

Nature Talks

Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District

Nature Talks
June 2020

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Sherburne
SWCD

Welcome Supervisor Binsfeld



Sherburne Soil & Water Conservation District has a new board member to fill a vacant seat representing District I, Elk River. Shelly Binsfeld, of Elk River, has been appointed by the Sherburne SWCD Board of Supervisors to fill the District seat vacated by Michael Schroeder. Shelly is an outdoor enthusiast and a recent graduate from the U of M Mankato with a bachelor's degree in Applied Leadership. She also brings to the board her background as an AIS Detector and Lake Orono Improvement Association Board Member. When asked about her interest in becoming a SWCD District board member, Shelly responded, "By representing Elk River residents on the Sherburne SWCD, I can support

and promote conservation efforts. I want to encourage others to know more about and care for the land and water around us through board/committee activities, education, and community outreach." Shelly and her husband Tom live on Lake Orono with their 4 active children. She enjoys being out in nature as an avid long distance runner and kayaker.

2020 Tree Sale

The staff at Sherburne County Soil & Water Conservation Districts have a strong belief in the power of trees. Trees have so many benefits; they filter water, prevent erosion, grow food, offer wildlife habitat, provide shade in the summer and keep us warm in the winter with firewood.

For decades the Sherburne SWCD has been providing high quality bare root tree seedlings and transplants to landowners at a price that makes it feasible to plant multiple row windbreaks, living snowfences, privacy screens or wildlife plantings. Affordable, easy, and good for you.

Each Spring our staff spends time sorting, prepping and bundling around 300 orders for the tree sale. This year over 22,400 trees were distributed in Sherburne County. Orders for the 2021 Tree Sale will be accepted on January 1st.

If tree planting is all new to you contact us, our staff is here to help you select varieties to meet your objectives and can assist with resources on planting methods and tree protection.

For more information on the Tree Sale or tree planting, please contact our office at 763-220-3434.



Nitrate Reduction Cost Share

Sherburne Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) received funding in 2019 to promote best management practices and alternative management tools that decrease Nitrate leaching to the groundwater. High levels of Nitrate have been identified through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Township Testing Program in 2014-2015. There are cost share and technical service opportunities available under this grant.

Practices Available for Cost Share

- Irrigation Water Management
- Irrigation Water Management Technology Upgrades
- Cover Crops, Multispecies and Interseeding
- Alternative Crops
- Nitrogen Management

Technical Assistance Available

- Uniformity Test, Catch-Can
- Ag-Sense Units, Try for a Season
- Cover Crop Design
- Nitrate Monitoring

Interested?

Contact Miranda Wagner for program details and cost share rates.

763-220-3434 ext 105 mwagner@sherburneswcd.org



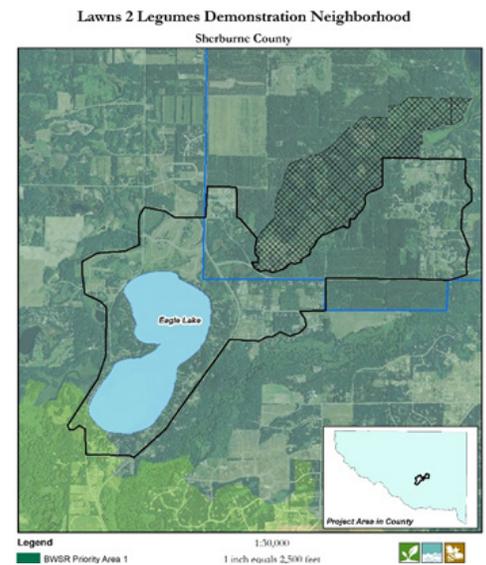
Lawns to Legumes Funding

The Sherburne SWCD was awarded funding from the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to establish pollinator habitat around the Big Eagle Lake Community. The program assists landowners with converting residential lawn to native flowers and grasses that help support at-risk pollinators like the newly endangered Rusty Patched Bumblebee. There are different project types included in this grant program such as pollinator meadows, small pocket plantings, bee lawns, and beneficial trees and shrubs. Contact the SWCD to see if you are eligible today!

