

Nature Talks

Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District

Nature Talks
April 2023

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Sherburne
SWCD

SWCD Legislative Briefing Day

Each year SWCD's from around the state head to St. Paul to share their story and demonstrate to our state lawmakers that the state's soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) are essential and effective partners in delivering locally led conservation practices on private lands to improve our shared natural resources.



Supervisors and staff members from Sherburne SWCD attended the annual



Legislative Briefing Day at the State Capitol March 8th. These meetings gathered support for the Conservation Districts' programs and issues. During their visit they met 2 of our local legislators; Senator Andrew Mathews and Representative Kurt Daudt. During the meeting, staff talked about some of the great conservation accomplishments Sherburne SWCD has made over the last year and some

of the new challenges they face as the need for soil and water conservation grows. Supervisors and staff also met with virtually with other area legislators in late March. The Legislative Session of 2023 will be important to the future of conservation programs in the state. Soil and Water Conservation Districts like Sherburne, play an integral role in enhancing Minnesotan's quality of life through conservation services to owners of private lands.



Tree Sale Pick-up

Trees and Native Plants ordered through the SWCD Tree Sale will be available for pick-up on:

Friday, May 5th 8am - 6pm

Saturday, May 6th 9am - 12pm

Pick-up location:

425 Jackson Ave NW Elk River, MN 55330



When you arrive, stay in your car. Our staff will check you in and retrieve your order. Please indicate where you would like your trees to be placed in your vehicle. Your trees will be brought out and loaded in your vehicle. Please have your pick-up email or order number to show. Contact our office at 763-220-3434 with questions.

Emerald Ash Borer Update

Emerald ash borer (EAB) was first identified in Sherburne County during the summer of 2022. At this time it has been observed in the communities of Elk River and Big Lake; surveys will continue to monitor its spread. EAB is an invasive beetle, native to Asia, that was first brought to the United States during the early 2000's. Since that time, it has spread to over 35 states and 5 Canadian provinces. EAB will only attack ash trees, however there is an observed 99% mortality rate of infested trees. So, if you have an ash tree, what should you do? As a landowner you have two options-treat it with insecticide or cut it down.

Insecticide treatment: Insecticides are one of the most popular and effective ways to manage EAB. They work by killing the larvae inside the tree before they can cause too much damage. If more than 30% of the canopy is dead, treatment may not be your most effective option. If your tree is over ~14 inches in diameter, it is recommended that you have a certified pesticide applicator treat your tree. These larger trees require stronger insecticides that are not available without special licenses. Treatment must be continued for the life of the tree.

Tree removal: If your ash is already heavily infested with EAB or in poor health, it may be best to remove the tree. This will prevent the spread of EAB to other trees in your area and you can then replace the tree with a different species. Additionally, ash trees become very brittle when they die and become a serious public safety risk. If you wait until your tree is dead, the cost of removal can also increase because it is no longer safe to send a climber into the tree.

No matter which option you choose, it's important to act quickly if you suspect that you have an EAB infestation. The longer you wait, the more damage is caused, and the more expensive it will be to manage.



If you have any questions please contact David Wick at (763) 220-3434 ext. 102 or dwick@sherburneswcd.org.

Woodpecker Activity Training



On March 28th the SWCD, in conjunction with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), hosted a woodpecker activity survey training to teach volunteers how to assess ash trees for emerald ash borer (EAB) feeding damage. The participants of this training were taught ash identification, the life cycle of EAB, key traits for EAB identification, damage symptoms, and had the opportunity to look at currently infested trees. The volunteers will survey the parks in Becker and Zimmerman to monitor the continued spread of EAB throughout the County. Any positive identifications will be reported to the MDA and will be added to the EAB status map for the State. That map can be found by clicking [here](#).

If you have any questions please contact David Wick at (763) 220-3434 ext. 102 or dwick@sherburneswcd.org.

Minnesota Buffer Law

Minnesota's Buffer Law requires perennial vegetative buffers of up to 50 feet along lakes, rivers, and streams and buffers of 16.5 feet along ditches. These buffers help filter out phosphorus, nitrogen and sediment. The deadline for implementation for buffers on public waters was November 1, 2017. The deadline for public ditches was November 1, 2018. The law provides flexibility for landowners to install alternative practices with equivalent water quality benefits that are based on the Natural Resources Conservation Service Field Office Technical Guide. As of July 2019, approximately 98% of parcels adjacent to Minnesota waters are compliant with the Buffer Law. Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are reporting encouraging progress in their work with landowners around the state. View the buffer maps for a visual representation of the Minnesota Buffer Law.

