



Quarterly News & Updates

September 2021 | Issue 5

Greetings Friends and Neighbors!

The Isanti SWCD is publishing this Quarterly e-Newsletter to:

- Help keep you informed of what is happening locally that affects the health of natural resources in Isanti County;
- Increase your understanding of what the SWCD does and how you can get involved in conservation; and
- Keep you informed on how Clean Water Fund tax amendment dollars are being spent locally.

If you have any questions, please give us a call!

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Follow us on Facebook for more updates!



Thank you, MN State Lawmakers, for continuing to advocate for Conservation in Minnesota!

We are happy to report that Minnesota State Law makers have voted to continue SWCD Capacity Funding in 2022 and 2023!

Capacity Funding, first established in 2015, comes from the Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment Fund. The Capacity funding was intended to add to SWCDs collective ability to implement local water management plans, leverage additional local and federal project funding, and to meet the increasing and varied expectations that local citizens have for

conservation and clean water results. This money has been a necessary supplement to the State's



portion of every SWCD's budget and it provides a base amount of predictable funding. Hurray!

The funding will total \$12 million per year for the next two years. This means that each SWCD in Minnesota will receive \$100,000 and the funds remaining will go out to SWCDs based on County matching funds and miles of shoreline and acres of private land.

Here's what we use the money for:

1) **We fully fund two Technical Staff positions.** These staff work with agricultural and residential landowners in Isanti County within targeted areas. The target areas currently focus most closely on Blue (check out the story below for more details), Green and Spectacle Lakes. Staff are working to install projects that will restore and protect these lakes for generations to come. Additionally, staff are working with agricultural landowners county-wide on a soil health initiative (i.e. planting cover crops). Because of the work of our staff we have been able to leverage over \$1.4M in state and federal grants to better our resources over the last six years!

2) **We fund projects that protect lakes and build local leaders:** Over the last three years, we have allocated money to fund lakeshore restorations and to build lake groups' capacity on Green Lake. The program's goal is to teach lake groups how to run a lakeshore restoration program. The SWCD can then focus efforts elsewhere. This program was built on the template of a similar successful program on Long Lake. If your lake group is interested in being next let us know!

The Clean Water Fund and Blue Lake



Clean Water Fund Success Story: Blue Lake

The Blue Lake Improvement District (BLID), the townships and the landowners surrounding Blue Lake have made it their mission to protect and preserve water quality!

In 2018, the Isanti SWCD received a grant through the Minnesota Clean Water Fund to help promote and install water quality projects near Blue Lake. Since then, the Blue Lake community partnered with the Isanti SWCD to identify areas around the lake where installing projects would be most beneficial.

The grant period is coming to an end and we excited to report that we met all of our goals! A total of 11 projects have been installed through the help of the grant and the community. Together, these projects are preventing 40.48 lbs of phosphorus from annually reaching Blue Lake! Our overall reduction goal for phosphorus entering the drainage area is 102 lbs/yr. This means we are 40% of the way to our goal!

Interesting fact: every pound of phosphorus that ends up in the lake has the potential to produce 500 pounds of algae.



Shoreline Restoration

Phosphorus reduction: 1.5 lb/yr



Rain Garden

Phosphorus reduction: .48 lb/yr

These projects would not be possible without community involvement and landowner willingness. The Blue Lake community is dedicated to ensuring Blue Lake is a healthy natural resource for everyone to enjoy!

To the right are some of the projects that were installed.



Rain Garden

Phosphorus reduction: 1.5 lb/yr



Shoreline Restoration and Hillside Stabilization

Phosphorus reduction: 6.24 lb/yr

Blue Lake Proposed Alum Treatment

As a continuation of our efforts to keep Blue Lake from being listed as impaired by the State of Minnesota, we recently submitted a Clean Water Fund Grant to reduce internal recycling of nutrients in the lake by doing an alum treatment. This grant would provide us with additional funding than the yearly allotment we receive from the Clean Water Fund. The grant money we receive would strictly go towards a Blue Lake alum treatment.