If you are not a resident nearby the Big Eagle Lake Community but are still interested in how you can help pollinators in your yard, the SWCD is here to help provide technical guidance.

Contact Franny to see if you qualify!

763-220-3434 x104 fgerde@sherburneswcd.org



SWCD's Newest Team Member

Sherburne SWCD recently hired David Wick as a District Technician. Wick will focus on forestry concerns, along with monitoring and coordinating a few of the SWCD outreach programs.

Wick grew up in Rochester, MN. He graduated from the University of Stout with a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science. Prior to graduation he was a Conservation Apprentice with Mower SWCD in Austin, MN.

Wick says he applied for the job in Sherburne County because he "has an interest in mitigating environmental concerns and promoting forest health."

His goal is to help people living in Sherburne County implement conservation practices that help protect our trees and minimize our impacts on the natural environment.

During his short time here, David has already assisted with the SWCD tree sale, provided inventory assistance on county parks, and planted a few cover crops.

In his spare time, David enjoys camping, downhill skiing, and frisbee golf. He's a big fan of the Chicago Bears (sorry Viking's fans) and says he eats Tacos about 2-3 times a week. David eventually hopes to travel to Alaska where he will go backpacking in Denali National Park.

Join us in welcoming David!



Island View Planting

Island View is a County Park located along the Mississippi River in Clear Lake township near the Long Lake Chain. The park has been slowly expanding since its first acquisition in 2009, the current area is around 70 acres. The park is comprised of an established native prairie, oak forest, and floodplain forest. Visitors can enjoy 2 miles of walking trails with views of the river and plenty of bird watching and other wildlife viewing.

The Sherburne SWCD received a Clean Water Fund grant in 2019 from MN Board of Water & Soil Resources. The SWCD is partnering with Sherburne County Parks to complete restoration activities throughout the park between 2020 and 2023 as a part of this grant. Some of the restoration efforts include enhancing the existing prairie with more flowers that will benefit at-risk pollinators such as the monarch butterfly. The SWCD will be assisting with the establishment of 20 acres of new native prairie near the floodplain of the Mississippi that is currently fallow. Last fall the County removed invasive woody species within the floodplain forest along the river. This past spring, a variety of wildlife shrubs were installed with tree protection systems. The County also recently completed a new trail through the dry oak forest to connect the two prairie trails. The trail edges were planted to native woodland vegetation such as, lady fern, wild geranium, wild columbine, common oak sedge and sprengel's sedge. The County used a combination of hydroseed and live plant materials. There are also plans to enhance the oak forest by removing woody species like red cedar and buckthorn that crowd out the bur oak. Releasing the bur oak will improve the overall quality of the oak forest and allow native understory plants to thrive.

For more information on Island View and other County Parks visit the Sherburne County website at: <https://www.co.sherburne.mn.us/610/County-Parks>



-  Property Border
-  Prairie - 26.5 acres
-  Dry Oak Forest - 17.5 acres
-  Fallow - 22.25 acres
-  Floodplain Forest - 2 acres



Small Farms Night and Small Farms Cost Share Available

The District hosted a Small Farms Night Zoom event in May but you can still participate today!! Follow the link: <http://www.sherburneswcd.org/small-farms-night.html> to view the playbacks of the presentations. The evening included information on soils, pasture management, Sherburne County Zoning requirements and presentations by two small farmers. There is also a brief presentation on cost share available. Need a site visit? fill out the form at the top of the small farms webpage to request a site visit.



If you are a Sherburne county livestock owner with limited acreage, this page is full of information, resources and support for you!

Pasture Management Concerns?
Request a free site visit on your property.

