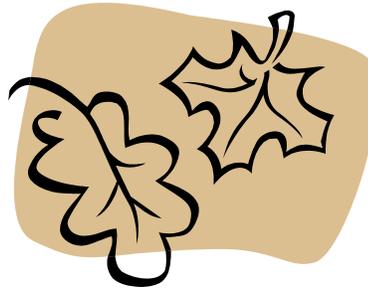


SWCD Focus



Volume 35 Issue 1

Fall 2013

Inside this issue:

Soil Health 2

AIS Watercraft Inspectors 3

2014 Tree Order Information 3

Kids Corner 4

District Supervisors

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

- Don Rettinger, Chair
- Lynn Goodrich, Vice-Chair
- Bob Iles, Secretary
- Don Sells, Treasurer
- Ruth Grandy, PR & Information

District Staff

Julie Kingsley, District Manager
(julie.kingsley@mn.nacdnet.net)

Melissa Koebernick, Admin Assistant
(melissa.koebernick@mn.nacdnet.net)

Nate Sitz, Water Quality/Resource Specialist
(nathan.sitz.swcd@gmail.com)

Assisted by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Dan Pazdernik, D.C.
(daniel.pazdernik@mn.usda.gov)

Alicia Laturnus, Soil Technician
(alicia.laturnus@mn.usda.gov)

On the web at:
www.hubbardswcd.org

Water Quality/Resource Specialist

Nathan Sitz from Park Rapids was hired in April to work with Hubbard County's water quality and resource issues. His main focus is coordinating the AIS Watercraft Inspector Program (see page 3).

Nathan has a B.S. Degree in Water Resources Management and a B.A. Degree in Biology. He has lived in Park

Rapids most of his life and enjoys fishing and hunting. He is passionate about preserving Hubbard County's pristine natural resources for future generations .

Nathan looks forward to meeting you and helping with all of your water quality needs.



Community Partners Grant

Do you belong to a lake association and want to see some changes made to the lake's eroding shoreline? Is your community or non-profit organization interested in planting a rain garden? Hubbard SWCD received \$100,000 in Legacy funding that is now available to groups like yours.

We are looking for

community partners that want to complete projects that will restore, protect or enhance water quality in lakes, rivers and streams by reducing storm water and erosion.

Eligible community partners include non-profit organizations, citizen groups, businesses, student groups, faith organizations,

and neighborhood lake, river or homeowner associations.

Projects must reduce storm water runoff and retain water on the land.

If you have a project you would like funded, please call us or go to our website to complete the application.

Soil Health

By Dan Pazdernik, District Conservationist

Soil health is the capacity of a soil to function. A healthy, fully functioning soil provides an environment that sustains and nourishes plants, soil microbes and beneficial insects. Soil is made up of air, water, decayed plant residue, organic matter from living and dead organisms, and mineral matter such as sand, silt, and clay. Increasing soil organic matter typically improves soil health since organic matter affects several critical soil functions, including nutrient cycling and water holding capacity. Healthy soils are porous and allow air and water to move freely through them.

Tillage, fertilizer, livestock, pesticides, and other management tools can be used to improve soil health, or they can significantly damage soil health if not applied correctly. Managing for soil health can be one of the easiest and most effective ways for farmers to increase crop productivity and profitability while improving the environment. Positive results are often realized immediately and last well into the future. The NRCS has identified four basic principles as the key to improving the health of your soil.

1. Keep the soil covered as much as possible.
2. Disturb the soil as little as possible.
3. Keep plants growing throughout the year to feed the soil
4. Diversify as much as possible using crop rotation and cover crops

Keeping the soil covered or “armored” has many benefits. Mulch on the surface helps reduce erosion from wind and rain, moderates soil temperature, increases soil organic matter, controls weeds, and conserves soil moisture. Accomplishing this can be done through no-till practices, mulch tillage, and the use of cover crops.

Disturbing the soil less is a significant factor in a healthy soil. Soil disturbance is destructive and disruptive to the soil organisms and damages the soil food web. Tillage also reduces the soil structure over time and can create a compaction layer (hard pan) that restricts water infiltration and root growth. Adding no-tillage or minimum tillage practices into your operation can help improve soil structure and increase soil organic matter. Some other benefits of disturbing the soil less include increased water infiltration, increased water holding capacity, reduced soil erosion, reduced energy use, and

decreased compaction.

Growing living plants as long as possible throughout the year greatly benefits soil health. There are many sources of food in the soil that feed the soil food web, but there is no better food than the sugars exuded by living roots. Soil organisms feed on sugar from living plant roots first. Next, they feed on dead plant roots, followed by above ground crop residues such as straw, chaff, husks, stalks, flowers, and leaves. Lastly, they feed on the organic matter in the soil. Healthy soil is dependent upon how well the soil food web is fed. Providing plenty of easily accessible food to soil microbes helps them cycle nutrients that plants need to grow. Utilizing cover crops throughout the year or after harvest of the cash crop can be a huge benefit to soil health.

