



Quarterly News & Updates

May 2022 | Issue 8

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!



Blue Lake Prepares for an Alum Treatment this Fall



The Isanti SWCD has secured a Clean Water Fund Grant to perform an alum treatment on Blue Lake this year. The treatment would not be possible without the Blue Lake Improvement District, who are providing a necessary 25% grant match and have been working with the Isanti SWCD to

make this a reality. The Isanti SWCD has been working to protect the health of Blue Lake by completing conservation projects in the area surrounding the lake. Now, an alum treatment has been identified as the next most logical and cost-effective way to protect Blue Lake.

The alum treatment will take place on Blue Lake in 2022 and 2024. The treatment will have minimal impact to those that use the lake, and is safe for humans, pets, plants, and wildlife. Regular updates are available on www.isantiswcd.org as well answers to frequently asked questions.

What is an alum treatment?

Alum is short for aluminum sulfate, a common mineral found on earth that has historically been used for drinking water treatment and lake management. It also is sold as a spice in most grocery stores! Alum is a safe and widely studied option for lake treatments to reduce the amount of phosphorus present in the water- a nutrient responsible for algae blooms. Therefore, alum treatments reduce the amount of algae in a lake and improve water clarity. It works by forming a fluffy aluminum hydroxide solid called a floc when applied to water. As the floc settles, it removes phosphorus and particulates (including algae) from the water column. The floc settles on the sediment where it forms a layer that acts as blanket to phosphorus. The phosphorus released from the sediments combines with the alum and is not released into the water.

Why is the alum treatment necessary on Blue Lake?

There is an excess of phosphorus in the lake, which fuels algae blooms. A study conducted on Blue Lake in 2019 found that internal loading (the recycling of phosphorus from the lake sediments) significantly contributes to the total phosphorus. Therefore, work must be done to reduce phosphorus from internal loading. The Isanti SWCD has already completed a significant amount of work to reduce phosphorus entering the lake from the upland areas. This has been accomplished through projects such as shoreline restorations, rain gardens, and settling basins. However, the work in upland areas will not be enough to protect Blue Lake. A Blue Lake alum treatment feasibility study conducted in 2020 confirmed an alum treatment could effectively address the excess phosphorus in the lake. The alum treatment will achieve 164% of the phosphorus reduction goal the Isanti SWCD set to keep Blue Lake Healthy!

Blue Lake Alum Treatment



Alum Treatment Dashboard

For the most up-to-date information about the Blue Lake Alum treatment visit our [webpage](#). On the webpage, you will also find a factsheet, frequently asked questions, and ways you can help protect Blue Lake. Important updates will also be posted on our [Facebook page](#).

Spencer Brook Township contributes to Blue Lake Monitoring

After the alum treatment this fall, water in Blue Lake will be regularly sampled to monitor results. Spencer Brook Township has agreed to fund half of the lake monitoring expenses associated with the alum treatment. They committed to paying \$1,500 per monitored year through 2038.

The Isanti SWCD is very grateful for the support local groups have provided for the alum treatment!



File by May 31st to Run for SWCD Supervisor



Individuals interested in natural resources and water quality should consider filing by May 31st, 2022 to run for the position of Supervisor of the Isanti Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).

“Supervisors play an important role in how our community deals with a wide variety of resource management issues, including water quality, soil erosion, stormwater management, agricultural conservation and land protection” noted Tiffany Determan, District Manager with the Isanti SWCD. “Serving as a supervisor is a terrific opportunity for people who want a voice in how we

manage our environment and place conservation on the land” she said.

This year, the Isanti SWCD has two Supervisor positions up for election. SWCD candidates appear on the ballot for the general election which will take place in November 2022

To be a candidate for supervisor election you must:

- File for candidacy with the Isanti County auditor’s office from May 17th through May 31st,
- Complete the Minnesota Affidavit of Candidacy and pay a filing fee,
- Live in the district you wish to be elected to.

Nomination districts up for election this year are District 2 and District 5. SWCD Supervisors serve four year terms.

District 2 includes Bradford, Athens, and Oxford Township.

District 5 includes North Branch and Isanti Townships.

Our supervisors meet monthly at public board meetings, generally held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 8:00 a.m. Many supervisors also participate in sub-committee meetings or represent the District in regional conservation groups and organizations. The primary responsibilities of Supervisors are to set the district’s priorities and vision while supporting the staff’s work to achieving their goals. The monthly time commitment can be roughly 4 to 12 hours, based on each Supervisor’s level of engagement. Supervisors are compensated for time and mileage for approved meetings.

Additional information about the SWCD can be obtained by calling Tiffany Determan, SWCD Manager, at 763-689-3271.

County Ditch 16 and 23 Inspection Results and SWCD Project Opportunities

Earlier this year, the SWCD and Isanti County partnered to complete ditch inspections and multipurpose drainage management plans (MDM) on two ditches. This includes County Ditch 16 and 23 which both drain into Green Lake (see map for locations). Now, the results of the inspections are ready to be shared with the public.

What: A public meeting to discuss findings of the ditch inspections and the future of the ditches.

When: The evening of June 15th

Where: Cambridge Public Library

The goal of the meeting is to gauge opinion on ditch maintenance and the potential abandonment of some sections. Landowners around the ditches will receive a direct notice of the meeting. All are welcome to attend. The exact time has yet to be set, but will be updated on the [Isanti SWCD website](#) when it becomes available.