* Indicates required field

Name *		Phone Number *	Address *		How can we help you? *
First <input type="text"/>	Last <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Line 1 <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
<small>First</small>	<small>Last</small>		Line 2 <input type="text"/>		
Email * <input type="text"/>			City <input type="text"/>	State <input type="text"/>	
			City <input type="text"/>	State <input type="text"/>	
			Zip Code <input type="text"/>	Country <input type="text"/>	

As a farmer, responsibly managing your livestock waste is one of the most important actions you can take for the health of your livestock, crops, family, land, water and community.

Several portions of the Elk River are currently listed on the Environmental Protection Agency's list of Impaired Waterways due to barnyard runoff from livestock. Under the Small Farms Cost-Sharing program, Sherburne SWCD offers several programs to assist landowners in reducing bacteria transport to the river.



- **Manure Management:** composting bins or other manure storage facilities. Manure Management protects surface water quality by reducing nutrient and sediment runoff, it also helps protect air quality by controlling odors.
- **Vegetates Buffer Strips:** work to remove sediment, organic matter and other nutrients, from runoff water by slowing down the water and allowing those materials to settle out and water to soak into the soil.
- **Pasture Management:** Livestock rotation plans and pasture plantings. These plans all help create healthy pastures which offer good nutrition, physically strengthen soils, and provide good vegetation to retain manure and nutrients during periods of heavy rain.
- **Stormwater Runoff:** Vegetated Plantings, French Drains, Raingardens, Constructed Berms. These practices help direct the flow of water on your property away from manure and bare soil.

Through a grant provided by the State of Minnesota's Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment, the Sherburne SWCD can now provide up to 75% financial assistance towards projects located in Priority Zones near the Elk River and connected waterways. Site visits and consultations are completed free of charge, as are many technical designs.

For more information, contact Miranda 763-220-3434 x 105 mwagner@sherburneswcd.org

AIS Update

The Sherburne County AIS Prevention Plan (<http://www.sherburneswcd.org/aquatic-invasive-species-ais.html>) describes the annual activities that are completed to prevent the spread of AIS into and within Sherburne County. Several of these programs may not be in operation this year due to COVID-19 safety guidelines and restrictions. However, many are still being carried out and a new project has even been developed. Better yet, there are still opportunities for you to get involved!

This year the Sherburne SWCD AIS Grant Program received and approved nine applications ranging from AIS treatments, AIS surveys and planning, and AIS outreach. Lake groups are working with contractors and Department of Natural Resource (DNR) staff to move treatment and surveying projects forward, with little delays due to COVID-19. Four groups received AIS Volunteer Incentive Grants – this program is still on hold by the Department of Natural Resources due to COVID-19 and the fact-to-face nature of the work. However, education of watercraft operators and enforcement of AIS regulations is occurring through Level 1 Watercraft Inspectors as the DNR approved this program to move forward. COVID-19 friendly training sessions and field protocols are being implemented in order to continue this work but limit the spread of the virus. Additionally, the SWCD's zebra mussel and spiny water flea program is still in operation for 2020. This program utilizes volunteers to sample for potential zebra mussel and spiny water fleas in 16 county lakes using a fine-mesh net. The samples are analyzed by a local lab; early detection of these AIS critters are important for timely management and preventative planning.

