



# Highlights Book 2020



# Table of Contents

2020 Conservation Fast Facts.....	3
SWCD Supervisors and Staff .....	4-5
Forest Management .....	6
Water Resources .....	7-12
Conservation on the Land .....	13-15
Completed Projects .....	16
Education and Outreach.....	17-19
Outstanding Conservation Cooperators .....	20
2020 Financial Summary.....	21
NRCS Programs.....	22
SWCD Information.....	23



## 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.*



# 2020 SWCD Conservation Fast Facts

## Sherburne County, Minnesota

### Precipitation Observation



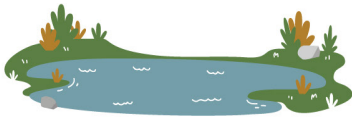
The SWCD had 10 residents participate in the Minnesota Volunteer Precipitation Observing Program. The data measurements they collect are used for weather, water supply and flood forecasts.

### AIS Volunteers



In 2020, 57 Active Volunteers participated in AIS monitoring, contributing over 150 hours of time.

### AIS Monitoring



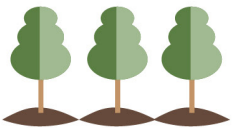
During the summer of 2020, a total of 18 Sherburne County lakes and rivers were surveyed for Aquatic Invasive Species.

### Wetland Delineations



During 2020, the District completed wetland delineations on over 18.3 miles of future projects.

### Tree Sale Program



Over 22,000 bareroot seedlings were distributed during the SWCD's annual Tree Sale in 2020.



### Online Outreach

After the state ordered shut down, the SWCD continued with outreach and education by offering 3 online webinars on topics like pollinator habitat and pasture management for small farms.



### Native Prairie Installation

In 2020, the District helped cost share 7 acres of native prairie.

### Water Quality Monitoring



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

### Tree Health Assessments

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





# 2020 Elected Supervisors

## Picture to Come (after it's safe to be together again)

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.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are special purpose units of government that manage natural resource programs. Minnesota's 88 SWCDs cover the entire state; their boundaries usually coincide with the county lines. 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.



**Shelly Binsfeld**  
District I



**Kerry Saxton**  
District II



**Roger Nelson**  
District V



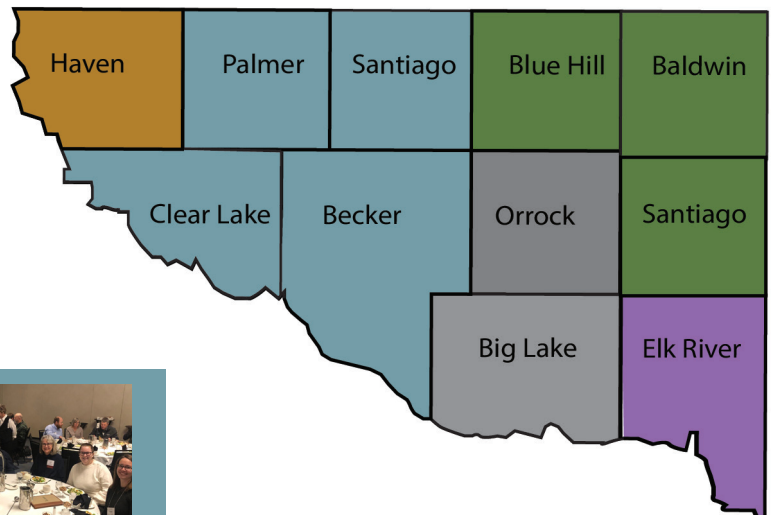
**Larry Goenner**  
District III



**Jason Selvog**  
District IV



\*Michael Schroeder,  
(District I) served  
on the board until  
March 12, 2020.



# 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



**Dan Cibulka**  
Sr. Water Resource Specialist



**Franny Gerde**  
Urban Conservationist



**David Wick**  
District Technician



**Miranda Wagner**  
District Technician



**Bill Bronder**  
District Technician



**Andie Bumgarner**  
Marketing/Admin Asst.





# Forest Management

## 2020 Tree Health Consultations

Over 50 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 2020.

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. 2020 proved a difficult year for gatherings resulting in limited pruning events. An online training is planned for 2021.

## Woodpecker Activity Survey

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. In 2019, Sherburne, Wright and Stearns County teamed up for a tri-county training and volunteer effort with the MDA. A similar training was planned in 2020 but unfortunately had to cancel due to the pandemic. Volunteers that had received the training in previous years completed surveys in 2020, no suspect trees were identified.





