

# Nature Talks

Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District

## Nature Talks

August 2018

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## Sherburne County Fair Parade



SWCD staff and friends participated in the Sherburne County Fair parade on July 21st. The parade theme this year was Las Vegas. The SWCD float was decorated with 2 large dice and playing cards, all promoting soil health. It was a beautiful sunny morning when the staff walked the parade route handing out icee's, soil health coloring books and I Love Soil stickers. This is the 3rd year the District has participate in the parade.



## Community Tree Inventory

Becker Minnesota has 17 parks and public building campuses that are all made beautiful by the trees that grace their landscapes. The SWCD has been collaborating with the Parks and Public Works departments of Becker to inventory all public trees in the community. This enables better tree care and prioritization. Similar efforts have been completed in Elk River in 2017. Volunteers received professional training on tree identification, tree measurements and data collection.

Then they were dispatched to community parks in Becker where they mapped, surveyed and observed hazard ratings of the trees. Thank you to all the volunteers who participate!





If there's one constant in farming, it's poop—and a lot of it. A single horse creates 50 pounds of waste per day; a beef cow up to 92 pounds; a sheep 4 pounds; and a laying hen 1/4 pound. 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.

### **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.



### **Buffer Strips:**

[Vegetated buffers](#)

Vegetated buffers 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.



### **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.



### **Manure Management:**

[Livestock fencing, 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.

Sherburne SWCD staff have the experience to help you address all your small farms or hobby farm needs! Site visits and consultations are completed free of charge, as are many technical designs. 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.

**Contact Miranda or Dan today to see if you qualify!**

**763-241-1170 x 4 [mwagner@sherburneswcd.org](mailto:mwagner@sherburneswcd.org) [dcibulka@sherburneswcd.org](mailto:dcibulka@sherburneswcd.org)**

## Got Buckthorn?

Buckthorn is one of the most invasive species found in Minnesota. Buckthorn leafs out early and retain leaves late into the fall creating dense shade that helps it out-compete many native plants.

Why is buckthorn such a problem?

- Out-competes native plants for nutrients, light, and moisture
- Forms an impenetrable layer of vegetation
- Threatens the future of forests, prairies, and other natural habitats
- Contributes to erosion by shading out other plants
- Lacks “natural controls” like insects / disease that would curb its growth



Ways to prioritize management:

- Remove trees with fruit first
- If you have areas with relatively few buckthorn trees, start your management there.
- Then work towards the areas that are more heavily infested.
- Continue to follow-up in the areas where you have previously removed buckthorn.

The most effective time to cut and chemically treat the stumps is in late summer and throughout the fall. Avoid treating buckthorn in May and June when the tree is putting out leaves as the herbicide will be less effective at this time then during the rest of the year.

For questions about Buckthorn please contact Franny 763-241-1170 x 4 [fgerde@sherburneswcd.org](mailto:fgerde@sherburneswcd.org).

## Elk River Clean Up



# Elk River Clean Up

Join us!

Saturday, October 6<sup>th</sup>  
9am-11am

Register today by contacting Franny at  
[fgerde@sherburneswcd.org](mailto:fgerde@sherburneswcd.org) or 763-241-1170 x 4  
Meeting Location: Lakeside Park in Big Lake



Great activity for groups and families

## New AIS Cameras

Users of the Big Lake water access at Lakeside Park in the City of Big Lake may notice a new piece of equipment and signage there. Recently, the City of Big Lake, Big Lake Community Lakes Association (BLCLA) and Sherburne SWCD have teamed up to place monitoring cameras at this water access to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. Called an “I-LID”, this is a self-contained, solar powered camera that prevent AIS transport through video capture and audio education. Movement triggers a camera to begin capturing images while also beginning a pre-recorded message, which reminds the boater to inspect their watercraft and trailer for aquatic plants or animals prior to entering or exiting the lake. The images are reviewed by a third party and potential violations of Minnesota’s AIS transport law are reported to local authorities for follow-up. “The BLCLA is very



encouraged by the reports from the new I-Lids video monitoring system installed at Lake Side Park Monday July 16. There have been 1205 videos captured and reviewed along with 301 launches counted through the end of July. And the good news is there have been no violations to date. Many of the videos show people looking at the device, reading the posted signs and stopping to listen to the recorded messages. These are all good indications that there is increased awareness and hopefully will continue to encourage boaters to act responsibly knowing they are being monitored. We’re

looking forward to 2 additional I-Lids systems being installed – another one at Lake Side Park and one at the Mitchell Lake landing.” Karna Lundquist, Vice President, BLCLA. This tool was heavily favored amongst lake residents and the Big Lake City Council amongst alternatives due to its ability to monitor and educate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Sherburne SWCD partnered with the City and BLCLA to assist in equipment purchasing and signage development, and will later on collaborate on a one-year report outlining the experiences with this innovative approach towards AIS Prevention. “We are thrilled to have the I-Lid systems to protect our lakes! The City utilized money from the Michelob Celebrate Your Lake Grant and partnered with the Soil and Water Conservation District, Sherburne County and the Big Lake Community Lakes Association. The I-lid system allows us to constantly monitor boats entering the lakes without paying someone to be on site. Big Lake takes both the quality of our lakes and responsible spending seriously, and the I-Lids systems are a great balance between those two priorities!” Raeanne Danielowski, Mayor, City of Big Lake.

## Oak Wilt Reminder



Oaks can become infected during the Low Risk period, but the probability is very low. However, since it could happen, it’s best to delay pruning of the oaks until the Safe period or to quickly seal the pruning wounds with shellac or paint to avoid attracting the Nitidulid beetle (which can spread the fungus that causes oak wilt). if pruning during the Low Risk period is unavoidable. During the Safe period, there is virtually no risk that an oak can become infected with oak wilt by over-land transmission of the fungus.