The Isanti SWCD is prepared to provide funding and technical assistance. A Multipurpose Drainage Management Plan was produced using information from the ditch inspections to identify locations for projects that will improve ditch drainage and integrity all while improving downstream water quality and reducing erosion. Project types identified include but are not limited to cover crops, nutrient management, residue management, wetland restorations, alternative intake structures, and grassed waterways. The Isanti SWCD will reach out to landowners that have land that qualifies for a best management practice. Meanwhile, if you are interested in learning more, please contact us!

Ditch 16 and 23 drain into Green Lake which means the water quality projects on these ditches will also align with our long-term goal to get Green Lake off the Impaired Waterbodies List!



Pictured: Locations of County ditch 16 and 23 (which both drain to Green Lake)

Staff and Board members at Isanti SWCD are always looking for reasons to Celebrate. This May, following our board meeting we raised our “mock”mosas to financial gains. In 2015 we had under \$170,000 in our bank account. On March 1st, 2022 we hit \$1,000,000! This money is largely due to the success we have had with grant writing and is dedicated to projects over the next 3 years. The funds are being used to fund local conservation projects to improve lakes and rivers in Isanti County.

Our May board meeting also marked the first meeting back in our usual office space since the start of COVID, nearly two years ago! The staff and board were excited to all be back together again.

We had many reasons to celebrate!



Isanti SWCD Tree Sale Success!



That's a wrap on another great tree sale! On April 30th we distributed around 20,000 trees to people throughout the state. We even managed to sell some extras the day of the sale.

This year's tree sale was a little unusual- some of the trees didn't come from the nursery on time and April 30th was a very rainy day. Our team spent the following week packaging trees that did not arrive in time for our Saturday sale. We were even packing trees through heavy

rain and hail (inside of course)! Luckily, we have a great team that was able to have fun throughout it.

Thank you to everyone that bought trees from us. We will see you at next year's sale!

Watch for Aquatic Invasive Species this Summer!

Enjoy your time on the lakes this summer and remember to do your part to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS). Invasive species disrupt an ecosystem by taking over habitat and outcompeting native species. They can become a nuisance for lake and stream recreation, and thus impact the economy. Notable AIS in Isanti county include Eurasian Watermilfoil, Curly Leaf Pondweed, and Zebra Mussels- but there are even more that threaten our waters.

Prevention is the best way to protect against invasive species. Once an invasive species has been established in a waterbody it is nearly impossible to remove it. Luckily, everyone can do their part to prevent the spread of AIS. Every time you enter or leave a water body there are simple steps you can take to stop the spread: Clean, Drain, and Dispose.

A printable flyer for AIS in Isanti County is [available on our website](#).



Upcoming AIS Education Events:

This year, the Isanti SWCD has partnered with the county to lead aquatic invasive species outreach. As part of this, there are three events scheduled for this summer that will feature AIS programming. Our [website](#) and [Facebook](#) get regularly updated with upcoming events.

May 20th- 5th Grade Conservation Day

The annual 5th Grade Conservation Day is back! There will be multiple booths to educate 5th graders throughout the county about conservation, including a booth on Aquatic Invasive Species.

June 23rd- CLIMB Theater's Kids AIS Performance

CLIMB Theater will present alongside Little's Blue's Traveling Zoo as part of Cambridge's kids summer programming.

August 20th- Starry Trek

This annual, hands-on workshop will teach volunteers how to identify AIS.

No Till Drill for Rent

We have a Truax FLXII-812 drill for rent that can be used for no-till planting, Conservation Reserve Program establishment, pasture/hay interseeding, buffer strips and pollinator habitat seeding. To facilitate multiple types of seeds, the Truax is equipped with two hoppers:



"Small seed box" for dense seed such as clovers, millet, ryegrass and crested wheat.

"Native grasses box" for lighter grasses such as brome, switchgrass, bluestem, and sideoats grama.

The drill is 12' wide and plants 8' wide rows with 12 disks at 8" spacing. A 50hp tractor or bigger is needed to pull the Truax which has a pin hitch. Two hydraulic hoses have pioneer ends with o-ring attachment. The rental fee is \$12 per acre with a \$150 minimum for those within Isanti County and a \$250.00 minimum outside of Isanti County. A \$161.82 security deposit is due at the time of rental. Rental is limited to a 20 mile radius from the City of Isanti.

If you have any questions or would like to rent the drill, contact Matthew Remer at 763-689-3271 or MRemer@IsantiSWCD.org.

Meet A Staff Member - Tiffany Determan

Why did you want to work for Isanti SWCD? Conservation has been a lifelong passion of mine. I have been lucky enough to have been in the water resources field since 2001; has it been 20 years already? I began working for an SWCD in 2008. I quickly realized it was one of the best agencies to work for! The staff are passionate, work hard, and have the freedom to act fast to help people do things that help our land and water. When I saw an opportunity for a manager position in Isanti, I knew that I was the right person to help the district excel. I have never regretted my decision for a moment!



How long have you been working for Isanti SWCD? I started in November of 2015.

What does your family look like? I have a three-year-old son, Rome; my husband Shane; our two dogs Gordy and Gretzky; my horse Sizzle; come August, a new baby girl, Rain!

Do you have a bucket list? What's on it? YES! I've been lucky enough to have done several items on my list. Here are a few examples: getting certified as a scuba diver, traveling to many different countries, competing in a body-building competition, and starting my own business. One of the items I haven't done yet is going to Africa and going on a safari to see lions, giraffes, and tigers in the wild before it's too late.

Tiffany is the Isanti SWCD's District Manager.

Contact Details

[Call Us](#)

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