## Intensive Watershed Monitoring

In 2020 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 were monitored. The results of the monitoring will supply the science behind decision-making processes including the WRAPS and One Watershed One Plan.



## 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 2020, the District completed 8 County wetland delineations comprising 18.3 miles of future road projects and one County Park trail delineation. We also wrote 3 Restoration Orders to correct wetland violations and attended 15 Technical Evaluation Panel meetings with the County and Cities of Elk River, Big Lake, and Clear Lake. We also completed approximately 40 on-site reviews of landowner wetland 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 2020, these efforts were challenging to complete due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The SWCD adapted however by holding virtual meetings and recording AIS related videos for sharing on social media. Additional AIS topics were shared in the SWCD Nature Talks quarterly newsletter.



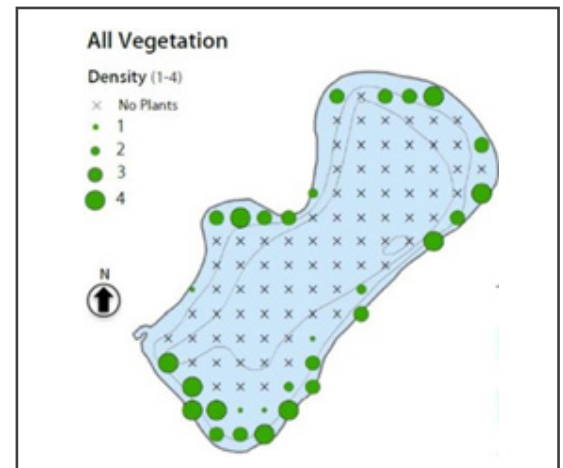
## AIS Early Detection Monitoring



Sherburne SWCD partners with the Sherburne County Coalition of Lake Associations to complete monitoring work for aquatic invasive species. In 2020, 16 Sherburne County lakes were assessed in this program. And despite the COVID-19 pandemic, a record 18 volunteers participated in a socially distant and masked-up Starry Trek annual day of AIS monitoring on county lakes and rivers. As part of this effort, volunteers found several Golden Clams on Briggs Lake. Golden clams were known to exist in Minnesota, but previously had been found in flowing rivers with warm water inputs (cooling plant outputs), never in a lake that fully freezes over. SWCD staff are now working with the University of Minnesota and DNR to further understand this new occurrence.

## AIS Grant Program

The Sherburne SWCD Aquatic Invasive Species Grant was again active in 2020, with nine grants being awarded. Nearly \$15,000 in county grant funds were awarded and \$13,000 additional dollars leveraged for AIS projects. These projects helped to monitor aquatic plants, develop lake vegetation management plans, control existing invasive plants, and increase AIS awareness.





# Water Resources



## Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan

In 2020 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 sixth year of active AIS prevention through this program, and the first year of implementing the new 2020-2024 AIS Prevention Plan that was created by the SWCD and AIS Task Force in late 2019. A summary of 2020 activities are outlined below:

Public Awareness / Education	AIS Monitoring & Inspections	Community Capacity
Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, three AIS related events were held engaging 62 residents.	Four local law enforcement officers were trained on AIS laws. These officers made positive connections with 437 watercraft operators about AIS concerns and water safety.	The Sherburne Coalition of Lake Associations (COLA) co-sponsored a “Starry Trek” AIS monitoring day with the SWCD in mid-August. 18 volunteers signed up for the event and scoured 10 lakes for potential AIS, with no new AIS being documented.
Utilizing a new YouTube channel and other social media platforms, the SWCD developed several videos and five social media posts regarding AIS. Roughly 633 followers tuned into the information.	3,889 total watercraft inspections occurred during 1,716 hours at nine lake public access points. Data shows 96% compliance with AIS transport laws.	Eight organizations were awarded \$15,000 in AIS grants to survey aquatic plants, develop lake plans, and manage existing AIS populations.

## New AIS Infestations

Unfortunately, several new AIS were found in Sherburne County in 2020. Most of these occurrences were very early stage infestations, which allows for potential management options and the opportunity to minimize further spread.

One new AIS, Golden Clam (*Corbicula fluminea*), was found in Briggs Lake. Golden clams are not thought to be able to tolerate the very cold Minnesota winters in a lake, so this find was surprising. Sherburne SWCD staff are working with researchers from the University of Minnesota to further understand this new AIS discovery – more to come on this!



