

SWCD Focus

Welcome Our New Technicians: Brandon Spain-Brist and Jake Shaughnessy



Please welcome Brandon Spain-Brist, to the Hubbard County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) team. Last summer Brandon worked as our intern and we are happy that he now joins us as the new Forest Resource Technician. He grew up on a small farm in Akeley, MN and graduated from Nevis High School in 2014. After high school, Brandon attended Itasca Community College in Grand Rapids, enrolling in the Forestry program. After acquiring an Associate degree of Applied Sciences in Forestry, he transferred to the University of Minnesota – Crookston in Crookston, MN. There he received his Bachelor’s degree of Applied Sciences in Natural Resources Management. After a string of jobs in customer service, he made his way home and settled in Nevis, MN before applying for the Forest Resource Technician position.

Brandon brings his knowledge of forestry and natural resources management, as well as approximately five years of customer service experience to the table. His ‘go-getter’ attitude and calm demeanor is welcoming in the office. He is a fast learner who has acclimated to the in-office operations quickly.

Brandon has been involved in many different projects since starting in mid-February. Some of these projects include the State Cost Share program, Wetland Conservation Act program, SWCD Tree Sale, SWCD Nitrate Clinic, Buffer Law, and more. The most exciting project Brandon has started working on is the Forest Stewardship Plans and Private Forest Management (PFM) programs. Brandon has attended many meetings with other SWCD district staff and different organizations going over the need for PFM, how to outreach to landowners, and possible partnership/funding opportunities available. The main goal will be to help landowners achieve their land goals while applying correct conservation practices, in hopes of preserving the land and watersheds of Minnesota for future generations.



Jake Shaughnessy joined the Hubbard SWCD team last summer as a part-time conservation & outreach technician. This February he was hired as our fulltime Water Quality Resource Technician. Jake’s duties include lake monitoring, checking buffers for the 2015 Buffer Law, Minnesota’s Watersheds Virtual Lab along with many other tasks he will learn throughout his time with the team.

Jake grew up in the small town of Northome, Minnesota. He graduated from Bemidji State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Aquatic Biology with an Aquatic Systems Emphasis and a minor in Geographic Information’s Systems (GIS). He is currently working on a Master of Science in Geography with a focus on hydrology.

Jake commented, “Even though I grew up in Northome, I spent most of my summers camping in the Park Rapid’s area. Camping in this area is where I grew to enjoy fishing and swimming. I remember endless hours of swimming and fishing on the lakes where we happened to be camping. I was lucky enough to be able to enjoy time on many of Hubbard County’s lakes. Ever since then, fishing is one of my favorite hobbies and I can’t wait to spend time on the local lakes for work or play.” He is very excited to become a part of the community in Hubbard County and work to help protect Hubbard County’s lakes and rivers.

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Hubbard County SWCD Board
meets the 2nd Wednesday,
monthly, at 8:30 a.m. at
603 Central Avenue North
Park Rapids, MN 56470

District Supervisors

- Marcel Noyes, Chair
- Don Rettinger, Vice-Chair
- Lynn Goodrich, Secretary
- Don Sells, Treasurer
- **District 3 - Position Open**

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Assisted by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

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Benefits of Planting a Cover Crop

By: Dan Pazdernik

Cover crops are crops that are planted to temporarily protect the ground from wind and water erosion and supply living roots to the soil during times when cropland is often not adequately protected. A common example in this area would be cereal rye planted after wheat harvest. It can help by keeping the ground covered to protect it from soil erosion, improve soil health by adding organic matter and biological activity, improve water infiltration, trap or capture nutrients, reduce weed competition, and provide livestock grazing opportunities.

It's important to plan ahead when thinking about planting a cover crop. Here are three main questions you should ask yourself: What benefit would I like to get out of it? What seeding method do I plan to use? And how will I terminate the cover crop if it over winters? Other things to consider can be previous herbicide residual that could restrict the growth of the cover crop, how to manage biomass once the cover crop is terminated, species selection, seed cost, and available

growing window after the main crop harvest.

Maintenance of the cover crop is also important to consider. It should be terminated as late as possible to maximize plant growth and residual nutrient accumulation, while allowing sufficient time for the biomass to decompose, release nutrients, and recharge soil moisture. When grazed by livestock, at least two inches of stubble should be maintained.