Diversifying with different crops and cover crops (biodiversity) can increase the success of most agricultural system. Lack of biodiversity limits the potential of any cropping system and can increase disease and pest problems. A diverse and fully functioning soil food web provides for nutrient, energy, and water cycling that allows a soil to express its full potential.

It is important to note that not all practices are applicable to all crops. Some operations will benefit from just one soil health practice while others may require additional practices for maximum benefit. But these core principles form the basis of a Soil Health Management System that can help optimize inputs, protect against drought, and increase production.

The NRCS can assist farmers interested in trying these soil health principles through financial incentives for cover crop, conservation crop rotation, no-till, nutrient management, and pest management. The NRCS has a wealth of information relating to soil health. Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office to learn more about Soil Health Management Systems and the technical and financial assistance available to farmers.

Helping People Help the Land

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

AIS Watercraft Inspector Program



We are just about done with year two of our watercraft inspector program. This season we added more accesses to bring our total to 23 public accesses in Hubbard County. We also added a decontamination station that is available on an on-call basis. Our inspectors were trained by the DNR on how to conduct inspections and how to detect aquatic invasive species. We also have 3 inspectors that are level 2 trained which allows them to conduct decontaminations of watercraft.

The purpose of our watercraft inspection program is to inspect watercraft while educating the public on watercraft laws, what to look for regarding AIS, and what could happen if a lake becomes infested. As of August 16, we have conducted 8067 inspections

with over 5000 hours spent at accesses. Of those inspected 681 (8.4%) were last in infested waters and 993 (12.3%) had out of state registration. Of the 4788 watercraft inspected upon entry, 333 (7.0%) had their drain plug in, 159 (3.3%) had water in their boat, and 144 (3.0%) had vegetation on their boat or trailer.

State law requires boaters to remove aquatic vegetation, zebra mussels, or other invasive species, and prohibits launching a boat or trailer with these species attached. Boaters are also required to remove drain plugs when traveling on public roadways and drain water holding devices when leaving boat accesses. We encourage boaters to dry out any remaining water that may be in their boat. Juvenile zebra mussel veli-

gers are free floating and microscopic and can be transported in water from lake to lake.

We anticipate more participation from other Hubbard County lakes next season and want to thank the lake associations, townships, cities, and Hubbard County for taking a proactive approach to protecting our pristine lakes.

“There is something incredibly nostalgic and significant about the annual cascade of autumn leaves.”

– Joe L. Wheeler



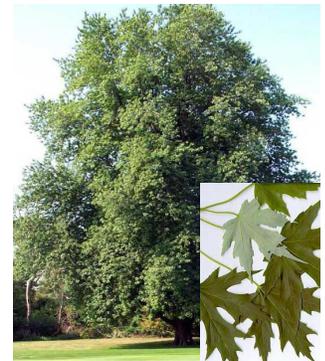
“The tints of autumn...a mighty flower garden blossoming under the spell of the enchanter, frost.”

– John Greenleaf Whittier



Please extend a warm welcome to our new District 2 Supervisor, Ruth Grandy!

Silver Maple



2014 Tree Orders

We are now taking orders for the 2014 tree planting season.

We have three new species available for order this year, Dolgo Crabapple, Silver Maple and Harbin Pear. We are also offering a Wild Berry Packet that includes Elderberry, Red Current, Flowering Raspberry and Red Mulberry.

All prices on the tree form include tax and you can order tree supplies along with your tree order.

If you are interested in ordering any of the new species or other trees and products we offer, please fill out the enclosed order form.

Please call our office with any

questions and visit our website to view the tree guide for descriptions of the trees.

Order early to ensure you get the species you want!



Harbin Pear





Forwarding Service Requested

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Park Rapids, MN
Permit #21

212 1/2 2nd St W
Park Rapids, MN 56470

Phone: 218-732-0121
Fax: 218-732-3994
NRCS Phone: 218-732-9723

2014 Tree Form Enclosed

EEO- All programs of the Hubbard County Soil & Water Conservation District are offered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or handicap.

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.

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



- Fall
- Rake
- Acorn
- Orange
- Yellow
- Leaves
- Harvest
- Foliage
- Squirrel
- Scarecrow

A crossword puzzle grid with 10 words listed on the left. The grid consists of empty squares for letters. The words are: Fall, Rake, Acorn, Orange, Yellow, Leaves, Harvest, Foliage, Squirrel, and Scarecrow.