Golden Clam, Briggs Lake, Sherburne County

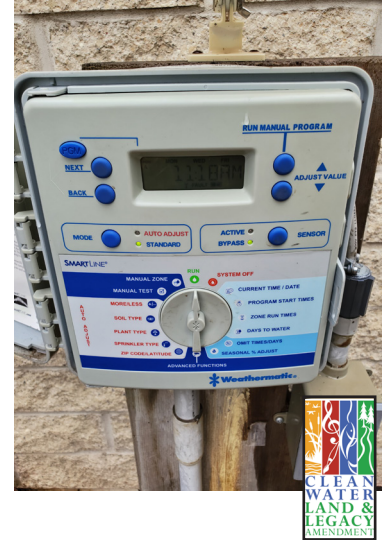




# Water Resources

## 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.



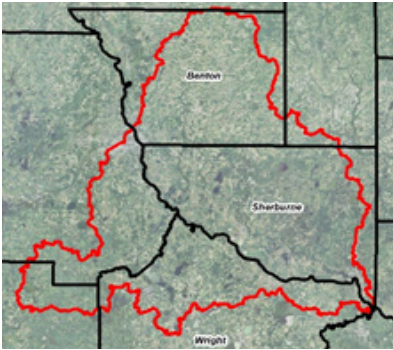
## Zebra Mussel Early Detection Program

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 2020, 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.





## 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. In 2020, project partners with Stearns, Benton, Wright and Sherburne County continued with Phase I of the 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. The plan will be completed in late 2021 and will specify top project for completion along with funding sources for each project.

## Sherburne County Coalition of Lake Associations (COLA)

The Sherburne SWCD works very closely with the SC COLA to help protect our lakes. In 2020, the SWCD and COLA teamed up to work on several important projects:

- An AIS Monitoring Rake Kit was constructed for each lake group. The kit includes a plant monitoring rake attached to a throw rope, an AIS identification guide, identification tools such as a hand lens and ruler, specimen bags, protocols for AIS monitoring, and is packed in a stackable tote.
- An AIS Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) sub-committee is pulling together resources for a visual-based EDRR plan. A template will be created for each lake group in the county.
- The COLA is assisting the SWCD and Sherburne County carry out a soon-to-be-released Adopt A Stormdrain program for the county.
- The COLA is working with the SWCD and Sherburne County to increase education and awareness about septic system functionality with lake property owners.





# Water Resources

## 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 worked with engineering firm Wenck Associates to complete a Phase II Water Stabilization study in hopes of identifying water storage opportunities in the watershed. Efforts are now underway to pursue wetland restoration and water storage in the Briggs Chain watershed.



## Stormwater Education and Permitting

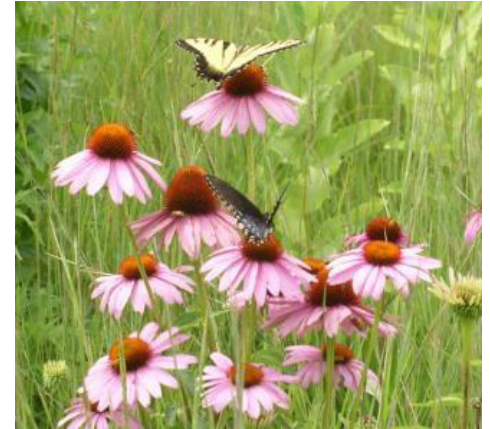
Since 2014, Sherburne SWCD has worked with Sherburne County and other Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permitted governmental units on permit documentation and outreach. Annual events are held each year to provide education, including activities focused on elected officials, lake property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





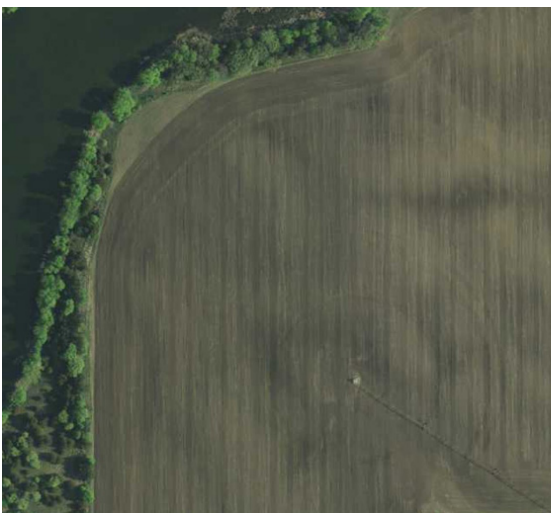
## Native Pollinator Program

In 2020 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.