To help determine if cover crops are right for your operation, the following web link will provide easy to use resources such as cover crop species characteristics, design tool, fact sheets, and other helpful publications. https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/mn/technical/ecoscience/agronomy/nrcs142p2_023671/

You may also contact your local NRCS office to help answer questions on cover crops and potential funding opportunities at (218) 732-9723 ext. 3.

The Relationship Between Leaves and Roots in a Grazing System

Information collected by: Alicia Laturnus

“Take half, leave half” is a valuable and proven metric; however, in truth, utilization rates should vary based upon time of year, type of pasture, forage available and overall management goals and expertise. See the following website for more information: https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcseprd621806.pdf

There are four basic keys to grazing management: stocking rate, livestock rotation, utilization rate and plant rest & recovery. Stocking rate – don't have too many animals that deplete your pasture. Livestock rotation – move the animals on a regular basis to provide fresh forage. Utilization rate – how heavily an area is grazed. Plant rest & recovery – the length of rest depends on many factors: season, weather, plant species, utilization rate, stocking rate, livestock class, etc.

“We have to leave leaves to give the plant the ability to create energy to regrow. If you take the forage right down to the ground at the first graze of the spring, it is very difficult for it to recover,” said Kent Solberg, Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota livestock and grazing specialist. Go to the following link for the complete article: <https://www.agrinenews-pubs.com/livestock/2021/03/10/developing-grazing-plan-to-simulate-nature/>

Leaving at least half the plant will help protect the soil from erosion (wind & water) and sun exposure. The sun will heat up the ground which can deplete moisture in the soil, kill



plant roots and possibly impact soil micro-organisms. Consuming 80% of the plant can stop the root growth and eventually kill the plant.

This photo shows the relationship between grass leaves and roots. See the following website for more information: <https://managingwholes.com/new-topsoil.htm>

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Hubbard SWCD District 3

Supervisor Position Open

We are looking to fill this position with someone interested in preserving our water and soil resources while working with our team to help implement conservation practices to help keep our water in its pristine state for consumption and recreational purposes. District 3 covers the Clover, Clay, Thorpe, Arago, Lake Emma, Mantrap and Akeley Townships. If you are interested in serving as our District 3 Supervisor, please call our office and we will be happy to answer any questions you may have about this position. (218) 732-0121 ext. 4

Hubbard SWCD Awarded Urban Agricultural Grant

By: Annette Olson & Jake Shaughnessy

Hubbard SWCD is one of 3 districts in Minnesota that has been notified recently about receiving a NACD Urban Agriculture Conservation (UAC) Grant. The NACD UAC Grant Initiative is designed to enhance districts' urban agriculture conservation technical assistance activities in developed and developing areas of both urban and rural communities. To date, NACD and NRCS have awarded \$5 million to 102 conservation districts. Through these grants, conservation districts increased their capacity related to urban technical assistance and small-scale conservation, while addressing community needs in both rural and urban contexts.

After Hubbard SWCD became aware that there was more interest in the 2019 Lawns to Legumes program than their funds could cover, we decided to write a grant proposal in mid-February requesting funds to help cover cost to create educational materials, cover technical assistance hours, and costs for construction of five community gardens in Hubbard County. These gardens are planned to be flat or raised pollinator/vegetable, or pollinator/rain gardens that will help control stormwater runoff into our lakes and streams. The goal of the community gardens is to create food, habitat, and improve water quality by effectively using underutilized urban greenspaces. We hope to educate and inspire community members to take these ideas to their own property. Check back soon on our website for more information to come on this project and how to get involved.

Our staff will be busy this summer planning and working on these garden projects. We have been presented with several proposed spots for these gardens when we were looking for local interest/support to back our application but are open to other suggestions for garden spots that could hold approximately 100 square foot flat or raised gardens. The grant is geared to help cover informational kiosks at each site for interested parties to attain information about the displayed garden and ideas for planning a garden on their own property as well as contact information for residents wanting technical assistance. It is our hope that the surrounding communities will be able to help keep these gardens in good health and be able to make use of the produce as it matures.

Please go online to download our Request of Technical Assistance form, complete it and return it to our office along with a non-refundable fee or call our office if you have questions about our urban gardens. We hope to see



(218) 732-0121 ext. 4

Reflections

By: Crystal Mathisrud



What a year. Right? I think we have all struggled with overwhelm, confusion, frustration and fear over this past year. I know I have, and, as a result I have spent a lot of time asking myself, "what am I doing that really matters?" I imagine we have all been asking ourselves that question in an effort to make decisions and define how to proceed with our work, relationships and lives while the world seems to both change and stay the same before our eyes. We have simultaneously experienced personal isolation and overstimulation from virtual events with layers upon layers of retraction and extraordinary growth.