Please contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) office for more information about buffers and local requirements.



What is a Buffer?

A buffer, also known as a riparian filter strip, is vegetated land adjacent to a stream, river, lake or wetland. Buffers help filter out phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment, and are an important conservation practice for helping keep water clean. Studies by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency show that buffers are critical to protecting and restoring water quality and healthy aquatic life, natural stream functions and aquatic habitat due to their immediate proximity to the water. More info can be found by [clicking here](#).

Sherburne County AIS Prevention - Watercraft Inspections



Sherburne SWCD will again in 2023 be hiring WaterGuards LLC to conduct watercraft inspections in Sherburne County. The purpose of watercraft inspections is to inform lake users about the importance of cleaning, draining, and drying your watercraft to reduce the risk of transporting aquatic invasive species (AIS). Inspectors are trained and certified by the Department of Natural Resources to communicate the importance of AIS to watercraft operators and assist them in removing plants, water, or other material from boats and trailers. The inspectors will be visiting high-use public access points to Sherburne County lakes between May and September of 2023, mostly on evenings and weekends.

Watercraft such as boats and jetskis and their trailers are the primary source of transporting water, plants, and other materials between lakes. Even the smallest forms of AIS can start a colony in a new lake or stream, including microscopic larval zebra mussels and small fragments of starry stonewort. So it is critical that everyone who owns and transports watercraft be mindful of the material they may be transporting and CLEAN, DRAIN, and DRY those watercraft. More information on aquatic invasive species can be found on the DNR website by [clicking here](#).

2023 Poster Contest

Each year the SWCD hosts an annual poster contest for Sherburne County 5th graders. The theme for the 2023 poster contest was “One Water”. Students were given a presentation on how we are all connected in our watersheds and ways we can improve the water quality of our local lakes, rivers and wetlands. A watershed model was used to demonstrate the various activities humans perform on their landscape and the potential consequences that has on water quality. A total of 5 schools and 5 homeschool students participated in the presentations, 85 posters were submitted for judging. The Sherburne SWCD staff and supervisors voted on the top 4 posters to be awarded with a certificate and prize. In addition to the students, the teacher of the 1st place winner also received a prize to be used in her classroom. This year’s posters were all amazing, well done 5th graders!

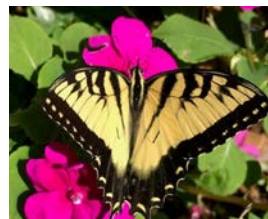


Congratulations to the 2023 1st Place Poster Contest Winner

**Clara H. from Meadowvale Elementary.
A big shout out to Clara’s teacher Ms. Sheerin.**

Pollinator Week

Celebrate Pollinator Week with us June 19th-25th, 2023! National Pollinator Week is an annual event celebrated internationally in support of pollinator health. It’s a time to celebrate pollinators and spread the word about what we can do to protect them. Sherburne SWCD will be holding special events like; photo contest, coloring contest, and a pollinator paint night as a salute to our pollinators. Stay tuned, more info to come!



We Are Water MN



The Minnesota Humanities Center (MHC) and the Mississippi River St. Cloud Watershed Collaborative are pleased to announce that the traveling exhibition — We Are Water MN — is now open in Becker, MN.

We Are Water MN is a project of the Humanities Center that engages Minnesotans with our state's most important natural resource through personal stories, historical content, and scientific information. We Are Water MN will be on display at the Sherburne History Center from March 2nd through April 24th during their normal business hours.

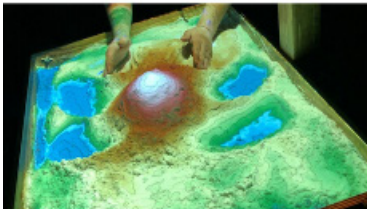
At a special event on April 22nd, join us for a free Youth Water Festival at the Sherburne History Center from 10AM – 1PM. There are activities for all ages – native fish and bugs, augmented reality 3D sandbox, watershed model, storm drains and art, rainfall simulator demo, We Are Water scavenger hunt and exhibit, learn 2 fish, and pollinator plinko. CLIMB Theater will presenting an Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) performance at 10:30AM and 12:00PM. **Due to weather all events will be inside.** More information on this exhibit and the events planned can be found at the project website by clicking here.



