



SWCD District 3 & 5 Supervisor Positions Open

Hubbard Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) will have two supervisor positions open for election this November. If you are interested in running, please contact the office or go to our website to access "An SWCD's Guide to the 2026 SWCD Election Process." You must be a Hubbard County resident to run for these positions. An SWCD candidate must file an affidavit of candidacy. The filing period opens May 19, 2026, and closes at 5 pm on June 2, 2026.

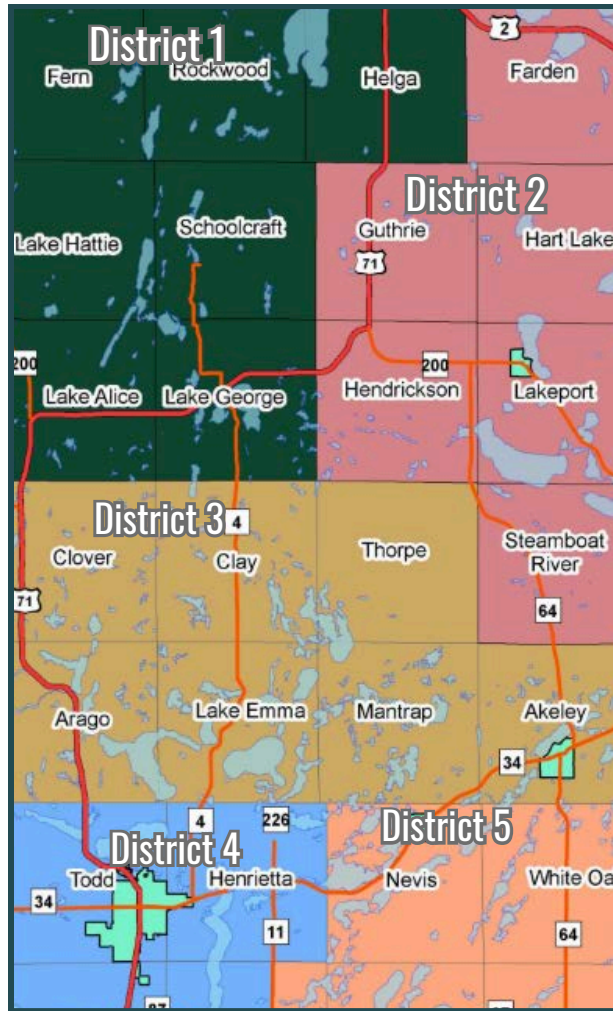
DISTRICT 1 - DON RETTINGER 

DISTRICT 2 - MARCEL NOYES 

DISTRICT 3 - OPEN POSITION 

DISTRICT 4 - DON SELLS 

DISTRICT 5 - OPEN POSITION 



New Co-Administrators



With Hubbard SWCD's previous District Manager Crystal Mathisrud's departure, the SWCD has restructured to a Co-Administration system. This allows for more specialized and prompt oversight of our core missions. Please join us in welcoming Jake Shaughnessy into his role as Co-Administrator: Programs & Partnerships and Megan FitzGerald into her role as Co-Administrator: Administration & Grants. This shift will ensure that our technical programs and financial health are able to remain responsive to our District's needs.

In This Issue:

District 3 & 5 Board Supervisors/New Co-Administrators
Page 1

Spring Tree Sale Update/
New Tree Packs
Page 2

Shoreline Protection
Program/1W1P Update
Page 3

Small Acre Stewardship/Tree
Planting Cost Share
Page 4

Environmental Education/
New District Technician
Page 5

Agriculture Program/
2025 Plat Book
Page 6

Wetland Conservation Act/
Nitrate Testing & Well
Sealing
Page 7

Additional Information
& Contacts
Page 8



Spring Tree Sale Update & Tree Packs

BY: RACHEL RUDQUIST

**Pick up your trees at a new location - The Hubbard SWCD Office:
603 Central Ave N, Park Rapids, MN 56470**

New to this year's tree sale, we are providing curated mixed packs of 10 trees/shrubs. These packs are intended for landowners who don't want 25 of a single species and are looking to do smaller plantings with more variety. Whether you have a lakeshore lot or are trying to encourage more songbirds to visit your property, we have packs for you! Technical assistance from SWCD staff is available for planting these kits. To find out more, visit [page 4](#) of this newsletter.

This year, the distribution days are Friday, May 1st, from 10 am-6:00 pm, and Saturday, May 2nd, from 10 am-2 pm. Trees will be picked up from the Hubbard SWCD Office. We do not have the capacity to store trees past the tree sale dates. If trees are left over, they will be added to the leftover tree stock to be sold. Signage will be posted to direct you when you arrive at our office.

The **pick-up location** this year is at the Hubbard SWCD Office.
Address: 603 North Central Ave. Suite 100, Park Rapids, MN 56470

We look forward to seeing you soon!



