

# Nature Talks

Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District

## Nature Talks

January 2018

### In This Issue

SWCD Tree Sale

Cost Share Programs

Poster Contest

Tree Care Advisors

Supervisor Elections

County Water Plan

AIS Grant Program

Free Nitrate Testing

## Tree Sale Now Accepting Orders



As our Minnesota winter marches on, indulge in thoughts of spring and how you might mark the transition of seasons. Imagine starting a tradition with your family or friends that benefits the environment, wildlife and your property!

Planting bare root tree seedlings is affordable, easy, and good for you! Trees have many benefits, from improving air quality, saving energy, creating beauty to reducing

stress levels in people! 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.

If tree planting is all new to you contact us! Our staff is here help you select varieties to meet your objectives and can assist with planning. We can also provide resources on planting methods and tree protection. This year 26 varieties of trees and shrubs are available. The species sold by the Sherburne SWCD are selected based on their performance in our soils and climate, as well as aesthetics, and benefits to wildlife.

The Sherburne SWCD tree sale is the perfect opportunity to insure the arrival of your trees at peak planting time. Orders are now being taken. To download an order form log on to [www.sherburneswcd.org](http://www.sherburneswcd.org), email Andie at [abumgarner@sherburneswcd.org](mailto:abumgarner@sherburneswcd.org) or call us 763.241.1170 x 4.

## SWCD Tree Sale



- 26 varieties of trees and shrubs
- Bare root seedlings
- Easy to plant, grow quickly
- Available for pick up in April
- Limited stock order today!



## Conservation Cost Share Available for Sherburne County Landowners

Sherburne SWCD would like to remind county landowners of the technical and financial assistance opportunities that are available. Since 1944, the SWCD has worked with county landowners to protect soil, prairies, forests, wetlands, streams, lakes and groundwater from a variety of environmental stressors and pollutants. Staff are available to answer your conservation questions, visit your property for a site assessment, and provide technical assistance – many times at no cost to the landowner! Financial assistance is often available for conservation practices through state or county allocations and from successful grant applications which District employees pursue. In 2018, Sherburne SWCD will have three programs offering financial assistance (cost-share) for Sherburne County property owners.



Past SWCD Technicians working with a landowner

The first is a well-sealing program, which is made possible through funds obtained from the Clean Water Land & Legacy grant program. Abandoned or otherwise unused wells pose a hazardous risk to groundwater, as they are not monitored and can potentially transmit pollutants directly into drinking water sources. Older wells may not be well documented or their locations lost over time. State of Minnesota laws require the disclosure of wells whenever property is sold or transferred, and that wells not being used be sealed properly by a licensed well contractor. If you know of, or discover, an abandoned well on your property Sherburne SWCD will pay for 50% of eligible sealing costs not to exceed \$1,000.



Present day SWCD Resource Specialist, Gina Hugo, speaking with a landowner

A second cost-share program available to county residents is through an Elk River Watershed Bacterial Reduction grant, recently awarded from the Clean Water Land & Legacy grant program. The purpose of this grant is to identify sources of *Escherichia coli* (commonly referred to as “e. coli”) that may be entering the Elk River, which is currently listed with the State of Minnesota as impaired due to excessive e. coli concentrations. E. coli is a bacteria whose presence may indicate sources of fecal material – including pet waste, livestock manure, leaky septic systems, etc. Priority parcels along the Elk River and tributaries have been identified, and if you reside in these areas you may be eligible for cost sharing opportunities for conservation practices to reduce transport of manure or waste material. The focus of the program will be pasture management, manure management, stormwater runoff, and increasing healthy vegetation on small farms and hobby farms. Upwards of 75% of the costs of a conservation practice could be cost-shared.

Finally, a third program county residents may consider is the State Cost-Share program, administered through Sherburne SWCD. Each SWCD receives funds from the state to implement conservation work. Sherburne SWCD will meet with you to discuss your property’s situation, develop a project to address identified issues, and assist in completing an application for cost-share consideration. Applications are considered on April 1st and August 1st and are ranked for priority. High-scoring applications will address the most concerning locations that are in close proximity to a waterbody or otherwise offer a great environmental benefit or pollutant reduction. Projects may consist of shoreline erosion control, native prairie establishment, shoreline or waterway buffers and filter strips, urban or rural rain gardens, and others. Anywhere from 40% to 65% of cost-sharing may be available, and there is no commitment to the landowner until a project and contract is established. Even if a project does not receive cost-share assistance, the landowner can still often receive technical advice and site designs from the SWCD free of charge.

Sherburne SWCD looks forward to working with county landowners again in 2018 to identify natural resource concerns and provide advice and assistance however possible. Please do not hesitate to contact our office at 763-241-1170 x 4 to discuss these opportunities, as well as our other services we offer.

