



MAY 2025

# WRIGHT SWCD NEWS

Spring Newsletter of Wright Soil & Water  
Conservation District

## AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES INSPECTORS

Meet our 2025 AIS Inspectors! AIS inspectors will be staffing public launches throughout the county May through September. Their goal is to inspect water related equipment for plants, animals, mud, and water.

They are working under Wright SWCD delegated authority to enforce Minnesota state statute. All boaters are required to comply with their instructions including submitting to a visual and physical inspection of equipment, opening live wells and drain plugs, lowering motors, draining ballasts, checking anchors, and checking fishing gear.

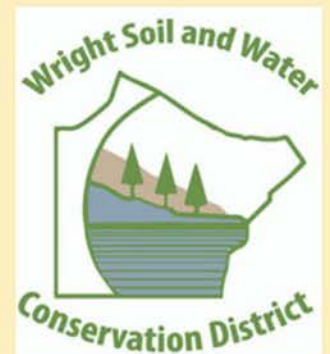
Please welcome the inspectors as you see them before you enjoy Wright County lakes!



AIS inspector pointing out plant

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# 1st 100 Decontaminations Get a Cooler

We all want clean lakes and clean boats. One method to help achieve both is to decontaminate your equipment with hot water and clean it with high pressure. If you don't have a pressure washer, Wright SWCD has you covered! We offer free decontamination services for boats and water-related equipment. This year we are offering the first 100 decontaminations a 20-can cooler if you post about the decontamination station on a social media application of your choice and show an inspector! One cooler per visit.

The station is located at 1300 Business Blvd Annandale, MN 55302. Open Sunday through Friday 8am-4pm, May 26<sup>th</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup>.

For all available decontamination sites visit [https://apps.dnr.state.mn.us/ais\\_decon\\_sites](https://apps.dnr.state.mn.us/ais_decon_sites).



Above: Cooler that will be given to the 1<sup>st</sup> 100 users that post about the decontamination station on social media (soda not included).



Left: Welcome sign at the decontamination station.

## STRUCTURAL TEAM TRAININGS

As the structural staff prepares for several of our spring construction projects, we're also participating in training sessions with Board of Water and Soil Resources, the University of Minnesota, and Frontier Precision:

- BWSR trained us on EFT (Engineering Field Tools), a software program used to build waterways and tile designs. We put those calculations into another program for reporting requirements.
- University of Minnesota training focused on best management practices on erosion control such as stabilizing exposed soils and different ways to stabilize those soils over certain time frames.
- At the Frontier Precision training we learned more about the software used on our survey equipment and its design tools.

These courses allow us to further our capabilities in construction designs and understanding our available software tools. We also network with others in the industry at these training courses where we learn what other counties around us are doing. Altogether, this helps us assist landowners more efficiently in soil erosion issues.





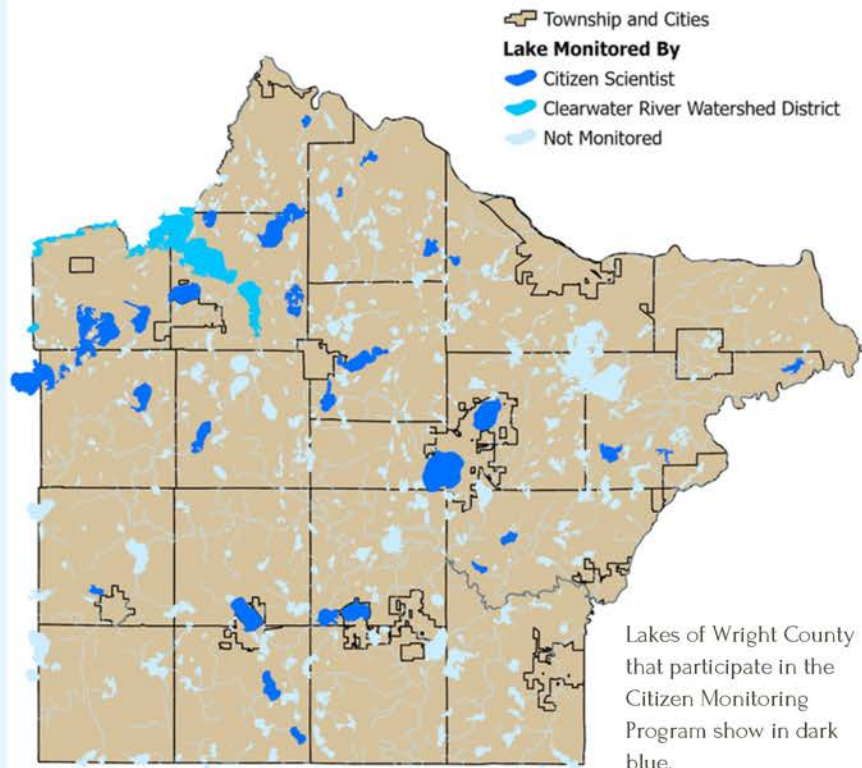
## Citizen Monitoring

Thanks to dedicated citizen volunteers, 17 lakes in Wright County have 20 years or more of routine water quality data. Several other lakes have at least 10 years and more lakes are joining the program each year (map on right).