★ = HUBBARD SWCD OFFICE



BROWSE BLOCKERS

Tired of deer eating your newly purchased trees? We are offering Browse Blockers at this year's tree sale. They help protect your young trees from deer browse. You can purchase a pack of 25 for \$25 plus tax.

Hubbard SWCD Online Tree Sale Shop





Shoreline Protection Program

BY: JAKE SHAUGHNESSY

Hubbard County is lucky to have many amazing lakes with great water quality and fisheries. However, many of these lakes are susceptible to increased runoff and erosion caused by shoreline mismanagement. Hubbard SWCD is starting a new Shoreline Protection Program focused on bridging the gap between lake life and water quality. This program is a resident-led, SWCD-supported program focused on building water quality-focused communities on our area lakes. There is not one landowner who can protect their lake; it takes a community. Each shoreline has a small impact on water quality, but when combined, they can have a massive impact.

The Lake Protection Program is aimed at lakes both with associations and without. Over the spring and summer, we would like to identify lake associations or lake ambassadors interested in promoting the Lake Protection Program along their lake. We want this program to be one that the lake associations and lake residents can call their own.

What does a lake get out of the Lake Protection Program? Hubbard SWCD will assist the lake ambassadors/associations with outreach and education for shoreline residents. Shoreland owners who are identified as going above and beyond to protect their lake will be awarded a lake steward dock sign. Those who wish to become lake stewards can work with Hubbard SWCD or lake ambassadors to develop a plan to become a lake steward. This commonly includes installing shoreline buffers or reducing erosion along the shore. Hubbard SWCD has a variety of programs and staff that can help landowners become lake stewards. If your project has a large enough water quality benefit, Hubbard SWCD may have cost-share funding to help install various water quality practices along your shoreline.

If you or your association is interested in learning more about this program, please reach out to the Hubbard SWCD. District staff may be available to speak at association meetings or with your association board. Reaching out early is recommended as our calendars can fill up quickly.



Example Dock Sign



Scan to Fill Out the Shoreline Protection Program Interest Form



Hubbard County One Watershed, One Plan Program Update

Hubbard County has now completed the planning process for the One Watershed, One Plan Program. This means that every watershed across the County is now in the implementation phase.

What does this mean for you? Having active watershed plans can increase the availability of funding for a variety of conservation programs for agricultural, forest, shoreline, and urban landscapes. If you are interested in learning what programs we have and which may overlap with your goals, please reach out to our office for more information.



Small-Acre Stewardship: Streamlined Forestry

BY: GRANT HELGESTAD

We often think big when it comes to conservation, but the choices we make at a small scale can have a large impact.

That's why we are offering a new small-acre forestry program called Streamlined Forestry. While funds last, we are providing a site visit and accompanying streamlined plan to interested landowners, both free of charge. During the site visit, an SWCD staff member meets you at your property. This is a time for us to get to know you and your property better, and to discuss any questions, comments, or concerns you have about the natural state of your property.

After the site visit, you will receive your streamlined plan, which is a short document that includes a summary of the current conditions on your property, your goals, and our recommendations for how you can best manage your property to increase its environmental quality and achieve your objectives.

Examples of topics that are often addressed in streamlined plans:

- Forest health
- Tree planting
- Wildlife habitat
- Erosion
- Pollinators

The real key to Streamlined Forestry is that when more small-acre landowners are proactive in managing their land, real benefits are achieved. All of the small pieces add up, especially in highly developed areas such as lakeshores and country subdivisions. For instance, one cabin owner may not think that their two-acre property makes much of a difference, but if several neighbors steward their small properties, the footprint becomes much more profound. Every bit counts, and we hope to equip as many landowners as possible with the resources to take conservation into their own hands.

If you have any natural areas on your property, you can likely benefit from a streamlined plan. Most plans occur on properties between one and 20 acres. If your property is outside of that range but you are still interested, please reach out as we assess viability on a case-by-case basis.

If you are interested in learning more and/or scheduling a site visit, please contact Grant at (218) 252-6987 or grant@hubbardswcd.org.

Tree Planting Cost Share

By Grant Helgestad

Are you interested in planting trees? Hubbard SWCD can help plan and implement tree planting projects for landowners. While funds last, we are offering site visits and accompanying planting plans free of charge. We can also offer reimbursements for landowners who do a project with us. Reimbursement rates vary from project to project, but can be as high as 75%.

Examples of practices that can be reimbursed are:

- Site preparation/equipment rental
- Tree and shrub seedlings
- Deer protection (e.g., bud caps, tree tubes, etc.)

This is an excellent opportunity to invest in the future of your property. Trees provide numerous conservation and human benefits. As the old saying goes, "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago; the second best time is now." This is especially true given the fact that we currently have funding to reimburse you for a portion of your expenses.

