

Nature Talks

Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District

Nature Talks
February 2019

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SHERBURNE
SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
1944

Sherburne SWCD Honored with Award

The Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) has named Sherburne SWCD as their 2018 SWCD of the Year Award winner. This honor was announced at the 82nd MASWCD Annual Meeting in December.

Sherburne SWCD was recognized for having a strong board, manager, and technical staff; all dedicated toward delivering a wide range of conservation services geared toward their diverse land and water resource base.



SWCD Staff and Board Supervisors

“Whether you are in the cities of St Cloud or Elk River, live on the shores of Big Lake, or farm on the Anoka Sand Plains, you are benefiting from the efforts of the 2018 SWCD of the Year, the Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District,” stated Sheila Vanney, MASWCD Assistant Director. “The efforts of their board and staff truly rise to the level of being exceptional, and MASWCD is proud to recognize Sherburne SWCD for all their hard work.”

2019 Tree Sale

The Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District is holding its annual tree sale to encourage tree planting in Sherburne County.

This year the SWCD is excited to announce 2 new species added to the sale; Bitternut Hickory, and Gray Dogwood. Bare root seedlings are easy to plant, grow quickly and come in bundles of 25. Many of the species being offered provide food and shelter for birds and



wildlife year round. Additionally, trees can increase the value of your property and conserve energy by shading your house in Summer and sheltering it from cold winds in Winter.

Tree orders will be available for pick-up the first weekend in May at our new office location on Jackson Ave in Elk River.

Stock is limited, and orders are entered on a first-come, first-serve basis.

[Click here for more info.](#) Don't Delay, Order Today!

SWCD 4th Annual Poster Contest

The SWCD is currently holding its 4th Annual Poster Contest for 5th grade students in Sherburne County. The poster contest follows a theme that is selected by the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), which differs each year. This year's theme is "Life in the Soil: Dip Deeper". The SWCD staff just wrapped up presenting to over 350 students in Elk River, Becker, and Princeton on the benefits of healthy soil. The students will then use this information to create their posters. Monetary prizes will awarded to the 1st-4th place winners. Stay tuned, winners will be announced in May.



SWCD Technicians Franny and Miranda

The Scoop on all this Snow

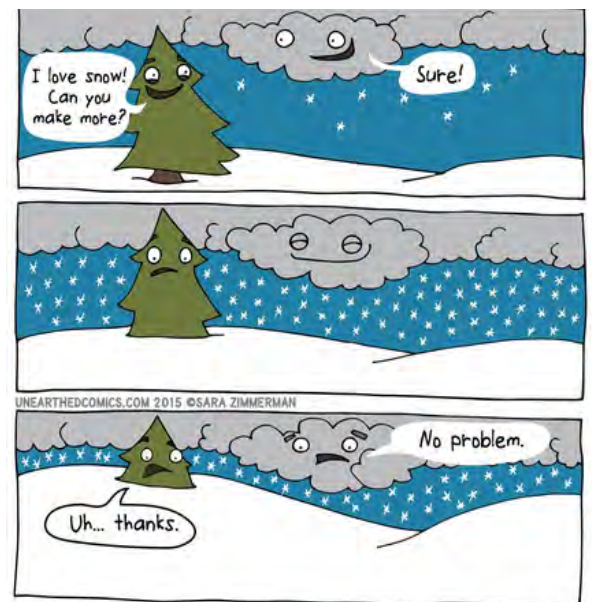
It has been a brutal winter for many of us in Sherburne County. Snowfall totals collected from the St Cloud Weather Station show 8.8" for December, 7.5" for January and a whopping 23.9" so far for February. Of course, the snow has it's downfalls like longer commutes and sore backs from shoveling, but let's all put down the shovel and look on the bright side. There is an avalanche of environmental benefits that come from a good snowfall.

The phrase "blanket of snow" is more than just a pretty visual, its also a great description for the warmth going on beneath the snow. Un-compacted snow can contain up to 95 percent trapped air. That air slows the flow of heat from the warm ground to the cold air above. This blanket effect makes snow a perfect insulator for gardens and landscapes, protecting plants and animals from freezing temperatures and harsh elements.