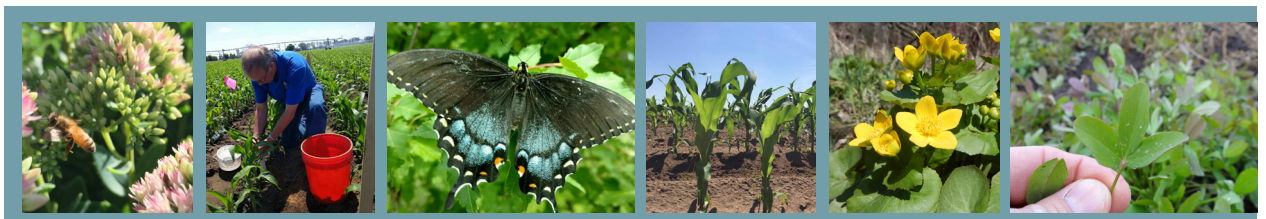
The benefits of the program improve habitat by providing a diverse plant community that supports the lowest levels of the food web up through feeding and nesting cover for song birds, upland game birds and small mammals. Prairie also sequesters carbon from the atmosphere, reduces soil erosion, builds soil health, and improves water quality. In 2020, the District helped cost share 7 acres of native prairie.

## 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 2020, SWCD completed the second 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.





# Conservation on the Land

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

Cost share is available under this grant for best management practices such as: cover crops, irrigation water management, nutrient management, and perennial cover establishment. The District also assisted landowners by providing 4 Agsense units to landowners to use during the 2020 growing season and assisting in a uniformity test. Furthermore, 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.

The District worked with five landowners in 2020, with three projects completed. Three landowners reseeded pastures in 2020, another reseeded is planned for 2021 and also a manure stacking slab is planned for 2021. 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. Properly stored and spread manure also reduces the amount of bacteria and nutrients making it to our waterways.



## Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan

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 7 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). Efforts will continue within the townships to adopt BMPs and AMTs to continue nitrate reduction efforts.



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, 170 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.



## The Nature Conservancy

In 2020, the District entered into a partnership with The Nature Conservancy, with support from Cargill, to implement more cover crops in Sherburne County. The goal of the program is to encourage new ways of planting multi species in a field three years consecutively. Cover crops are an important tool in increasing soil health, decreasing erosion, scavenging nutrients, and managing water.

In 2020, 170 acres of cover crops were planted along with soil health tests and infiltration tests taken by staff. The project will continue for two more years and changes to infiltration and soil health will be tracked.



# Completed Projects



## Big Lake Shoreline Restoration

Big Lake property experiencing erosion along the shoreline from wave action and ice heaving. Due to this erosion, the shoreline has lost approximately 3 feet in the last 5 years. The shoreline was planted with both seed and live plugs to ensure full coverage. Coconut fiber logs were installed at the toe of the slope to protect the planting until it becomes established.

Project Details	Project Funding	Project Partners
Date Installed: August 2020	Cost Share: \$2,000.00	Sherburne SWCD
Area: 765 ft <sup>2</sup>	Landowner: \$1,512.50	Turbenson Family
	Total Project Cost: \$3,512.50	



Before



After



## Lake Orono Erosion Control

Lake Orono property with a steep slope experiencing erosion due to lack of vegetation cover. The current vegetation consisted of garden ornamentals and non-native invasive species such as buckthorn. The slope was planted with a short/dry native prairie mix that will establish well on the south facing slope. The seed was enhanced with live plugs of forbs, grasses and shrubs. An annual cover crop was seeded to stabilize the slope until the native plants were able to establish.