Volunteers collect water samples at the surface of the lake five times throughout the summer. The samples are sent to RMB Environmental Laboratory. They analyze for total phosphorus, chlorophyll-a, and secchi disc reading. Each of these measures is an indication of the overall health of the lake, but it is the long-term trends that really tells the story.

The data is used by SWCD staff to help prioritize work. If a lake is barely over the impairment standard and trending towards better water quality, we want to give those lakes a little nudge toward being delisted. Same is true if we see a lake trending in the wrong direction, we want to work there to stop it from going over the impairment threshold.

It is never too late to start a monitoring program on your favorite lake. Supplies and training are provided. Sampling can be done from a pontoon, fishing boat, or even a canoe. Sampling takes about one hour per month, then samples need to be delivered to Wright SWCD on the third Monday of each month, May through September. The cost for the 2025 sampling season is \$350 +\$22 if testing chloride.



## 2025 Sample Drop-off Days

May 19

June 16

July 21

August 18

September 15



## Landscaping and Water Quality on Your Yard

Whether you live on a lake or in town, you have waterfront property. Many city storm drains flow to lakes and streams, so even if a property is not directly on the water, runoff water from that lot may carry pollutants such as sediment and phosphorus to local lakes and rivers. As a result, everyone is responsible for ensuring that our waters stay sediment and pollutant free.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO ON YOUR PROPERTY?

- **Mowing/Fertilizing:** Blowing grass clippings back on the lawn and avoid paved surfaces like streets or driveways. Excessive or improper use of lawn fertilizer can negatively impact water quality. It's crucial to use fertilizer at the right rate and avoid applying before a large rain event. Better management of your grass clippings and fertilizer will prevent algae blooms by keeping extra nutrients from getting into our lakes and keep them on your lawn.



Image of fertilizer on a road.



Image of grass clippings near stormwater drain.

- **Planting:** Plant trees and prairies. A mature tree canopy will intercept 1,685 gallons of water a year thus reducing water before it even touches the ground. In addition, planting deep rooted prairie plants will help to decrease runoff because the deep root systems take in more water, not to mention, they are easy to take care of, provide food and shelter for pollinators, and are hardy to the MN temperature extremes.

- **Minimize Hard Surfaces:**

These surfaces prevent water from soaking into the ground, increasing runoff and erosion. Try gravel instead of pavement, install steppingstone paths instead of concrete, and use porous paving materials whenever possible. These tactics decrease the amount of hard surface that water will rush along, gathering any pollutants or debris during a rain event.



Steppingstones instead of cement.

- **Infiltrate:** Providing an area for water to soak into the ground, such as a rain garden, is a foolproof method for preventing erosion. An infiltration bed prevents the water from running directly into the water body and provides time for nutrients and pollutants to filter out of the system before entering the lake or stream.



## Excavation within Wetlands – Is a Permit Required?

The Wright SWCD receives many requests to excavate within existing wetlands to create ponds for wildlife each year. In general, the act of excavation within a wetland is regulated by the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act (WCA). Whether or not a particular excavation project follows WCA rules is dependent on a few factors. One of the most important factors is determining if the excavation will occur in the permanently or semi-permanently flooded portions of the wetland. Plants such as cattails are indicative of the portions of wetlands that are semi-permanently flooded whereas permanently flooded areas will have standing water year-round. Excavation within these areas of a wetland is considered an impact (there has been a loss of wetland) and can only be done if it meets the requirements of the wildlife habitat exemption with WCA rules. To meet this exemption, the project must result in an improvement to wildlife habitat as certified by the Wright SWCD. The Wright SWCD follows guidance provided by the DNR when evaluating the wildlife habitat improvement for these projects.

(<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/excavatedponds/index.html>)

If, however, the excavation is occurring outside of the permanently or semi-permanently flooded portions of the wetland, the work can be completed without applying for the wildlife habitat exemption. These areas are generally defined by the predominance of grassy vegetation (reed canary grass, for example) and rarely have standing water during the growing season. Regardless of the wetland type, all excavation projects within a wetland must be shallow (excavation depth not to exceed 8.2 ft) and the spoil material must be removed from the wetland and stabilized in an upland location. To ensure a project meets WCA rules we always recommend landowners discuss their proposed projects with Wright SWCD staff before beginning any work.



