up days and farmers markets. We also ran approximately 20 samples in house as we now have a nitrate testing machine in our office. Landowners are encouraged to bring in cold samples of water from their home to be tested for nitrates. High levels of nitrates in drinking water can be dangerous to health, especially for infants and pregnant women. This service gives residents pertinent information for their health and safety.



Poster Contest

The Sherburne SWCD has hosted an annual poster contest since 2016 for Sherburne County 5th graders. The contest has a conservation related theme each year. In 2019 the theme was “Life in the Soil: Dig Deeper”. Students learn about the interactions of soil microorganisms and their important role in maintaining a healthy soil food web. The SWCD received just under 100 posters from the students. The top 4 winners were awarded with a monetary prize, while all participants received a Dairy Queen coupon for a free ice cream cone.



Climb Theater AIS Presentation

In an effort to educate our youth about the threat aquatic invasive species pose to our lakes, the SWCD partnered with CLIMB Theater to develop an Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) lesson for 2nd and 5th graders. Minnesota has delegated funding to each county for the sole purpose of developing an AIS Prevention and Management plan. The Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District recognizes the importance of education in preventing the spread of AIS. Over 540 elementary students participated.



Legislative Day

SWCD Staff and Supervisors spent March 21st at the State Capitol talking with legislators about conservation practices that are important to Sherburne County as part of MASWCD Legislative Day. A Legislative briefing day is set aside each year for SWCDs to meet at the Capitol and make their statewide membership visible to legislators.





Starry Trek

The Sherburne County Coalition of Lake Associations (COLA) and Sherburne SWCD co-hosted a group of 16 volunteers to participate in the third statewide Starry Trek (starry stonewort monitoring event). Over 220 lakes were searched statewide for AIS; 10 Sherburne County lakes were searched during this event.



2019 Tree Sale

In 2019 over 20,000 trees were sold during the SWCD's annual tree sale. This sale was one of the most successful on record. The tree sale is an important annual program that runs between January 1 and mid April. The sale originated in order to provide landowners with an affordable and convenient way to purchase trees and shrubs for conservation practices, such as windbreaks, shelterbelts, living snowfences, scenic buffers, wildlife habitat, and more.



Envirothon

This annual outdoor event is an academic competition that tests students' knowledge of aquatics, forestry, soil and land use, wildlife, and a current environmental topic that changes each year. The current issue topic for 2019 was, "Minnesota Agriculture and the Environment: Knowledge & Technology to Feed the World." Students were required to compose and present a 10-minute oral presentation related to the current events issue, and answer questions from a panel of judges. Sherburne staff assisted at the metro area event and the state Envirothon.



Wildlife Fest

The SWCD participated at the Wildlife Fest in Zimmerman with a booth. Staff provided information on available SWCD services and programs. The staff fielded questions throughout the day on native plants and pollinators. They also handed out information on services provided by the SWCD. Sherburne SWCD has been a presence at the expo for several year. Children of all ages were also encouraged to play a game of Pollinator Plinko.



Completed Projects



Dan Kruger

A steep Elk River property was noticing erosion near the toe of the slope, worried about losing property the Krugers worked with the SWCD on a vegetation plan in combination with coconut fiber coir logs to help secure the slope. The vegetation will also provide essential wildlife and pollinator habitat.

| Project Details | Project Funding | Project Partners |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Date Installed: July 2019 | State Cost Share 2018: \$4,724.85 | Sherburne SWCD |
| Area: 590 ft ² | Landowner: \$3,247.15 | Landowner |
| | Total Project Cost: \$7,972.00 | |



Jung Ja and Claude Brist

Erosion due to wave action and ice heaving was leading to loss of property on the Brist's Eagle Lake home. The property also has a steep slope that contributes stormwater runoff causing even further erosion. The Brist's were really interested in improving pollinator habitat on their property, the steep slope was the perfect opportunity to install a small prairie like garden to help control erosion and provide for the pollinators. The toe of the shoreline was stabilized using coconut fiber core logs and a combination of native flowers, sedges and shrubs.

| Project Details | Project Funding | Project Partners |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Date Installed: July 2019 | CWF 2017 and 2018: \$5,000 | Sherburne SWCD |
| Area: 2,600 ft ² | Landowner: \$2,725.00 | Landowner |
| | Total Project Cost: \$7,725.00 | |



Randy and Laura Sandeno

The Sandeno's Lake Orono property was displaying signs of undercutting due to wave and ice actions. The Sandeno's elected to use Shoresox to stabilize the toe of their shoreline. Native shrubs, flowers, grasses and sedges were planted into the Shoresox and upland to help further stabilize the shore.