I am thankful that we are here together, that you are reading this right now and that you are patient and open for this conversation and I am increasingly aware of the diversity of voices, vision and needs in our community. Those of you who have met me know that I believe in the combined wisdom of a place and that I always aim to ask the right questions, identify the potential projects that have meaning and then find the resources needed to take action. You probably also know that I am learning from you as much as you are from me when we talk about a shoreland project or a wetlands question.

Lately, because of the One Watershed One Plan planning process, I find myself thinking about how lucky we are to live in a county with some of the best water in our state and nation, that the residents of this county whether they are farmers, loggers, resort owners or average workers have cared about the landscape in such a way to keep the water clean and the soil in place. I have been thinking about how every person and every action matters whether we are talking about the millions of steps that have added up to bring us to where we stand today or the hundreds of steps we will take this year toward creating the world we want to see our children and grandchildren inherit tomorrow.

We have a lot in common and yet a lot to learn from each other. So, in this year of rebuilding and recentering ahead of us, let's remember to pause often enough to hear and see each other, to identify common goals and how to reach them in ways that will make our grandchildren proud.

2021 Tree Sale Distribution will be:

April 30th 1-6pm; May 1st 8am-6pm; May 2nd-only if needed

Pickup will be at the Hubbard County Fair Grounds. Please watch our website, Facebook and Instagram pages for posted updates.

Land of Three Watersheds

By: Crystal Mathistrud

When people think of Hubbard County, they think of lake resorts and Itasca State Park and the origin of the Mississippi River. Some people think of giant bass, the muskellunge or trophy upland or swamp bucks. What they don't often think about is waterflow within our sub and major watersheds or how the surface water and groundwater are inextricably connected. What we do at the surface matters and significantly impacts the quality of our drinking water here as well as downstream and out state.

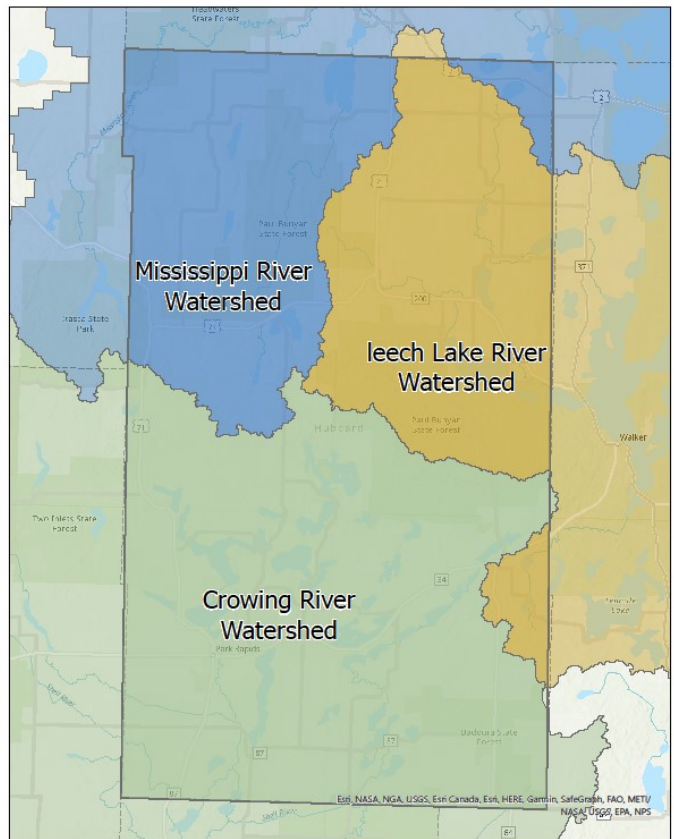
Clean water is the impetus behind the One Watershed One Plan movement in the state and the One Watershed One Plans are important locally because they provide funding and a framework for developing and implementing projects and activities that reduce erosion and pollution to our waterways and secure a clean water future for our communities. Some of the activities that protect clean water are activities that we already do well in Hubbard County like managing our forests, caring for our shoreland and watching over our farmland to keep it safe, healthy and productive.