Project Details	Project Funding	Project Partners
Date Installed: June 2020	Cost Share: \$2,000.00	Sherburne SWCD
Area: 1,900 ft <sup>2</sup>	Landowner: \$1,793.50	Struble Family
	Total Project Cost: \$3,793.50	



Before



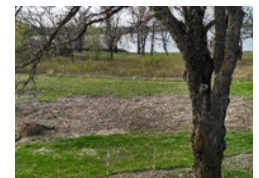
After



## Lawns to Legumes

The Sherburne SWCD was awarded a Lawns to Legumes grant in 2020. This grant funding is provided by the Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF). The goal of this grant is to increase pollinator habitat in residential lawns while raising awareness to the importance of protecting our pollinators. The program is especially geared toward the protection of at-risk species, such as the newly federally endangered rusty patched bumblebee. There are 4 categories of planting types that landowners can select: pollinator meadow, pocket planting, bee lawn, beneficial trees and shrubs.

Project Details	Project Funding	Project Partners
Date Installed: July 2020	Lawns to Legumes: \$2,000.00	Sherburne SWCD
Area: 4,000 ft <sup>2</sup>	Landowner: \$2,863.00	Rensberger Family
Project Type: Pollinator Meadow	Total Project Cost: \$4,863.00	



Before



After



# Education and Outreach



The global outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) means we've had to stop socializing and gathering to help prevent further spread. Inevitably, this has had a huge impact on the events we had scheduled for 2020. The SWCD was able to still host a few events, pictured below. The pandemic has challenged SWCD staff to think outside the box and utilize new and innovative means to provide outreach to the community.

## Womens Ag Night

In February 2020, The District hosted its first Women in Agriculture Event, a night dedicated to connecting and providing opportunities to women in Sherburne County. 15 women gathered at a farm near St Cloud to listen to speakers from Minnesota Rural Water, Sherburne County Parks, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and District Staff. Topics included groundwater, trees for wildlife, and financial assistance opportunities for farmers. Guests were also provided with dinner and enjoyed a Paint Night led by District staff; guests got to leave with their very own canvas masterpiece of a wildflower. This event was in partnership with MN Rural Water, Sherburne County, NRCS, and utilized funding from Clean Water Funds, MDA, and Capacity Funds.



**Lunch & Learn**  
Dec 17th, 11:30am  
Sherburne History Center  
10775 27th Ave SE  
Becker, MN 55308

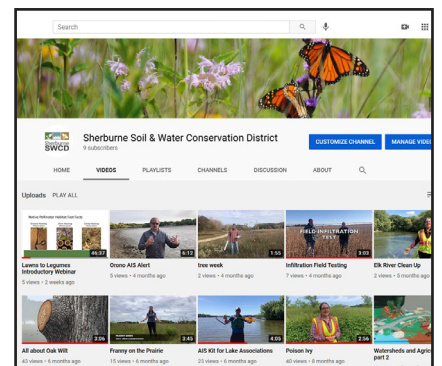
*Please Join Us!*  
December 17th 11:30am-1:00pm Sherburne History Center

## Lunch and Learn

In February 2020, the District hosted a Lunch and Learn for Irrigators. Speakers included staff from Valley Irrigation and Reinke Irrigation showcasing the latest in Irrigation Technology for Advanced Irrigation Water Management. High level irrigation management promotes timely and calculated watering based on actual field conditions and crop stage, which in turn can lead to a reduction in nitrate leaching and energy and water savings. Partners included the Minnesota Dept of Agriculture as well as funding from the Clean Water Funds.

## SWCD YouTube Channel

In response to fast changing ways of communicating during the COVID-19 pandemic, the SWCD launched their own youtube channel. This created a platform to be able to provide education and outreach in one place covering a wide range of topics. Some of the videos and presentations available include the Lawns to Legumes Introductory Webinar and Information on Oak Wilt.





# Education and Outreach



## Elk River Cleanup

The Sherburne SWCD has coordinated a watershed wide river clean up almost every year since 2008. In 2020, 19 volunteers and 6 SWCD staff braved the cold fall morning to clean up the Elk River and Big and Mitchell Lakes. During the 2-hour event approximately 385 pounds of trash was collected, mainly around area bridge crossings. We would like to thank each volunteer for donating their time and energy to help keep the Elk River watershed clean for everyone to enjoy!

## Rain Gauge Readers

Sherburne SWCD partners with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources State Climatology Office to facilitate and collect rain gauge reader data on a monthly basis. The measurements collected by the 10 SWCD rain gauge readers are used for weather, water supply and flood forecasts, for assessing drought severity and impacts, for severe storm prediction and verification, for crop growth and yield forecasts, for assessing hail damage, for contracting snow removal, for predicting mosquito outbreaks, for planning fishing and snowmobiling outings, and plenty more.