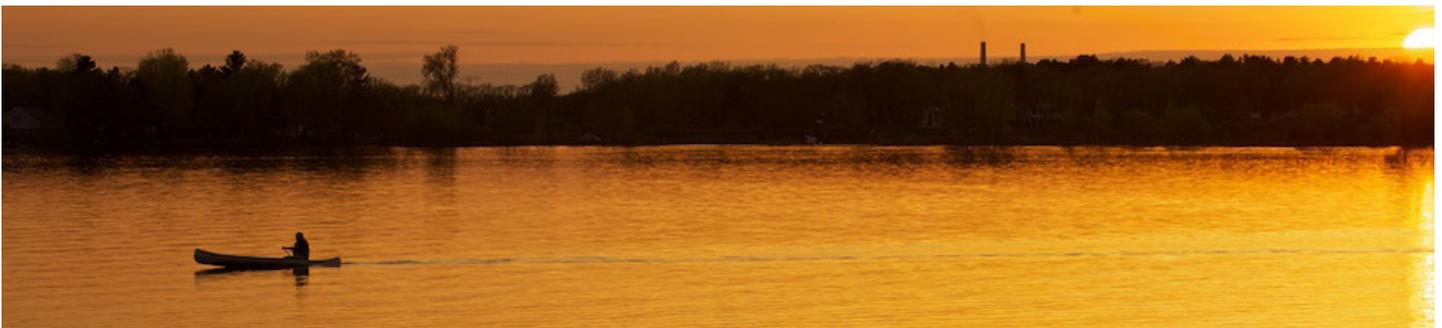
The Sherburne County AIS Task Force typically meets twice a year, spring and fall, to review current AIS activities and program progression. The spring meeting was cancelled but we are optimistic a fall meeting can occur – either in person or via a video platform. Likewise, an AIS workshop with area High School Fishing Teams has been postponed but may occur later this summer or fall.

Despite some setbacks to our AIS Program, a new project was developed through a collaboration with the Sherburne County Coalition of Lake Associations (SCCOLA). The SWCD and SCCOLA have teamed up to create aquatic plant surveying kits for lake associations to use. The kits come with customized aquatic plant sampling rakes, instruction manual and aquatic plant identification books created by the University of Minnesota Extension. These kits will be distributed to lake groups in mid-summer for use in the late summer months for aquatic plant monitoring.

Lastly, there are still several programs that YOU can be involved in:

- AIS Detectors Program (<https://www.maisrc.umn.edu/ais-detectors/detectors-course>)
– learn to detect and identify AIS and educate others on the topic.
- AIS Management 101 (<https://www.maisrc.umn.edu/ais-detectors/ais-management>)
– if you manage AIS in your lake, do you know how your herbicides work? How do you measure effectiveness? Learn more through this online program.
- Starry Trek 2020 (<https://www.maisrc.umn.edu/ais-detectors/starrytrek>)
– Starry Trek is back, and will be held with COVID-19 protocols in place. Save the date for August 15th and keep your eyes peeled for more details this summer.

Feel free to contact Dan Cibulka (dcibulka@sherburneswcd.org) for more details on the Sherburne County AIS Prevention Plan and Programs.



2020 SWCD Poster Contest

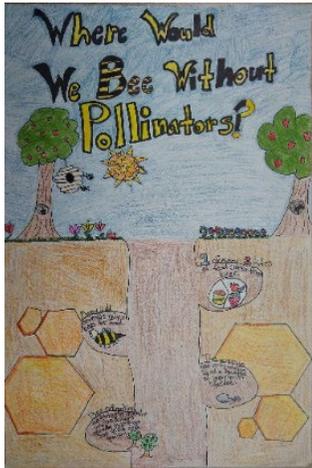
2020 was the 5th year of the annual poster contest held by the Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District.

Each year 5th grade students are given the opportunity to design posters based off a conservation theme. The conservation theme for 2020 was "Where would we BEE without Pollinators?" The students were given a presentation all about the benefits of pollinators and what we can do to protect them.

There were 5 schools that participated in the poster contest, 153 posters were collected from students. 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 is also receiving a prize to be used in their classroom. Well done 5th graders!