| Project Details | Project Funding | Project Partners |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Date Installed: November 2019 | CWF 2017: \$5,000 | Sherburne SWCD |
| Area: 380 ft ² | Landowner: \$4,285.00 | Landowner |
| | Total Project Cost: \$6,285.00 | |



Completed Projects



David Fuller



The Fuller's noticed their Lake Orono property has had shoreline loss since they moved in due to wave and ice action. Limited understory vegetation left several bare spots vulnerable to erosion. The Fuller's installed shade tolerant forb and grass seed along with bare root shoreline friendly shrubs to help stabilize the shoreline. Coconut fiber coir logs were installed at the toe of the shoreline to protect the newly installed planting until establishment.

| Project Details | Project Funding | Project Partners |
|-------------------------------|--|------------------|
| Date Installed: November 2019 | CWF and State Cost Share 2018: \$1,000 | Sherburne SWCD |
| Area: 2,155 ft ² | Landowner: \$2,338.00 | Landowner |
| | Total Project Cost: \$3,338.00 | |

Joan Fenton



After a very high-water year and spring ice action, Joan Fenton's initial shoreline project from 2018 was destroyed. Going back to the drawing board the SWCD worked with a native landscape company to install a more robust design that would be able to withstand the increasing water levels. Heavier blanket and stakes were used to secure native flower and sedge seed, and in increased amount of sedge plants were installed to provide a strong root system.

| Project Details | Project Funding | Project Partners |
|---------------------------|--|------------------|
| Date Installed: June 2019 | CWF and State Cost Share 2018: \$1,000 | Sherburne SWCD |
| Area: 300 ft ² | Landowner: \$2,338.00 | Landowner |
| | Total Project Cost: \$3,338.00 | |

Cynthia Casper



The Casper's Little Elk Lake property sits on a steep slope that is mostly shaded with minimal vegetation in the understory. The Casper's worked with a native landscape company to install a wide variety of shade tolerant flowers, grasses and shrubs on their 3,500 square foot slope. The deep-rooted native vegetation will help prevent erosion and any runoff from entering the lake all while providing essential pollinator habitat.

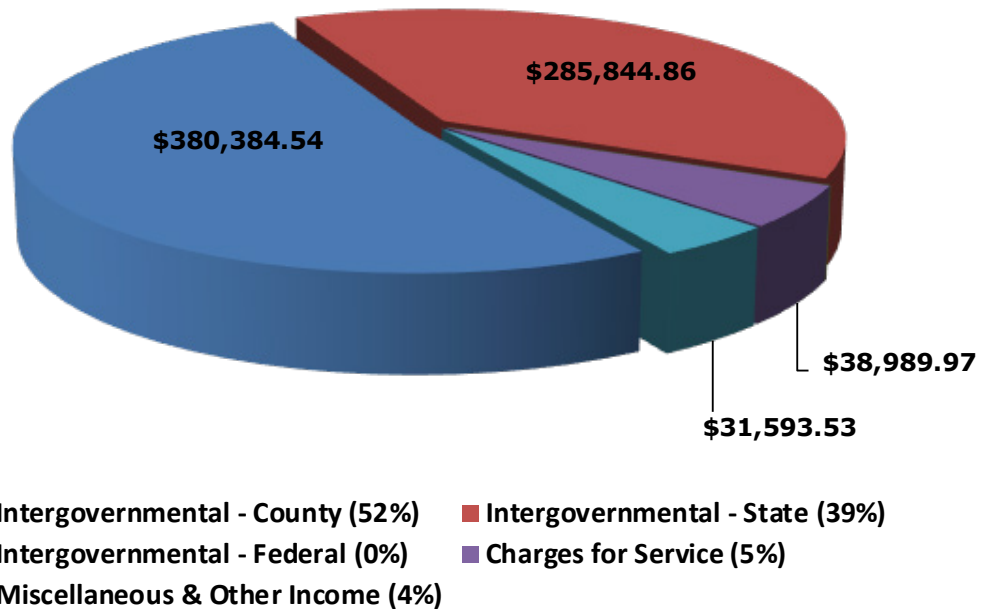
| Project Details | Project Funding | Project Partners |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Date Installed: June 2019 | CWF 2018: \$2,000 | Sherburne SWCD |
| Area: 3,565 ft ² | Landowner: \$4,285.00 | Landowner |
| | Total Project Cost: \$6,285.00 | |

The Sherburne SWCD finances its day-to-day operations through a variety of revenue sources.