SATURDAY, APRIL 22 ● 10:00AM - 1:00PM

SHERBURNE HISTORY CENTER (10775 27TH AVE SE, BECKER, MN 55308)

HOSTED BY: MISSISSIPPI RIVER ST. CLOUD WATERSHED COLLABRATIVE



ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES

- NATIVE FISH & BUGS ● AUGMENTED 3D REALITY SANDBOX ● STORM DRAINS & ART
- WATERSHED MODEL (ENVIROSCAPE) ● RAINFALL SIMULATOR DEMONSTRATION
- WE ARE WATER SCAVENGER HUNT & EXHIBIT ● LEARN 2 FISH ● POLLINATOR PLINKO
- CLIMB AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES THEATER PERFORMANCES AT 10:30AM AND AT 12:00PM

Welcome New Supervisors!



Sherburne SWCD would like to introduce new SWCD Supervisor, Zach Guttormson. Supervisor Guttormson represents District V, which includes: Baldwin Township, Blue Hill Township and Livonia Township. Zach lives in Blue Hill Township with his wife and two children. During his free time, he enjoys hunting, fishing, camping, and exploring the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge. "I look forward to the opportunity to set conservation policy for important resource management issues like water quality, soil erosion and sustainable land use." said Zach.

Sherburne SWCD also welcomes Supervisor Chris Jurek. Jurek represents District II which includes: Big Lake Township, and Orrock Township. Chris resides in Big Lake with her husband Luke and 2 children. During her free time, Chris enjoys skiing, camping, gardening and cheering her children on at sporting activities. "As a member of the Sherburne SWCD board of Supervisors, I look forward to addressing a wide variety of resource management issues aimed at protecting and improving water quality and enhancing soil health," said Jurek.



To learn more about the SWCD Board of Supervisors, [click here](#).

Meet the SWCD Staff

Meet Miranda Wagner Sherburne SWCD's Agricultural Conservationist.



My name is Miranda Wagner and I have been working with the Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District since 2016. Prior to that, I worked for the Natural Resources Conservation Service for 6 years working in LaMoure ND, Elk River, and Waconia. I have a strong passion for helping people and love getting to talking about conservation on their land. I especially have a passion for learning about and advocating for soil health.

I primarily work with agricultural operators, large and small, on implementing practices on their land such as irrigation water management, soil health and erosion reduction, pasture management, and native habitat.

When I'm not talking cover crops, I enjoy spending time in the great outdoors with my husband and three children. We take many trips throughout the summer, visiting State Parks with our camper, as well as time at our family cabin in Wisconsin.



Questions for Miranda? Contact her at mwagner@sherburneswcd.org or 763-220-3434 x 105.

Spring Garden Maintenance for Pollinators



After a long winter it is always tempting to jump into spring garden maintenance as soon as the last bit of snow has melted. This is a friendly reminder that your garden likes to sleep in! Many pollinator species like bees and butterflies overwinter in the duff layer in gardens and other natural areas on your property. Removing last year's stems or leaves from garden beds could disrupt those overwintering insects and potentially expose them to late spring frosts. In addition to pollinators, many other insects use leaf litter as an overwintering refuge such as beetles, spiders, snails and many more – which are an essential food source for birds and other wildlife. If you are curious when is the best time to dig into spring gardening here are a few helpful tips to remember: Is it warm enough to plant tomatoes outside? Is the lawn tall enough to start mowing? Are early spring trees like apples blooming yet? Once all those answers are yes, then it is time to garden!

Other Tips to Increase Pollinator Habitat

- Use native plants to provide a nutritious food source for bees and butterflies
- Create natural areas to provide nesting and overwintering habitat
- Limit or eliminate the use of pesticides and herbicide
- Reduce lawn size or add low growing flowers
- Talk with friends and neighbors about pollinators!

Citizen Pruners



Citizen Pruners were out in full force early April, caring for city trees. The Citizen Pruner program aids in tree care by engaging citizens in community forestry. Citizen Pruners are trained in tree identification, biology, and pruning techniques. Sherburne SWCD partners with Becker, Big Lake, Elk River, Princeton and Zimmerman to host “Pruning Events”, where volunteers work in teams to prune city-owned trees of high priority.

Conservation Comedy

What do wind turbines think of renewable energy?