Even though we are already doing a good job, we know there is more we can do and the One Watershed One Plans are providing us a stable source of funds to identify areas where we can improve and to take action to make those improvements. The three major watersheds in Hubbard County are the Leech Lake River to the east, Mississippi River Headwaters to the north, and Crow Wing River in the central to southeast. Each of these watersheds is at a different stage in the planning and implementation process which means that while SWCD and our county partners are working to implement the approved plan in the Leech by developing shoreland projects, reducing salt on the roads and enrolling land owners in forest stewardship, we are still working to get the Mississippi plan approved and to begin the planning process in the Crow Wing.

When looking at your place on the landscape, notice which major watershed your land is in and realize that as we are planning the watershed and water quality work,

We are looking for surface water to ground water connectivity so we can target our projects and actions to have the most impact on our collective water resources. When someone from the SWCD, County or other local organization asks you if you'd like to participate in a project with the One Watershed One Plan funds or to join a committee to work on planning projects, what we are really doing is working together to target, plan and implement a clean water future.

To meet watershed goals for clean water, we are currently seeking landowners who wish to participate in forest stewardship programs and we are collecting a list of potential projects for upcoming workplans. Please get in touch with us by email or phone if you want to sign up for a forest stewardship plan, apply for a cost-share project on private lands or bring a bigger potential project to our attention.



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2021 Tree Sale Distribution

Most of our tree stock has been sold! What a good feeling to have over 16,000 new tree seedlings or transplants on their way to be planted soon around Hubbard County. Last year our staff and supervisors decided to deliver about half of our tree orders directly to our customers, to help keep everyone as safe as possible from COVID by limiting the number of clients at the pick-up site, to get their orders. It seemed like a heavy task at first, but it all turned out fine. We will again send out our mid-April "reminder post cards", and we plan to send an email invitation to allow customers a chance to sign up for a time slot that works for them, through "[picktime.com](https://www.picktime.com)". Orders can be delivered upon request in Hubbard County, for a minimal fee, payable before delivery. We plan to hand out the majority of the orders at the fair grounds on Friday, April 30th, Saturday, May 1st and Sunday, May 2nd if needed. More information will be available on our website www.hubbardswcd.org, and through our Facebook and Instagram pages as we get closer to the pick-up dates.

Hubbard County Conservation Easement Programs

By: Pete Jacobson

This is a busy time for conservation in Hubbard County! There are five conservation easement programs currently active within the county. All of them will benefit the lakes and streams by preserving land in its natural state. Landowners are paid to not develop or farm the land but retain ownership. The conservation easements are permanently recorded on the deed and remain in effect even after land is sold. The land also stays on the property tax rolls.

We know that a lake's water quality will remain good if 75% of its watershed can remain forested. These conservation easements will go a long way towards achieving that goal.

Specific details for each of the ongoing conservation easement programs:

The Northern Waters Land Trust is using a Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Grant to protect the watersheds of deep, clear cisco lakes in north-central Minnesota. Two of their targeted lakes are in Hubbard County – Kabekona and Big Sand. Lakes that are upstream of those two lakes are also eligible because they are part of the watershed.

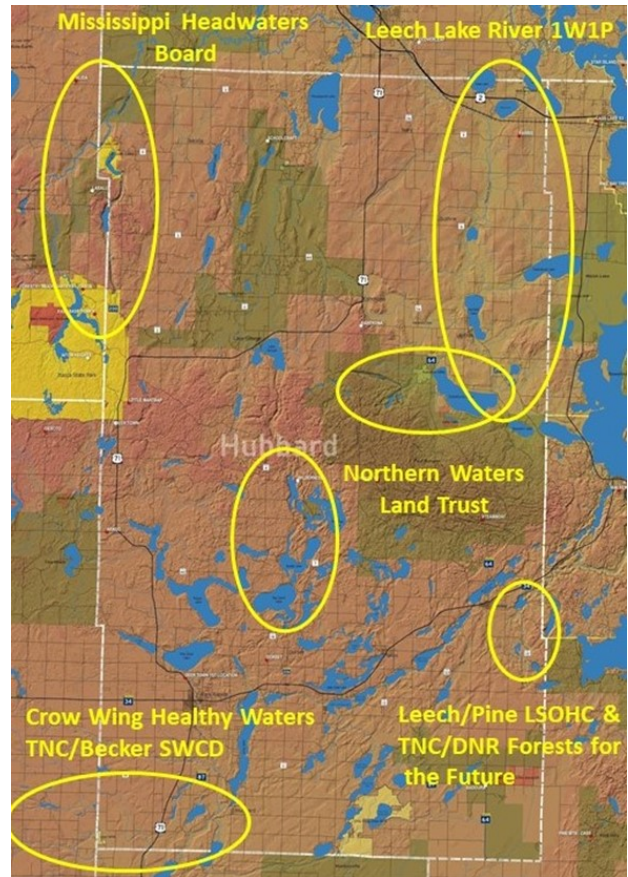
Mississippi Headwaters Board is using a Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Grant to protect Critical Habitats along the Mississippi River and immediate tributaries. One area of focus within Hubbard County is the LaSalle Creek valley where there are a number of high-quality lands suitable for conservation.