We are currently offering site visits to landowners interested in planting in the fall of 2026 or the spring of 2027. For more information, please contact Grant at (218) 252-6987 or grant@hubbardswcd.org.





To access our Virtual Lab and learn more, scan the code below!



THANK YOU SO MUCH

A sincere thank you to all who have contributed to helping Hubbard SWCD put on educational events for the community and students free of charge. We appreciate your time and giving! We would like to recognize the following individuals and organizations.

2026 Envirothon Don Sells

- 2026 Grazing Workshop
- Citizens National Bank
- TruStar Credit Union
- Bagley Livestock Exchange
- Rhode's Feed & Garden
- MN Grazing Lands Conservation Association
- Ace Hardware
- NEI Bottling Co.
- Minnesota Office for Soil Health

- 2026 Freshwater Festival
- Citizens National Bank
- Spider Lake Association
- Hubbard COLA
- Eagle Lake Association
- Walmart
- Don Sells
- Lamb-Weston/RDO Frozen
- Northwoods Bank Charitable Fund

If you are interested in supporting future events, please send your contributions with a note in the memo to Hubbard SWCD, 603 Central Ave. N, Suite 100, Park Rapids, MN 56470

Environmental Education

BY: RAY ANDERSON

Hubbard SWCD has been awarded a grant from the Bernick Family Foundation. This grant aims to help youth connect to the outdoors and provide hands-on learning experiences.

The SWCD will be using these funds to assist our local youth in getting outdoors and developing practical skills involving the natural resources found throughout Hubbard County. Students will learn to identify native tree species, study pollinators and food forests, and gain hands-on experience collecting seeds and cones for the Minnesota State Nursery. Through these activities, participants will develop valuable environmental and career skills while highlighting a unique income opportunity available to all community members. To support our local schools, we are developing flexible online modules and lesson plans that provide high-quality science resources for the classroom. Furthermore, the program empowers student leaders to engage their families and peers in meaningful environmental action, fostering a deeper connection to our local landscape for years to come.

New District Technician - Ray Anderson

Hubbard SWCD has a new staff member. Ray Anderson was recently hired as the District Technician.

Originally from Princeton, MN, Anderson says, "I recently completed my undergraduate degree in Aquatic Biology at Bemidji State University with an emphasis in fisheries."



He previously worked as the District Water Quality Intern for Hubbard SWCD in the summer of 2025. Working alongside current staff members gave him insight into how an SWCD operates and what its mission is within the community. He will be coordinating shoreline projects and the Bernick Family Foundation Grant.

"I am excited to join the Hubbard SWCD team as the new District Technician. As an avid outdoorsman with a passion for fishing, I have always felt a connection to our natural landscapes. There is a unique joy in being a steward of the resources that bring joy to myself and others in the community. I look forward to applying that same dedication to our local conservation efforts and working with the community to protect Hubbard County's soil and water resources."



Hubbard County SWCD Agriculture Program

BY: JACK SLIPY

Hubbard County Soil and Water Conservation District has funding available and is working to expand our agriculture program to offer more options to producers. This program aims to create good relationships with the valued producers within the County. Our program provides the producers of Hubbard County with an opportunity to be compensated for incorporating conservation-minded agricultural practices into their operations. Some of the practices that are eligible for compensation or cost share are listed below.

Practice	Payment
No Till	\$40/acre
Tree Planting (Field Corners, Windrows)	50% - 75% Cost Share
Cover Crops	\$40/acre
Soil Sampling	\$25/Sample

Eligibility

1. Acres must have not been previously compensated for the same practice.
2. Planting site must be partially or fully within the boundaries of Hubbard County.
3. No-till planting sites must have existing cover.

Contact us:

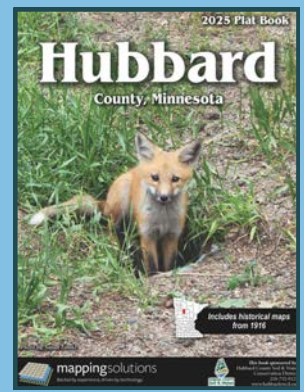
Please call, text, or email with any questions

Jack Slipy

Program Development, Innovation, & Agriculture Coordinator

Phone: (218)-252-6981

Email: jack@hubbardswcd.org



2025 Plat Book

The new Hubbard County plat books are here! A new plat book is released every three years, and this latest version includes updated plat and aerial imagery as well as archival maps of the townships from 1916. These older maps provide an interesting and sometimes surprising look at land use and ownership over 100 years ago.

The new plat books are available for \$35.00 plus tax at the Hubbard SWCD Office, Citizens National Bank of Park Rapids, Laporte Grocery, Northern Bait Co., Smokey Hills Outdoor Store, and Rock Creek General Store. Stop in and pick up yours today.