## SWCD Webinars

A webinar is an online seminar that turns a presentation into a real-time conversation from anywhere in the world. Webinars allow large groups of participants to engage in online discussions or training events and share audio, documents or slides – even when they're not in the same place. The staff of the SWCD utilized this technology during the COVID-19 outbreak to share information on everything from "How to plant pollinator habitat" to "What is Sherburne County soil made up of".



## Poster Contest

The Sherburne SWCD has hosted an annual poster contest since 2016 for Sherburne County 5th grade students. The contest has a conservation related theme each year. In 2020 the theme was “Where would we BEE without Pollinators?”. Students learned about the importance of pollinators and what they can do in their communities to help the declining populations. The SWCD received over 150 posters from 5 different schools throughout the county. The top 4 winners were awarded with a monetary prize.



## Starry Trek

The Sherburne County Coalition of Lake Associations (COLA) and Sherburne SWCD co-hosted a group of 18 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.

## 2020 Tree Sale

In 2020 over 22,000 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 to 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.



# Outstanding Conservation Cooperator

Due to COVID-19, no Outstanding Conservation Cooperator was selected for 2020. Included instead, are highlights of previous years Outstanding Conservation Cooperators.



2019 Lynn Ayers, Diamond A Farm LLC



2018 Tom Hammer



2017 Patrick Plant and Cindi Edwards-Plant



2016 Peter and Debra Jensen



2015 Duane and Alan of Peterson & Peterson Farms

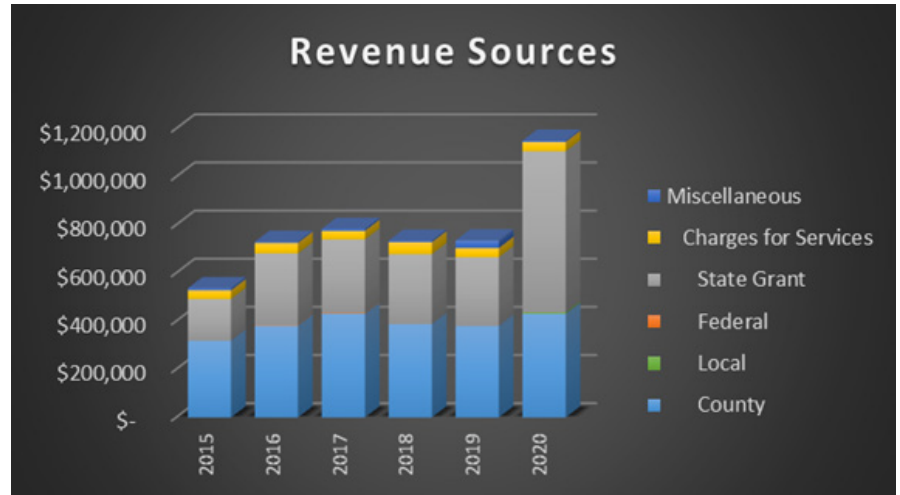


2014 Briggs Lake Chain Association

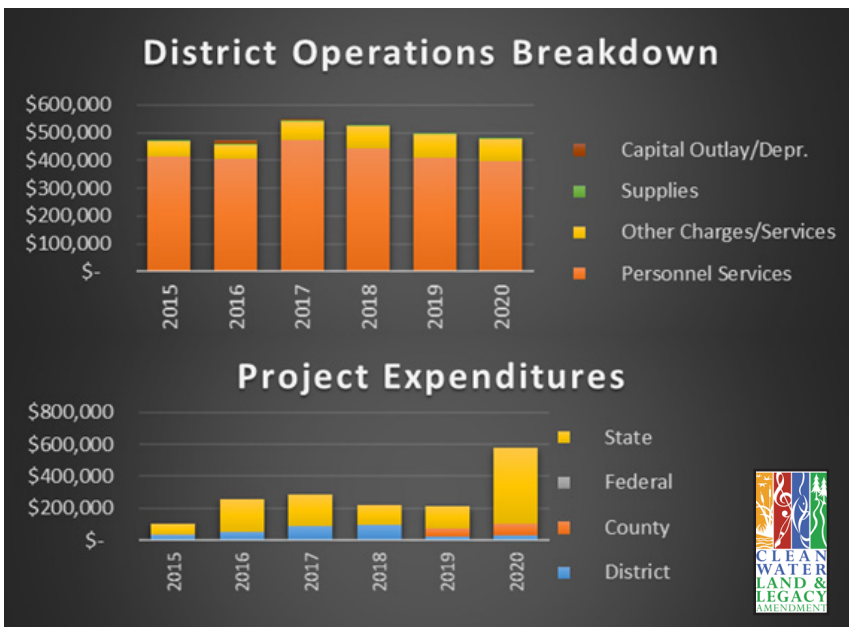
# Financials



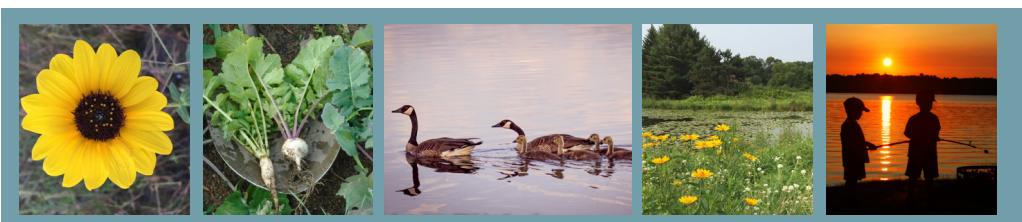
Sherburne SWCD operates on a combination of County, State, Federal, and nonprofit grants and other agreements. Much of the funding is allocated via competitive grants, so the sources, amounts, and partnerships vary by year. These sources include: County and Local Grants (37%), State Grants (58%), Charges for Services (3%), and other Miscellaneous Income (2%).