Snow reflects sunlight back to the atmosphere, which helps to cool our planet. The process of how well a material can reflect sunlight is called albedo. The ocean has a very low albedo in most cases, so its semi-reflective of sunlight. But the albedo of fresh snow can be as high as 90 percent. That makes it far more efficient at reflecting and sending solar energy back into space more than almost any other material on Earth. This helps regulate our planet's temperature.

Snow is one of the major sources of fresh water on Earth. When all this snow starts to melt, and it will, that moisture will be a much needed drink for our plants and trees on the landscape. Even dormant plants continue to lose moisture as water evaporates through their branches over the winter months.

Although we may grumble about long winters with cold temperatures, the presence of snow benefits us long into those summer months when we will be using shovels to build sandcastles on the beach.



Cost Sharing Available for Small Farms



Composting Bin for Manure Management

Sherburne SWCD offers several programs to assist landowners in reducing bacteria transport to the river.

Sherburne SWCD staff have the experience to help you address all your small farm 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 Minnesota's Clean Water & Legacy Amendment, the Sherburne SWCD can now provide up to 75% financial assistance towards projects located in Priority Zones near the Elk River, as determined by recent studies.



Available Programs

Manure Management:

Proper manure management techniques include livestock fencing, composting bins/stalls or other manure storage facilities.

Buffer Strips:

Vegetated buffers may intercept or remove pollutants and sediment in the following percentages from runoff: 50% or more of nutrients and pesticides, 60% or more of some pathogens, and 75% or more of sediment. Deep rooted plants and wider corridors are more effective at protecting water quality and promoting groundwater recharge.

Pasture Management:

Livestock rotation plans, pasture plantings, and tilling plans all help to create healthy pastures that provide good nutrition, physically strengthen soils, and provides good vegetation to retain manure and nutrients during periods of heavy rain.

Stormwater Runoff:

Controlling the flow of water on your property is crucial for reducing bacteria transport and solving erosion problems. Stormwater runoff can be directed with vegetated plantings, French drains, rain gardens, constructed berms, or a variety of other solutions.

For more information please contact Miranda at 763-220-3434 x 105.

Citizen Pruners Needed

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 assisted with basic tree pruning in city common areas since 2014. Citizens are trained in tree identification, biology, structural pruning techniques, and help maintain trees on publicly owned property during events scheduled throughout the year. Citizen Pruners provide a tremendous benefit to our urban environment.

For more information on this program contact Gina Hugo at the Sherburne SWCD: 763-220-3434 or ghugo@sherburneswcd.org



Citizen Pruner Training

One Watershed One Plan

Every ten years, a county completes a water plan process that outlines the status of the waters, identifies priority concerns, evaluates pollution reduction options, and prescribes an approach to restore or protect the county's waters. The State of Minnesota is evolving the water planning process to go from jurisdictional boundaries (i.e. counties or watershed districts) to larger watersheds as a whole. When managing on a watershed scale, it is understood that priorities become of greater importance and conservation efforts can have multiple benefits, such as benefiting several waterbodies as the water moves downstream. This new initiative is called One Watershed One Plan (1w1p). About 11% of Sherburne County resides within the Rum River Watershed, which extends from Lake Mille Lacs down to the City of Anoka. The SWCDs and Counties included in this watershed are beginning a watershed wide planning process that will result in an implementation plan that guarantees funding for the priority projects that are specified. Notable Sherburne County waterbodies included in this project are the Rum River (near Princeton), Sandy Lake, East/West Hunter Lakes, and Trott Brook. Public participation will be a component of this project. For more information on 1w1p, go to the Board of Water and Soil Resources. website: www.bwsr.state.mn.us/planning/1W1P/index.html



Elk River Watershed

Building Healthy Soils and Partnerships



The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) at the Elk River Field Office has seen a tremendous boost in Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) applications for our first-round 2019 sign-up thanks to a cooperative effort with the Sherburne SWCD to promote Cover Crops and No-Till practices.

Last fall we recognized No-Till November to encourage farmers to skip the tillage and not disturb the soil. We used the analogy behind No-Shave November to highlight men's health, in a similar way as No-Till November improves Soil Health!

We followed this up during the holidays by including a sample of a cover crop cocktail mix with a festive letter from the "Conservation Elves" to producers in Sherburne County.

This outreach opened doors to a busy January by meeting together with agricultural producers interested in implementing soil health principles.