These sources include:

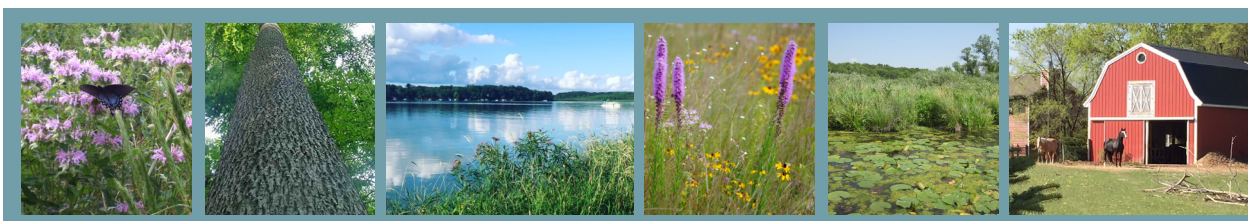
County Allocation (52%), State Grants (39%), Charges for Services (5%), and other Miscellaneous Income (4%). Although governed by an elected board of officials, Conservation Districts do not have levy authority and must secure funds from many sources to maintain programs and services.

Sherburne SWCD - Revenue Summary
Total Revenue in 2019 was \$736,812.90



Thanks to increased capacity funding, the Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District is engaging more and more landowners in conservation work, using incentives to increase interest and generate more program sign-ups. Getting more conservation on the ground in the county’s priority areas has increased awareness of the SWCD’s work and strengthened their partnerships with other local government units, landowners and lake associations.

Locally-driven conservation is a cost-effective way to protect Minnesota’s natural resources. Targeting these practices to where they’re needed most, and getting more practices implemented thanks to funding like this, empowers and motivates the community. That wouldn’t be possible without this additional support.





Natural Resources Conservation Service

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

EQIP provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water & air quality, conserved ground & surface water, reduce soil erosion & sedimentation, and improve or create wildlife habitat.

In 2019 \$104,787 were obligated through EQIP for conservation on 3,417 acres in Sherburne County.

Some of the conservation practices implemented:

- Cover crops
- Irrigation Water Management
- Farmstead Energy Improvements
- Residue and Tillage Management, No Till
- High Tunnel System
- Agricultural Energy Management Plan
- Pollinator Plantings
- Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan
- Prescribed Grazing Plan



Yara Gonzalez, NRCS Soil Conservationist

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

10 acres were enrolled in CRP in 2019 in Sherburne County. CRP is a conservation program administered by the Farm Service Agency, landowners enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. NRCS provides the technical assistance to producers and write the conservation plans.





Legislative Priorities

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts



The following positions are aimed at ensuring that Soil and Water Conservation Districts continue their effective delivery of conservation on private lands, and leverage other private, local, state and federal funds.

Bonding for CREP

MASWCD supports \$16.5 million in bonding funds for Minnesota's water quality focused Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). This amount would complete the state matching dollars needed to fully leverage federal funding. CREP easement dollars are appropriated to BWSR for SWCDs to enroll interested landowners in voluntary, permanent conservation easements.

Increase SWCD Board Member Per Diem

SWCD Supervisor compensation is currently set in statute, Minn. Stat. 103C, at a maximum of \$75 per day for meetings. MASWCD supports increasing this cap to \$125 to more fairly compensate Supervisors for the time commitment involved in serving as an SWCD board member.

Address the unmet Funding Needs of SWCD's

State and county appropriations to SWCDs to date have fallen short of what SWCDs need in order to meet statutory obligations aimed at delivering private lands conservation programs and services. That shortfall is currently \$15.8 million per year. Funding for SWCDs is a shared state and local commitment. Currently both state and local funding mechanisms are not predictable and are not sufficiently meeting SWCD needs. To address the local funding, MASWCD has proposed a local funding option that would allow SWCDs to have their own independent funding authority through options that include a water quality fee authority, and an ad valorem levy authority. (SF 1443/HF 1284). MASWCD also continues to seek a predictable and long-term state funding contribution to SWCDs.

Outdoor Heritage Fund

MASWCD supports \$16.5 million in bonding funds for Minnesota's water quality focused Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). This amount would complete the state matching dollars needed to fully leverage federal funding. CREP easement dollars are appropriated to BWSR for SWCDs to enroll interested landowners in voluntary, permanent conservation easements.

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

MASWCD supports the funding recommendations of the Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR).



Current Legislative Funding Proposals Regarding the AgBMP Loan Program

There are currently two bills in the House of Representatives and one in the Senate regarding additional allocations for funding to the AgBMP Loan Program.