## 3rd Annual SWCD Poster Contest

The SWCD will be holding its 3rd annual poster contest for 5th grade students of Sherburne County. The poster contest follows a theme that is selected by the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), which differs each year. The theme for 2018 will be Watersheds: Our Water, Our Home. The SWCD staff will present to participating classrooms and speak about watersheds. The students then used this information to create their posters. Monetary prizes were awarded to the 1st - 4th place winners. The 1st place winning student's teacher was also awarded with a monetary prize to be used in the classroom. Last year over 300 students participated in the contest. For more information on the poster contest, *please contact Franny at 763-567-5370.*



## Become a Minnesota Tree Care Advisor



**Minnesota Tree Care Advocate**  
People Helping Trees Help Communities

The Minnesota Tree Care Advisor Program, founded in 1992, aids in the development of environmental stewards through education and the promotion of volunteerism. Tree Care

Advisor volunteers provide communities in Minnesota with a valuable pool of "tree stewards" that support and enhance our urban and community forests.

Opportunities may include conducting educational programs for youth groups, schools, neighborhood and community groups, or other Master Gardeners. You may be called upon to assist community or neighborhood forestry planning groups by conducting workshops, helping them prepare proposals, reviewing their plans, and helping the public with their tree-related questions by providing information or directing them to resources. There are many exciting urban and community forestry initiatives and programs emerging in Minnesota and especially in the 11-county, Metro region.

*For more information on the Tree Care Advocate Program, visit [www.mntca.umn.edu](http://www.mntca.umn.edu).*

## Board of Supervisors Election

Supervisors play an important role in how our community deals with a wide variety of resource management issues, including water quality, soil erosion, stormwater management, agricultural conservation and land protection.

This year, the Sherburne SWCD has two Supervisor positions up for election. SWCD Supervisors serve four year terms. Candidates appear on the ballot for the general election which will take place Tuesday, November 6, 2018. Individuals who wish to be on the ballot must file for candidacy between May 22, and June 5, 2018.

More information can be found at [www.co.sherburne.mn.us](http://www.co.sherburne.mn.us). Candidates are elected county wide, but must reside in one of the nomination districts up for election. Nomination Districts up for election this year are District 2 and 4.

District 2 includes: Big Lake Township, Orrock Township

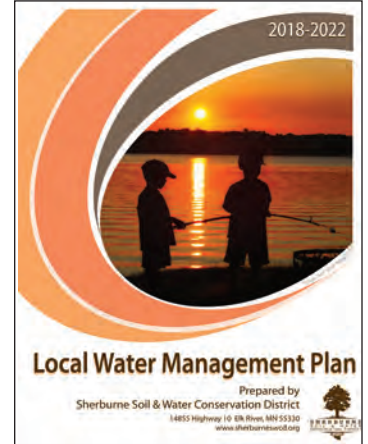
District 4 includes: Clear Lake Township, Becker Township, Palmer Township, Santiago Township



*Additional information about the SWCD can be obtained by visiting their web site at [www.sherburneswcd.org](http://www.sherburneswcd.org) or calling the office at (763) 241-1170 x 4.*

## County Water Plan Updated

In a process stretching over a year, Sherburne SWCD has been updating the County's Local Water Management Plan (LWMP). The LWMP is updated every 10 years, and documents the status of lakes, streams, wetlands and their watersheds throughout the county. Through a process which involves local stakeholders, a local advisory committee, and officials from state and local government, approaches to mitigating the county's water concerns are identified. An Implementation Schedule is then defined which specifies how the county will manage our water resources, who will be responsible, how long it will take, and how it will be funded.



A draft version of the Sherburne County LWMP is now complete and is currently being circulated to state government agencies for review. You can read the LWMP by visiting the Sherburne SWCD website at [www.sherburneswcd.org/water-management.html](http://www.sherburneswcd.org/water-management.html). Feel free to contact Dan Cibulka at 763-567-5369 with any questions or comments.

## AIS Grant Program



Sherburne SWCD is again this year offering grants and cost-sharing for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) projects. Funds are available for lake associations, lake districts, cities, townships, other applicants to address AIS issues on Sherburne County's waterbodies. Appropriate

projects would include aquatic vegetation surveys, lake or AIS management plans or AIS control. A new category this year provides incentive payments to groups completing volunteer education activities at public watercraft access points. The deadline for all AIS grant applications is February 1st. More information, including an application can be found on at [www.sherburneswcd.org/ais-grant-program.html](http://www.sherburneswcd.org/ais-grant-program.html). Dan Cibulka, SWCD Water Resource Specialist, may be contacted for more information at 763-567-5369.

## Free Nitrate Testing

Sherburne SWCD offers free well water testing at the Elk River office. Testing will be available from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday – Friday. The SWCD office is located at 14855 Highway 10 in Elk River. Nitrate is a common contaminant found in many wells throughout Minnesota. Shallow wells, dug wells, and wells with damaged or leaking casings are the most vulnerable to nitrate contamination.



To take your sample, run your cold tap for three minutes then collect about one cup of water in a plastic baggie (double bag) or clean jar. Keep the water cool until it is ready to be tested. Water can be collected anytime within one day of testing. Testing will take place on site with results typically available within 5-10 minutes. Test results may remain anonymous. The well water samples will only be tested for nitrate. For more information, contact our office at 763-241-1170 x 4.



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