**For questions about Oak Wilt, contact Gina Hugo 763-241-1170 ext. 4 or [ghugo@sherburneswcd.org](mailto:ghugo@sherburneswcd.org)**

## Citizen Pruner Program

**If you enjoy being outdoors, love trees and your community, this is an opportunity you need to check out!**

Sherburne SWCD and the cities of Becker, Big Lake, Clear Lake, Elk River, Princeton and Zimmerman are partnering with the U of M Minnesota Tree Care Advocate Program on a pilot program that engages citizens in caring for their community forestry. Citizen Pruner volunteers have gathered at several city parks and facility locations to assist with basic tree pruning needs since 2014. They are trained in small tree structural pruning, and during events scheduled throughout the year help maintain trees on publicly-owned property. A healthy urban forest plays a vital role to the health of all cities. Trees improve air and water quality, lower air temperatures, reduce energy demand, and beautify the streets. CitizenPruners provide a tremendous benefit to our urban environment.



Citizen Pruner's are trained in tree identification, biology, and pruning techniques. Tree pruning requires not only an understanding of how to prune but also an understanding of the tree's biology to prevent the spread of certain diseases.

**Date:** Saturday, October 13th

**Time:** 9:00am - 3:00pm

**Cost:** \$25 per person

Course material will be taught by U of M Urban Forestry Department staff.

**For training registration information, visit <http://www.mntca.org/mcp-sherburne/> or contact Gina Hugo at the Sherburne SWCD: 763-241-1170 ext. 4 or [ghugo@sherburneswcd.org](mailto:ghugo@sherburneswcd.org)**

## Starry Trek 2018

On Saturday, August 18th, the second annual Starry Trek took place at Lakeside Park on Big Lake. This is the second year the University of Minnesota has coordinated the event for lake groups and SWCD's across the state. A group of 14 volunteers dedicated their time to search for starry stonewort, Minnesota's most recent aquatic invasive plant. SWCD Water Resource Specialist, Dan Cibulka, spent time teaching the group the individual characteristics of both native and invasive species of aquatic plants they might encounter. Volunteers were sent to 10 lakes across the county to hunt for the dangerous Starry Stonewort. Fortunately, no new infestations of the invasive plant were found in Sherburne County.



## District Manager Graduates From Statewide Leadership Program

The Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District (or BWSR or NRCS) is proud to congratulate Francine Larson, District Manager for successfully completing a one-year leadership development program sponsored by the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD).

The 2017-2018 MASWCD Leadership Program brought together 32 participants from across the state to strengthen their leadership capacity for conservation work in Minnesota. The group was comprised of locally elected Soil and Water Conservation District supervisors, local SWCD staff, staff from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, and regional staff from the Natural Resources Conservation Service.



*District Manager Francine Larson, Pictured Front Row, 4th from left.*

The group met for seven multi-day sessions to study and practice leadership topics including: building personal leadership skills, the leader-follower relationship, developing a vision, practicing ethical leadership, strengthening team leadership, facilitation as a leadership skill, and working with stakeholders in public issues.

This was the eleventh group to complete the statewide leadership program; more than 225 SWCD staff and supervisors have completed the program since 1996. The content is designed and delivered by current and former staff of the University of Minnesota Extension. For further information about the MASWCD Leadership Institute, contact the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts at 651-690-9028 or visit the MASWCD website at [www.maswcd.org](http://www.maswcd.org).

*The Sherburne Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) 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 and referral center.*



*2017-2018 MASWCD Leadership Program participants.*

## Blue-Green Algae

Blue-green algae are not algae at all, but types of bacteria called cyanobacteria that are normally present in many lakes. This type of bacteria thrives in warm, nutrient-rich water. When conditions are right, the bacteria can grow quickly forming “blooms.” Blue-green algal blooms are often described as looking like pea soup or spilled green paint. However, blooms aren’t always large and dense and can sometimes only cover small portions of the lake.



You can become sick if you swallow, have skin contact with, or breathe in airborne water droplets while drinking, swimming, boating, waterskiing, tubing, bathing, or showering in water that has harmful algae. If you become sick, you might experience vomiting, diarrhea, rash, eye irritation, cough, sore throat, and headache. Symptoms can begin hours or up to two days after exposure.

Pets, especially dogs, are susceptible to harmful algae because they swallow more water while swimming and doing activities like retrieving a ball from the water. They are also less deterred by green, smelly water that may contain harmful algae. Animals can experience symptoms within minutes of exposure to the toxins. Symptoms they might experience include vomiting, diarrhea, weakness, difficulty breathing, and seizures. In the worst cases, animals have died. If your pet shows symptoms after exposure to algae, contact your veterinarian.

We can’t eliminate blue-green algae from a lake, it is part of the overall lake community. What we can do is control the overall intensity and the frequency of algae blooms. Since we can’t control the water temperature, the best thing we can do is reduce the amount of nutrients getting into the lake. We can do this by reducing the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen from man-made sources such as lawn fertilizer, and runoff from cities, farm fields and other sources. The reduction of nuisance algal blooms will not be immediate, but it is the best long-term solution to minimizing the frequency and intensity of algal blooms.

**For questions about Blue-green algae or to report Blue-green algae on a waterbody in Sherburne County, please contact Dan 763-241-1170 x 4 [dcibulka@sherburnswcd.org](mailto:dcibulka@sherburnswcd.org).**

## Naturally Funny



What do you call a tree with lots of friends?

– Poplar



In observation of  
**Labor Day**

Our office will be closed  
Monday, September 3, 2018

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District

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