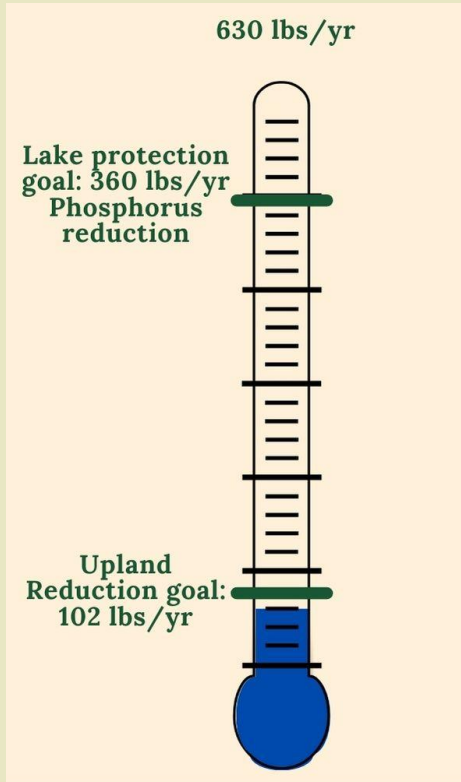
While many lakes in MN have undergone this treatment, this is the first lake in Isanti County to be eligible. To be eligible, all cost-effective sources of upland nutrients must be addressed first (these are the types of projects discussed in the article above). Also, extensive monitoring and feasibility studies must be completed and show that Alum is a cost-effective option.

If selected for funding, the treatment will occur in two ½ doses. One in 2022 and the second in 2024. The grant total is \$384,630 and the required match is \$96,158. The Blue Lake Improvement District (BLID) has dedicated funding for the match. Way to be proactive BLID! Once complete, the project will reduce nutrients (phosphorus) by 590 pounds/year; this is well over our goal of 360 pounds/year and that means the lake health will be greatly improved! NOTE: In conjunction with Alum, the SWCD will continue to work on reducing nutrients from the upland areas- this will help keep the treatment effective!

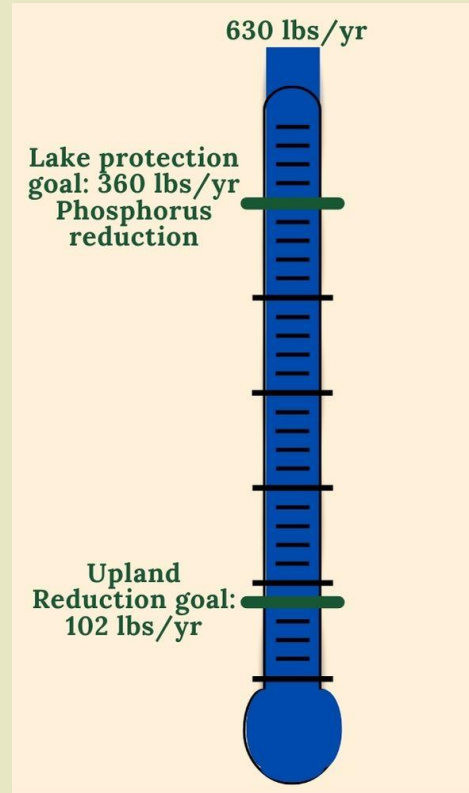
What is alum and how does it work?

ALUM (aluminum sulfate) is a nontoxic material commonly used in water treatment plants to clarify drinking water. Because of its predictable characteristics, it has been used in lake management since the 1970's.

In lakes, Alum is used to control the internal recycling of phosphorus from the sediments of the lake bottom. On contact with water, alum forms a fluffy aluminum hydroxide precipitate called floc. Aluminum hydroxide (the principle ingredient in common antacids such as Maalox) binds with phosphorus. The compound is insoluble in water under most conditions so the phosphorus it holds can no longer be used as food by algae. On the bottom of the lake the floc forms a layer that acts as a phosphorus barrier by combining with phosphorus as it is released from the sediments. The treatment is not only beneficial for water quality, it also improves fish habitat by clearing up the water so more native plants can grow.



Blue Lake phosphorus reduction goal progress with the completion of upland projects.



Blue Lake phosphorus reduction goal progress with the completion of upland projects AND alum treatment. The treatment would exceed our protection goal!