Left: Excavation within this wetland would likely be allowable under WCA rules as long as the depth of excavation is shallow and the spoil material is placed in an upland location and stabilized.

Right: Excavation in these wetland types requires qualifying for WCA's wildlife habitat exemption.



# Planting Trees

This year we celebrated both Earth Day (April 22) and Arbor Day (April 25) in the same week! Both holidays mark times for us to think about our natural environment and what we can do to improve it. One way is to plant trees! Each spring the Wright SWCD has a seedling tree sale that is open to all. Pre-orders are taken starting in February and extras are sold in conjunction with pre-order pick-up times. This year was great with 500+ pre-orders, and approximately 40,000 trees and shrubs sold. You can also buy trees at local nurseries and online through sources such as [arborday.org](http://arborday.org).



The benefits of trees are nearly endless, they are beautiful, they provide shade to cool homes, water, and the ground, protection from the wind, provide habitat for pollinators and wildlife, they create oxygen to breathe, they improve soil health, reduce erosion, and capture carbon from the atmosphere. Not to mention all of the wood and wood fiber products trees are used for, such as building materials and paper.

Consider planting trees wherever and whenever possible, the world will be better for it.  
“The best time to plant a tree is 10 years ago, the second best is today.”

## Federal Partners Seeking Public Input

At Wright SWCD, we utilize a variety of funding sources to implement conservation practices throughout the county. One of the longest-standing sources of funding is the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, more commonly referred to as EQIP, through our federal partners at the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). To best utilize their available funding, NRCS is seeking input from citizens to identify conservation planning needs to prioritize project financial assistance and staff technical assistance. Please consider taking a couple of minutes to fill out this survey to help guide how federal conservation funding will be prioritized in Wright County.

## Survey found at:

<https://forms.office.com/g/UzHbrAaKn2>



### Wright County Local Work Group, 2025

The purpose of the Local Work Group is to identify significant local and statewide natural resource and geographical areas of concern. These concerns may be used for USDA program ranking, need, overall program recommendations, and shaping technical guidance.

The Local Work Group is made up of individuals from the community including: farmers, nonprofit organizations, agribusiness professionals, agency staff, and owners of non-industrial forestland.



## April Showers Bring Stormwater Runoff - Home Edition

It's spring, one of the dirtiest times of the year in the stormwater management world. Rain and melting snow piles can remobilize the trash and pollution that were stabilized over the winter by snow cover. This often happens before vegetation greens up, street sweepers, or other spring-clean up efforts can happen. As a homeowner, what can you do to help prepare for spring runoff?



It's important to clear any debris from your gutters and downspouts to allow for proper drainage. Now is also a good time to check your roof for any missing shingles or cracks from any damage over the winter such as ice heaves.

Check exterior taps for any leaks such as your water hose connection. Concrete, asphalt and other hardscaped material don't take too kindly to winter's continuous freezing and thawing. The fluctuation in temperature can cause cracking allowing water to seep through. Take a walk around the exterior of your home checking for any cracks, you may be able to patch it quickly to deter further damage.



Winter often piles up snow, sleet and slush and other things onto decks and other wooden structures. Check if the wood is warped, stained or discolored. If they have, it's time to reseal. If you have a wooden deck and want to know if you need to reseal it, just pour some water onto the deck. If the water beads up the seal is likely still intact. If the water doesn't bead up, you'll want to reseal your deck this spring. Don't forget to dump any standing water as this provides a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

**A little effort now goes a long way in keeping your home clean, safe, and ready for the seasons ahead. It's more than just tidying up-it's about deep cleaning, organizing, and tackling maintenance tasks that help preserve the home's value and comfort.**

# STAFF UPDATES



**Samantha Kaml**  
Natural Resources Engineer in Training

Samantha is continuing to work on obtaining her Professional Engineer (PE) license. Recently she passed her Fundamentals of Engineering exam and received her EIT (engineering in training) certificate.

To receive a PE license one must get a bachelor's degree or higher in engineering, pass the Fundamentals of Engineering exam, have four years of engineering experience, pass the PE exam, and apply for licensure. Wright SWCD is extremely proud of Samantha's hard work and continued education!

**John Rebrovich**  
Seasonal Natural Resources Technician

Wright SWCD welcomes the return of John Rebrovich who was our field intern last year.



His main task is to monitor the 12 Mile Creek Watershed and County Ditch 10. He gathers data regarding the condition, level, and discharge rate of the streams, along with taking water samples in those streams and surrounding lakes. When the opportunity presents itself he goes along shadowing and helping some of the other staff members with field or wetland projects. John grew up in Sherburne County and earned a Bachelors of Science degree in Environmental Studies from St. Cloud State University. His hobbies include fishing in the summer, hunting in the fall, and working on DIY projects.



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