We have approximately 1,305 acres of Cover Crops and 240 acres of No-Till in applications. And this is not for your common single cover crop planted after harvest. Our Sherburne producers are looking at multiple species cover crops and willing to try different seeding methods to incorporate cover crops into their crop rotation. We will be interseeding cover crops into corn at V4 stage. We will also be aerial seeding into soybeans. Producers are making management decisions and trying creative ways to keep soils alive. This means great things for Soil Health in Sherburne County!

We truly believe that Soil Health is integral part for sustainable agriculture. We want to find ways to protect and restore this natural resource while maintaining productive lands by working with producers to apply Soil Health principles in Sherburne County.

We look forward to continuing to partner with the Sherburne SWCD as our next EQIP round of 2019 sign-up will be open until April 19, 2019 so we can invest even more in soil conservation in Sherburne County.

By: *Yara Gonzalez, NRCS Soil Conservationist*



Yara Gonzalez, NRCS Soil Conservationist
Miranda Wagner, SWCD

2018 Outstanding Conservation Cooperator

Sherburne SWCD recognized TJ Farms owned by Tom and Penny Hammer, have done an outstanding job implementing conservation practices. They operate a cash grain, potato, and seed corn operation. Tom was integral in the District's 2017 Soil Health Field day by allowing us to plant/interseed cover crops, test for water nitrates, and hosted the event. Tom has also been an important member of two county-wide committees; the MDA's Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan Local Advisory Team which will help address groundwater nitrate impairment, and the Water Plan Advisory Committee where he has represented the agricultural community in county water planning since 2014. On his own operation, he has converted to low pressure irrigation, high level irrigation water management, cover crops and reduced till which all have a lasting impact on soil health and water quality. Congratulations to Tom and Penny for their outstanding accomplishments in protecting, preserving and restoring our natural resources.



Tom and Penny Hammer

Woodpecker Activity Survey



Woodpecker Activity Training

Sherburne SWCD will be conducting its 2nd woodpecker activity survey for the early detection of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB).

There is a documented and proven correlation between heavy woodpecker activity in ash trees in late winter and presence of emerald ash borer (EAB) larvae. EAB was recently confirmed in Anoka – the general infestation area is a mere 6.5 miles from the Sherburne County Border.

Emerald ash borer is the most destructive forest pest to ever reach the United States and it is poised to kill millions of public and private ash trees across the state as it already has in hundreds of US communities since its discovery. Early detection is key to successfully slowing the damaging effects of an infestation. The SWCD is committed to being proactive in early de-

tection of EAB. For more information on this program contact Gina Hugo at the Sherburne SWCD: 763-567-5360 or ghugo@sherburneswcd.org.

SWCD on the Move



Exciting things are happening at Sherburne SWCD!

We are proud to announce that our office has moved.

To serve you better with even more space, we are now located at 425 Jackson Ave NW, right next to the Elk River Fire Department. To celebrate the expansion, we will be holding an open house during our Tree Sale pick up May 3rd and 4th. More Information to come!

Celebrating 75 Years of Conservation in Sherburne County



Driving through Sherburne County, you will pass many conservation practices without even realizing it. Sherburne County's lakes, trees, fields and backyards have all been positively impacted by the 75 years of Conservation practices including restoring wetlands, planting rain gardens, prairies, and trees.

Born in the wake of the Dust Bowl, SWCD's have been involved in delivering conservation across America for more than 70 years. Because Minnesota has a wide variety of landscapes and conservation needs, each district operates at the direction of five locally elected board supervisors. This local perspective allows SWCD's to specifically manage the resources and serve the needs of the citizens in their district. Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD's) are local units of government established under state law to carry out natural resource management programs at the local level. SWCD's provide voluntary, incentive driven approaches to landowners for better soil and cleaner water in the State of Minnesota.

Seventy-five years ago, Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District formed in 1944. Since that time, Soil and Water Conservation District staff and supervisors have built partnerships with public and private, local, state and federal entities like the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, in an effort to develop locally-driven solutions to natural resource concerns.

To celebrate 75 years of Conservation, Sherburne SWCD will be hosting fun activities events and postings all throughout 2019. We invite you to help us celebrate 75 years of Conservation in Sherburne County resulting in cleaner water, healthier wildlife habitat and more productive soils for everyone!

Celebrating 75 Years of Conservation in Sherburne County 1944-2019



Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District
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