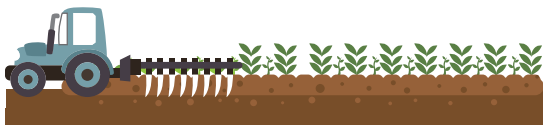


Although governed by an elected Board of Officials, Conservation Districts do not have levy authority and must secure funds from many sources to maintain programs and services. The baseline level of support from the taxpayers of Sherburne County is critical for leveraging outside funding from state and federal government agencies. The financial health of Sherburne SWCD allows the District to pursue opportunities to assist landowners and other partners with their natural resource concerns.



In 2020 Sherburne SWCD became a lead partner in watershed-based initiatives including One Watershed, One Plan (1w1p; active in the Rum River Watershed) and the Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS; active in the Mississippi River St. Cloud Watershed) projects. The SWCD also partnered with Sherburne County on a Lessards-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund project for a habitat restoration and enhancement project at Sherburne County's Oak Savanna Park. As a result of taking on the Fiscal Agent role for these initiatives and many other large projects, the District's 2020 state revenue and state project expenses reflect these pass-through funds.





## 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 2020 \$72,913 were obligated through EQIP for conservation on 635.2 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



Kelly Bistodeau, NRCS Soil Conservation

### Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

245.94 acres were enrolled in CRP in 2020 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 writes the conservation plans.





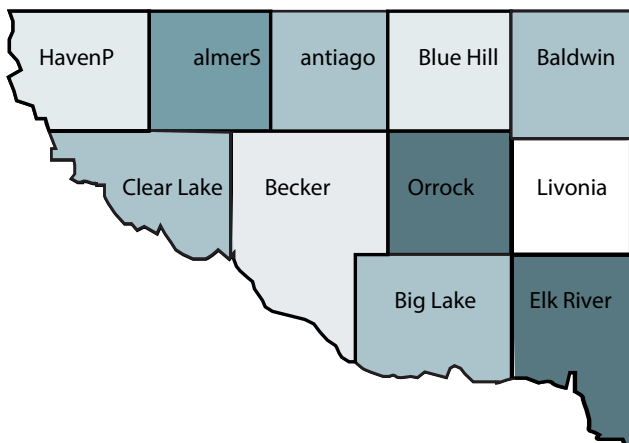
<b>Sherburne SWCD</b>	<b>Hours of Operation</b>
Tel (763) 220-3434 www.sherburneswcd.org	Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Mailing Address 425 Jackson Ave NW Elk River, MN 55330	Closed Sat & Sun Closed on Federal Holidays

## 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:** 97,238 \*2019 Estimate  
**Native Vegetation:** Oak Savanna Sandy Soils/  
 Conifer Forests



Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District  
[www.sherburneswcd.org](http://www.sherburneswcd.org)

425 Jackson Ave NW  
Elk River, MN 55330  
763-220-3434