

# SWCD Focus

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**Inside this issue:**

Importance of Soil Quality	2
Tree Pickup Times	2
Shoreline Buffer	3
Aquatic Invasive Species	3
Kids Corner	4

## New District Manager

In October, Mark Sommer was hired as our new District Manager.

Mark has a Masters Degree in Biology and worked for the US Forest Service.

His passion for the environment came from his years growing up on the beautiful North Center Lake in Center City, MN.

Mark likes to spend his time canoeing, hiking, and fishing. He is looking forward to the spring so he can enjoy the many lakes and trails in Hubbard County.



Mark and his wife, Kelly, along with their two children Oliver and Karis are enjoying their new home in Nevis.

Mark looks forward to meeting you and working with you on your conservation needs.

### District Supervisors

The District Board meets the 2nd Tuesday monthly at 8:30 a.m.

- Lynden Nelson, Chair
- Bill Clausen, Vice-Chair
- Don Rettinger, Secretary
- Don Sells, Treasurer
- Carol Berg, PR & Information

### District Staff

Mark Sommer, District Manager  
(mark.sommer@mn.nacdnet.net)

Melissa Koebernick, Staff Support  
(melissa.koebernick@mn.nacdnet.net)

Assisted by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Rick Berscheid, D.C  
(rick.berscheid@mn.usda.gov)

Alicia Laturmus, Technician  
(alicia.laturmus@mn.usda.gov)

On the web at:  
www.hubbardswcd.org

## Irrigation Field Moisture Monitoring

In the interest of sound irrigation management, the SWCD will offer the Irrigation Scheduler, which is a computer assisted management aid.

It is designed to give the farmer a second opinion on in-field soil moisture status that can assist the farmer on when to irrigate.

The farmer will notify the SWCD office of weekly irrigation and rainfall amounts, spraying dates (when pesticide application may restrict re-entry), and emergence dates.

In return, we will provide weekly visits to check soil moisture and furnish weekly computer soil moisture graphs.

We will also provide a year-end report showing irrigation totals, rainfall amount, and potential leaching events.

Please stop by or call Mark at 218-732-0121, for more information.



# The Importance of Soil Quality

Soil quality or soil health is the capacity of the soil to function. Healthy soil gives us clean air and water, bountiful crops and forests, productive grazing lands, diverse wildlife, and beautiful landscapes. Soil does all this by performing five essential functions: regulating water, sustaining plant and animal life, filtering potential pollutants, cycling nutrients and supporting structures.

Management practices that improve soil health increase productivity and profitability immediately and into the future. A fully functioning soil produces the maximum amount of products at the least cost. Soil will not work for you if you abuse it. Managing for soil health must begin by changing the way you think about soil.

Managing for soil health (improved soil function) is mostly a matter of maintaining suitable habitat for the myriad of creatures that compromise the soil food web. Amazingly, there are more individual organisms in a teaspoon of soil than there are people on

earth; thus the soil and its process are controlled by these organisms.

Maintaining a suitable habitat for the diverse soil organisms can be accomplished by disturbing the soil as little as possible (Mulch-till, Strip-till or No-till operations), growing as many different species of plants as practical (Conservation Crop Rotation), keeping living plants in the soil as often as possible (Cover Crops) and keeping the soil covered all the time (Residue Management).

The purpose of understanding soil quality is to protect and improve long-term agriculture activity, water quality, and habitats of all organisms, including people. We use soil characteristics as indicators of soil quality, but in the end, soil quality must be identified by how soil performs its functions.

*Combined the following articles:*

*NRCS – Soil Quality / Soil Health Concepts*

*NRCS – Farming in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: a practical approach to improve Soil Health*

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“When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.”

~ John Muir



## Tree Pickup

Your tree order will be ready for pickup May 4–6, at the Hubbard County Fairgrounds.

Because of last year's tornado, we will no longer be under the grandstand but behind the 4-H food building. If you are not sure where it is, we will have a sign showing the location.

The times for pickup are:

Friday, May 4 1:00–6:00

Saturday, May 5 9:00–3:00

Sunday, May 6 1:00–3:00.

It is not too late to order trees. We still have several species available.

If you would like to order trees, stop in, call, or visit our website to download the form.

## Shoreline Buffers

A natural shoreline protects fish, wildlife, and the entire lake. Native vegetation along the shoreline provides a buffer to reduce nutrients, runoff, erosion and pollutants from entering the water. The plants reduce the force of the waves minimizing erosion which helps maintain water quality. The nutrients in the runoff feed algae and the pollutants reduce water and habitat quality.

A buffer zone is an area of un-mowed vegetation that extends from the lakeshore 25 –50 feet landward, preferably, but even 10–15 feet provides benefits.

Having a natural shoreline does not mean it has to look unkempt. There are many native trees, shrubs, and flowers that will bring beauty to your property, increase your privacy without obstructing your view, and deter geese.

You do not have to give up access to your lake, either. You don't have to make your whole shoreline natural, you can keep a mowed path to your dock.

Shoreline buffer projects qualify for cost-share. We have cost-share dollars available to help you with your conservation project. If you would like to get started on your project, please stop in or give us a call!

“A lake is the landscape's most beautiful and expressive feature. It is earth's eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature.”

~Henry David Thoreau



*Before and after Native Shoreland Restoration. Photos courtesy of MN DNR.*

## Aquatic Invasive Species

Mark Sommer is on the newly formed Hubbard County Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Task Force. Their goal is to do everything possible to eliminate all the pathways and opportunities for AIS to spread to our county.

We are fortunate that we live in an area that has been blessed with some of the best

lakes in Minnesota. One of the projects to help control the spread of AIS to our lakes and rivers, is having boat inspectors at public accesses.

This summer, SWCD is partnering with the DNR and area lake associations to have boat inspectors at participating lake accesses. The boat inspectors, will inform lake users about

the laws relating to AIS, what to look for, and how to inspect your boat before leaving an access.

We are excited about this opportunity to help prevent AIS from entering our pristine lakes!





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*EEO-The USDA prohibits discrimination in all of its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political belief, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information should contact USDA's TARGET center at 202-720-2600.*

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**Mission Statement**

The purpose of the Hubbard County Soil and Water Conservation District is to help preserve surface and ground water quality, to encourage wise land use decisions throughout the district, and to foster a secure and prosperous community with agriculture, tourism, and industry working together in harmony for the general welfare of the people of the district.

# Kids' Corner

Lamb  
Lily  
Chicks  
Daffodil  
Tulips  
Spring  
Puddles  
April  
Sunshine  
Green

T W E N O I V C H U L P S A R P M O E W A  
L A M B G J H X I K B G E I N U T R A N G  
F O L E E V I O L A R F O E M D H C R N R  
P D Z L H Q U S M I T T A U B D E N I T E  
U D W E B X W P O E L A N V Q L F R A Z E  
N I L C E S O N I U D Y M K S E P A I F N  
A U G L I R P A T K N E D S P S X D I O E  
T U L I P S E J Y O L C D E A N R T U B D  
J H B E O V Q E I K M O A T T P O U D E Z  
L A M S U T N X W O E N F F A S T E W B O  
E I Y D W I Y A Q J V E N O I K L S E P X  
T E B D H A S S H I G U D I S C H E N U S  
L N A S T B L R M D A F F O D I L P A S E  
O F N Y L I V T E M O E D S N H P E X R T  
F U Z I J P Y C H A C S O E X C D I K V E  
S L I L O M K C E S W O D D U P T U L O Y