

# Nature Talks

Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District

## Nature Talks

March 2017

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**SHERBURNE**  
SOIL & WATER  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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## Farm Receives Water Quality Certification



Diamond A Farm, a family farm run by Lynn Ayers and her siblings, is making sure clean water is part of its legacy. Diamond A Farm recently received its certification through the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP). Diamond A Farm's certification was recognized on February 15, 2017 at an open house featuring Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) Assistant Commissioner Susan Stokes and local Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff.

The MAWQCP is a voluntary program that works with farmers and landowners to identify and fix risks to water quality on a field-by-field, whole farm basis. Farmers who treat all risks to water quality on their operation are certified and deemed to be in compliance with new water quality rules and laws for 10 years. The MAWQCP is a statewide program that is delivered locally through a partnership between the MDA and Minnesota's 89 soil and water conservation districts.

"Lynn and Diamond A Farm have shown continual commitment to conservation over the years, the century farm land is a model example of responsible planning and management of resources" said District Manager, Francine Larson, Sherburne SWCD.

To date the MAWQCP has certified 336 farms, covering more than 190,000 acres. Together these farms have implemented over 580 new best management practices that are keeping 16.8 million pounds of soil on fields annually and 11.6 million pounds of sediment and over 7,000 pounds of phosphorous out of our waters every year.

Farmers and landowners interested in learning more should contact the Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District, or visit <http://www.sherburneswcd.org>.



## SWCD at the Capitol



Recently, Sheila Vanney (MASWCD) and Sherburne SWCD Supervisors & Staff met with Representative Kurt Daudt to highlight our use of State Capacity Funding as an example of how SWCD's are increasing the amount of conservation throughout the state. Sherburne SWCD is using a portion of the capacity funding towards cost sharing and incentives for local conservation practices. Locally driven conservation is a cost-effective way to protect Minnesota's natural resources. Targeting these practices to where they are needed most, not only increases awareness of the SWCD's work but also empowers and motivates the community.

## 2017 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 3 new species added to the sale; Harbin Pear, Siouxland Poplar and White (Concolor) Fir. 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.

We are currently sold out of:  
Concolor Fir, White Spruce, White Pine, and Woodland Packets

Tree orders will be available for pick-up April 27th through April 29th at the Sherburne County Fair Grounds. 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 2nd Annual Poster Contest

The SWCD is currently holding its 2nd 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 *Healthy Soils Are Full Of Life*. The SWCD staff presented to students at Meadowvale Elementary, Becker Intermediate, and North Elementary on the benefits of healthy soil. The students then used this information to create their posters. Monetary prizes will awarded to the 1st-4th place winners. Additionally to the 1st place winning student's prize, their teacher was also awarded with a prize to be used in the classroom. Winners will be announced in April.



Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District  
2nd Annual Poster Contest



## AIS Grant



In fall of 2016, Sherburne SWCD developed an AIS Grant Program to assist local stakeholders in developing management strategies to prevent the spread of AIS in Sherburne County and manage existing AIS infestations. We would like to congratulate four lake groups on their successful applications to Sherburne County's first ever AIS Grant Program! This spring the lake groups will be starting several projects to control AIS, develop Lake Vegetation Management Plans and monitor existing AIS populations on their respective waterbodies.

The successful projects are outlined below:

### **Ann Lake Improvement Club**

Ann Lake Curly-leaf Pondweed Treatment and Control

### **Lake Orono Improvement Association**

2017 Point-Intercept Survey Data Refresh

2017 CLP Removal Public Waters Demonstration Site

### **Little Elk Lake Improvement Association**

LELIA: Management of Aquatic Invasive Species

### **Three Lakes Improvement District**

TLID Lake Vegetation Management Plan

TLID AIS Survey and Containment Project

## 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: 763-567-5360 or [ghugo@sherburneswcd.org](mailto:ghugo@sherburneswcd.org)



## Learn & Grow Garden Expo

SWCD Staff will be on hand to answer questions at the Garden Education Expo. Gina Hugo will also be speaking on Tree Planting 101 and the Emerald Ash Borer. Please stop by our booth and say Hi!

Saturday, Mar. 25, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Big Lake High School, 601 Minnesota Ave. E., Big Lake.

A variety of informative speakers, Panera Bread lunch, "make and take it" sessions, door prizes, silent auction, educational displays, and over 25 vendors. Cost: \$30. Register with the U of MN Extension Office in Sherburne County, 763-765-3075, [Click here for more info.](#)



## Woodpecker Activity Survey

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 detection of EAB.

For more information on this program contact Gina Hugo at the SherburneSWCD: 763-567-5360 or ghugo@sherburneswcd.org.

## Bill Bronder Retires from SWCD

Bill has been providing natural resource technical assistance to landowners and local units of government in the design and installation of streambank stabilizations, raingardens, native prairie, tree plantings and intensively managed pastures for 39 years. Through all that time he has been an inspiration and role model to his colleagues and coworkers. Bill's steady perseverance, dynamic passion for the land and quick wit have aided him in successfully implementing more conservation in Sherburne County than any other employee with the Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District.



Fortunately you will still see Bill's smiling face from time to time around the office as he enters a phased retirement. On behalf of the SWCD, we would like to congratulate Bill on 39 years of dedicated service and wish Bill the best in his (phased) retirement.

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