Want to Get Monthly Updates?

We have started to send out a monthly e-newsletter. If you are interested in receiving one, please send an email to newsletter@hubbardswcd.org.



WETLAND CONSERVATION ACT

By: Brandon Spain-Brist

The Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) rules became effective January 1, 1992 statewide. These rules are administered by each county local government unit (LGU). In Hubbard County, it was delegated to the Soil & Water Conservation District to administer the WCA rules and act as the WCA LGU.

If you are a Hubbard County resident who wants to:

- Build near/in a possible wetland area,
- Cut near/in a possible wetland area,
- Excavate near/in a possible wetland area, or
- Fill near/in a possible wetland area;

Please give us a call at 218-252-6963 or email Brandon at brandon@hubbardswcd.org.

Wetlands can sometimes be very hard to determine. It is not always standing water that determines a wetland; it depends on the vegetation as well. The most important key to determining a wetland area is the soil. We can do site visits to help landowners identify wetlands. Contact us today if you would like to discuss your options.

SUMMER NITRATE TESTING EVENTS & INFO

By: Rachel Rudquist

We offer free nitrate testing at the following events:

- Akeley Paul Bunyan Days -- Friday, June 26, from 5-6 pm
- Laporte Independence Days -- Saturday, July 11, from 9 am-12 pm
- Hubbard Co. Fair -- Friday, July 17, 10 am-4 pm & Saturday, July 18, 10am-2pm

Hubbard SWCD also offers free monthly nitrate testing on the first Friday of every month from 9-2 at our office, located at 603 Central Ave. N, Suite 100, Park Rapids, MN 56470. Take your sample the morning of the test. Bring water in a clean container or a Ziploc-type bag. Keep samples cold. If you have a reverse osmosis or different nitrate removal system, you should take two samples: one before and one after the treatment process. Homeowners with water softeners only need to take one sample, either before or after the water passes through the softener.

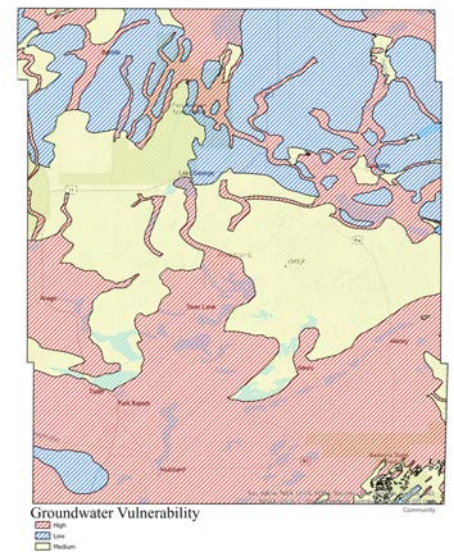
We also have testing kits at our office for bacteria, arsenic, iron, lead, fluoride, copper, magnesium, calcium, hardness, and manganese. The kit is free, but there is a cost for getting your samples tested. Testing drop off is only available Monday - Thursday (no holidays), and you must use bottles from RMB Environmental Laboratories, Inc. We have those kits available in our office. Stop by and get your kit today.

Well Sealing to Protect Drinking Water

The sandy, porous soils in Hubbard County are highly vulnerable to contamination. This makes taking steps to protect groundwater important. Unused and abandoned wells can be a direct route for contamination to enter the water table. Sealing these wells is vital for protecting drinking water quality.

The Hubbard SWCD has funds to assist landowners in sealing these unused wells. If you know of an unsealed or abandoned well on your property, please reach out to the Hubbard SWCD.

Groundwater Vulnerability Map



SWCD FOCUS



HUBBARD COUNTY
Soil & Water
Conservation District

603 North Central Ave.
Park Rapids, MN 56470

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

Future Events and Outreach:

Are you in a group that is interested in conservation and forest management practices? If so, we may have funds available to present and provide information relative to your forests, wetlands, and more.

Please contact us if you would like us to come speak at a community group, church, restaurant, or meeting near you!

Hubbard SWCD Team



Back left: Grant Helgestad, Forestry Technician; Jake Shaughnessy, Co-Administrator; Jack Slipy, Development Coordinator; front left: Ray Anderson, District Technician; Rachel Rudquist, Office & Finance Manager; Megan FitzGerald, Co-Administrator; Brandon Spain-Brist, District Forester

Our Supervisors:

Marcel Noyes, Board Chair Don Sells, Treasurer

Don Rettinger, Vice Chair District 3 - up for election

Lynn Goodrich, Secretary

Virtual Lab:

Our online Virtual Lab has a wide variety of environmental educational topics. Check how you can be involved through our Citizen Science page!



Our Office:

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Park Rapids, MN 56470
www.hubbardswcd.org
(218) 732-0121 ext. 4

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