Upcoming Events

Conservation Tour- September 8. The Isanti SWCD is taking elected and appointed officials on a tour of some of our recent accomplishments. Tour information has been sent out already. Please RSVP as soon as possible if you would like to come. Space is very limited!

SEPT	CONSERVATION TOUR WITH ISANTI SWCD
SAVE THE DATE	8
	RSVP BY EMAILING LGODFREY@ISANTISWCD.ORG

Soil Health Field Days- Late September. Join us to see cover crops in action! We will have multiple times and locations over the course of a week. Stop in to learn about soil health, cover crops, and other agricultural services we offer. This is a drop in, informal event where people can stay as long, or as little, as they want!



Shoreline Restoration Maintenance Workshop- September 16. This workshop will focus on how to maintain a shoreline restoration project. Topics will include weed identification, weed management solutions and general maintenance tasks. This will be in-person at a Green Lake Shoreline Restoration Project. The presenter will be from the Prairie Restorations.

Shoreline Maintenance Workshop

September 16

Come learn how to identify weeds, remove weeds, and take care of your native shoreline buffer



Nature Photo Contest Winners

At the end of July, we hosted a Nature Photo Contest. Thank you to all those that sent in photos! We had about 50 photos entered into the contest. Here are our 3 winners.



First Place: Bald Eagle by Henry Hintermeister

Location: Small wetland pond about a mile and a half northeast of Cambridge.

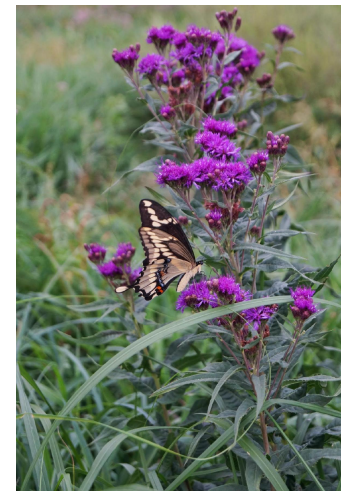
When Henry submitted the image, he mentioned that “The eagle had just eaten a turtle and was feeling guilty.”



Second Place: Saw-Whet Owl by Jackie Mann

Location: At her home in Southern Isanti County.

When Jackie submitted the photo, she said: “It was taken February 2021. He spent a good part of the day on this branch hunting mice and sleeping.”



Third Place: Swallowtail Butterfly on Ironweed by Mike Evenocheck

Location: On his restored prairie about 6 miles NW of Cambridge.

Financial Assistance Available!

Interested in doing your part for Conservation in Isanti County? We periodically have money available to help offset the cost of doing conservation projects on residential and rural land. We currently have funding focused at Spectacle and Green Lakes and the Rum River.

Examples of projects include:

Residential: lakeshore buffers, rain gardens and infiltration trenches.



Rural: cover crops, filter strips, grassed waterways, and water and sediment control basins. We also have funding for permanent conservation easements along the Rum River. We keep a waiting list of interested landowners, call us today if you want to be added the list!

Meet A Board Member- Al Koczur

Why did you become a supervisor?

I was asked to run by the previous District Manager, Mark.

How many years have you been a supervisor?

18 years!

What are your interests and hobbies?

I like hunting, fishing, gardening, biking, hiking and anything outdoors.

What does your family look like?

I have my wife Nancy, who I have lived with in Cambridge since 1974. I have a son Brian who lives in Duluth with his wife. I also have two grandchildren; Molly and Jacob who are 9 and 11 respectively.

What was your favorite subject in high school?

Math, which is also what I taught.



Al represents District 3: Cambridge Township.

Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center • MAISRC

Managing Lake Water Quality: Nutrients, Carp and Native and Invasive Plants

Raymond M Newman
Fisheries, Wildlife, & Conservation Biology
University of Minnesota

Isanti County SWCD Workshop
25 August 2021

USDA NIFA MN AES

The Benefits of Native Aquatic Plants Workshop

On August 25th we hosted The Benefits of Native Aquatic Plants Workshop over Zoom! Ray Newman, a professor at the University of Minnesota presented about plant's role in the nutrient cycle, the difference between native and invasive aquatic plants, nutrient management, and more.

If you missed it, don't worry we recorded the presentation! You can watch it by clicking [here](#) or by clicking on the image to the left.

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