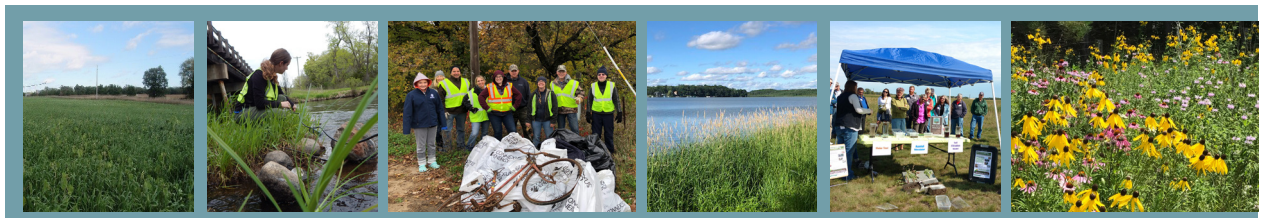
The first bill introduced was HF3383. This bill proposed \$15 million and was referred to the Agriculture and Food Finance and Policy Division. It has nine co-authors from all parts of the state. This bill has not been heard by the Committee at this time. It has no companion bill in the Senate.

There was a second bill, HF3946 introduced for funding to the AgBMP Loan Program; however, the bill did not specify a proposed amount. This bill does have a companion bill in the Senate. The Senate bill is number SF3953. Typically, an amount will be inserted during the committee hearing process after testimony from legislators, agencies, and the public.

You can review and follow any bill by clicking on the hyperlinked file numbers above or by going to the Revisor's webpage at : <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/>, then selecting "Bills" from the dropdown, entering any bill number in to the "Retrieve by number" box and pressing "GO" button.

Once a bill is introduced into the House or Senate, it is referred to one or more committees for review. This year's bills must pass their first committee by March 20th to receive further consideration. Respective finance committees must also approve bills by April 3rd. If still viable, the two bills are vote on by their respective house. If the two bills are not identical, they are referred to a conference committee to negotiate a resolution of any differences, then return for another vote of each house. If passed it is forwarded to the governor who can sign the bill into law, veto the bill and return it to the legislature for further action, or do nothing and the bill will become law. There are many more steps than I have highlighted here; however, you can find more information in many legislative publications.

If you wish to contact the authors of these bills or your legislative representatives in your area, you can find their contact at: <https://www.gis.leg.mn/iMaps/districts/>





SWCD Information



Sherburne SWCD

Tel (763) 220-3434
www.sherburneswcd.org

Mailing Address
425 Jackson Ave NW
Elk River, MN 55330

Hours of Operation

Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Closed Sat & Sun
Closed on Federal Holidays

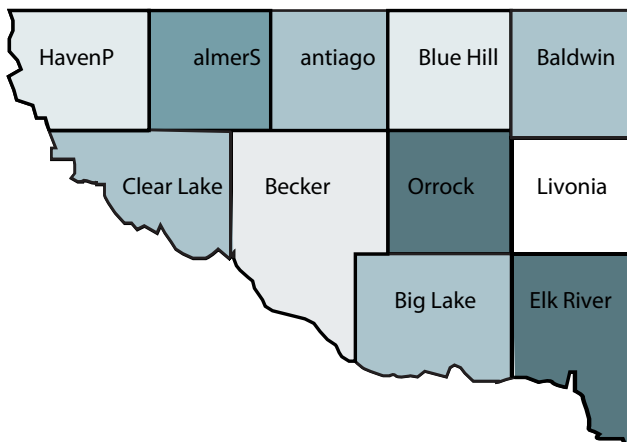
Upcoming Events

| Date | Event |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| May 1st & 2nd | Tree Sale Pick Up |
| May 19th | Small Farms Workshop |
| September 10th | Tour of Practices |
| October 3rd | Elk River Clean Up |
| November 5th | Volunteer Appreciation Dinner |

Programs & Services

Sherburne SWCD provides programs to protect our soil & water resources and promote best management practices for the land & water use. Following is a list of some of the programs and services provided by the Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District.

- Tree, windbreak, shelterbelt plans**
- Living snowfence planting plans.**
- Machine tree planting service.**
- Prairie & pasture planting service.**
- Stream & lake buffer strip planting**
- Upland & wetland habitat restoration**
- Soil evaluations.**
- Manure management.**
- Nutrient management.**
- Streambank & lakeshore protection**
- Manure spreader calibrations.**
- Pasture/grazing management.**
- Designed erosion control practices**



Sherburne County Info

Total Land Area: 451 Square Miles

Total Water Area: 11,520 Acres

Lakes: 127

Rivers and Tributaries: 493 Miles

Population: 93,528 *2016 Estimate U.S. Decennial Census

Native Vegetation: Oak Savanna Wet Soils/
Water Conifer Forests