The Nature Conservancy and Becker/Hubbard SWCDs are pursuing RIM easements along the Shell River in southwestern Hubbard County. While these easements protect lands along streams, downstream lakes such as Upper Twin Lake will benefit as well.

DNR Forests for the Future, with assistance from The Nature Conservancy, is pursuing easements in the Shingobee Headwaters area, including Shingobee Lake.

Hubbard SWCD is using a Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Grant to protect priority watersheds within Leech Lake River Watershed (eastern portion of Hubbard County). We are coordinating this RIM conservation easement program with the DNR Forests for the Future effort for other lakes in the Shingobee Headwaters area.

Contact Crystal Mathisrud or Pete Jacobson at Hubbard SWCD (218) 732-0121 ext. 4 if you have any questions on any of these programs. Note that we are especially interested in large tracts of undeveloped shoreline.



Rain Monitors Needed in Several Hubbard County Townships!

We are looking for rain monitors in each of the following townships: Badoura, Clover, Helga, Lake Alice and Thorpe. If you like keeping track of the moisture you get each year, this is the perfect job for you! Several of our other townships have someone monitoring the rain and snow fall but we could use a second monitor on the other end of their township. It only takes a few minutes each day to check your rain gauge and record your findings on the monthly sheet. We request that the beginning of each month the recordings be turned in or mailed in to our office. We provide rain gauges and all supplies needed for submissions.

If you think you might be interested in helping us collect this data, please call our office at (218) 732-0121 ext. 105 and ask for Annette Olson.

Free "Drop Off" Nitrate Clinic held the first Friday of every month at the SWCD office located at 603 Central Ave N Park Rapids, MN. Please call 218-732-0121 if you have any questions.



**HUBBARD COUNTY
Soil & Water
Conservation District**

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Park Rapids, MN 56470

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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.

The tree order pickup is still scheduled to be held on April 30 & May 1st at the Hubbard County fair grounds in Park Rapids!

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Hubbard County Soil and Water Conservation District is to provide leadership, education, technical advice, financial assistance to landowners, cooperating agencies for various programs and projects with the goal being the whole community working together in harmony to pursue the sustainable management, wise-use, and protection of the District's soil, water, forests, wildlife, and recreational resources.

Kids' Corner By: CRAYONSANDCRAWINGS.COM



**Earth Day
Word Search**



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

- | | | | |
|---------|--------------|-----------|-----------|
| AIR | CONSERVATION | OXYGEN | RECYCLE |
| APRIL | EARTH | OZONE | REDUCE |
| BOTTLES | ENERGY | PLANET | REUSE |
| CANS | ENVIRONMENT | PLANTS | TREE |
| CLEAN | LAND | PLASTIC | VOLUNTEER |
| CLIMATE | NATURE | POLLUTION | WATER |
| COMPOST | OCEAN | PROTECT | |

2021 Annual Freshwater Festival

Our 2020 annual Freshwater Festival was cancelled last year due to COVID and in it's place our staff was able to work on our **Minnesota Watersheds Virtual Lab** found at: <https://hubbard-county-swcd-watershed-education-hub-hcswcd.hub.arcgis.com/> Please feel free to check out all the neat things we have so far and be sure to check back occasionally for new items to be added!

Our Board of Supervisors and staff all agreed that we want to help keep everyone as safe as possible this spring. So our 2021 Annual Freshwater Festival is being held by a live video webinar event, through Zoom webinar, and we have approximately 250 surrounding sixth graders signed up to take part in this event. We have booked most of our past presenters to do a presentation, including the favorites, Sam Ting and the Science Center, and have several activities planned throughout the event for all the students as well.

We are excited to do our virtual webinar event this year but are anxious to go back to our outdoor event next spring at the Camp Wilderness Boy Scout Camp when we will be looking for our usual volunteers to help with our event. Until then, stay safe and hope to see everyone soon!

Like us on Facebook!