1st Place:
Tori Oslund
Teacher: Mike Humphrey
Lincoln Elementary



2nd Place:
Lily Johnson
Westwood Elementary



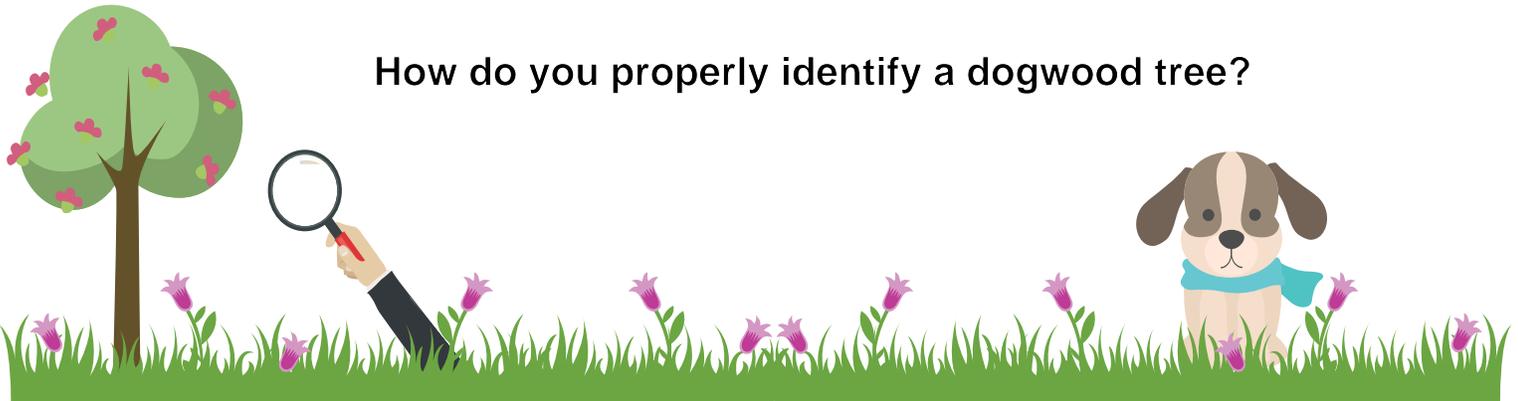
3rd Place:
Reyanna Arenos
Westwood Elementary



4th Place:
Emily Schwerzler
Princeton Elementary

Conservation Comedy

How do you properly identify a dogwood tree?



Happy National Pollinator Week



What is pollination?

Pollination is a vital stage in the life cycle of all flowering plants. When pollen is moved within a flower or carried from one flower to another of the same species it leads to fertilization. This transfer of pollen is necessary for healthy and productive native & agricultural ecosystems.

- Bees are the most important pollinators, but over 100,000 invertebrates—including butterflies, moths, wasps, flies, and beetles—and over 1,000 mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians, act as pollinators.
- About 75% of all flowering plant species need the help of animals to move their heavy pollen grains from plant to plant for fertilization.

5 Ways you can help

1. Become a Wildlife Gardener

Join the growing movement of Wildlife Gardeners who have made the choice to nurture their own small piece of the Earth—their own yards and gardens—with the needs of wildlife like pollinators in mind.

2. Plant Natives

The best way to attract beautiful butterflies, busy bees, speedy hummingbirds and other pollinators is to fill your yard with native plants. Native plants form the foundation of habitat for pollinators by providing them with pollen and nectar for food, cover from the elements and predators, and places where their young can grow.

3. Gives Bees Nesting Places

There are 4,000 bee species native to North America (the honey bee is a European import) and most of those don't form hives. Instead, individual female bees lay their eggs in tunnels in decaying wood or in sandy soil. You can offer such nesting spots by leaving tree snags on your property, by leaving bare patches of sandy soil, or by building or buying whimsical native bee houses. Add nesting boxes like these to give native bees a place to raise their young.

4. Avoid Pesticides

Bees are our most important pollinators, and they are insects. So are butterflies like the monarch. Using insecticides will kill these insects. Herbicides will kill important native plants such as milkweed that pollinators rely upon as a food source and a place to raise young. Make the commitment to avoid using chemicals and to maintain your garden in a natural, organic way.

5. Plant Milkweed

The iconic monarch butterfly has declined by over 90 percent in just twenty years. One of the main causes of this decline is a lack of milkweed, the species' only caterpillar host plant. Without milkweed, monarchs can't complete their lifecycle and populations plummet. By planting milkweed in your own yard, garden or neighborhood, you'll not only attract these beautiful butterflies, you'll be providing crucial habitat that will allow their caterpillars to survive. Find out what milkweed is native to where you live and how to get it.