



# Washington Conservation District Conservation Connections

FALL 2017

## OUTSTANDING CONSERVATIONIST Schaffer Family Partnership

Doug Schaffer remembers moving from Roseville to Demark Township in 1969 when he was 15 years old. It was a big change for a city kid. His parents, Kenneth and Margery, purchased 120 acres of farmland along the St. Croix River south of Afton State Park in an area dominated by rolling hills, farms, and woods.



Doug Schaffer stands on his property in Denmark Township.

During the summers, Doug and his twin brother Dave liked to hike down through the woods and along the railroad tracks to the Kinnickinnic Resort, which was on the river. There, they would rent fishing boats and sell gas to tourists and local people that picnicked and camped on the St. Croix.

Kenneth and Margery Schaffer loved the open space surrounding their farm and, as they grew older, began discussing ways to protect the land from future development. After Kenneth passed away in 1991, Margery sat down with Doug, Dave and their other two siblings Chester and Linda and suggested putting a portion of the land into an easement with the Minnesota Land Trust. The children agreed, and the Schaffer Family was able to execute an easement on 60 acres of their land in 1999, shortly before Margery passed away. Today, Doug, Chester and Linda still live on land that was part of the original Schaffer Family Farm and Dave lives nearby in Inver Grove Heights.

Last year, Doug contacted the Washington Conservation District to ask for advice on controlling three large gullies that had formed in the woods near the edge of their cropland. The Conservation District helped to secure funding from the South Washington Watershed District and a Minnesota Clean Water Fund grant to stabilize the gullies and reduce runoff pollution to the St. Croix River. The project included excavating three large basins to collect runoff at the edges of the field and installing rate control structures to allow the water to drain out more slowly, without eroding the bluff. Altogether, these three practices will keep 143 pounds of phosphorus out of the river each year, which is equivalent to 71,500 pounds of algae.

In recognition of their land protection and pollution prevention efforts, the Washington Conservation District has chosen the Schaffer Family Partnership as its Outstanding Conservationist for 2017.

## Welcome to our new Master Water Stewards!

Training for the 2017-18 Master Water Stewards program began in October and we are welcoming 11 stewards to our very first Washington County cohort.

Master Water Stewards is a program of Freshwater Society that certifies and supports community leaders to protect clean water. Stewards receive 50 hours of on-line and in-person training and complete a capstone project in their communities in partnership with their watershed management organizations. After certification, stewards provide volunteer support for clean water and education programs in the county.

Incoming stewards:

- **Brown's Creek Watershed District:** Anna Leintz and Laurie Mainquist
- **Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District:** John Goodfellow
- **Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District:** Tom Furey
- **Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization:** Sally Arneson
- **South Washington Watershed District:** Cole Williams, David Hoyt, Greg Hagen, Joan Nichols, Nathan Zerbe, and Susan M. Goebel.

On Saturday, October 14, the stewards kicked-off their year with a tour of conservation projects around Washington County. They visited the South Washington Conservation Corridor in Woodbury, site of the future Glacial Valley Park; a river bluff stabilization project in Lakeland; Lily Lake and the Oak Glen Golf Course creekside buffer planting in Stillwater; the Jackson Meadow conservation development in Marine on St. Croix; and a residential lakeshore planting project in Forest Lake.

"We're so excited to participate in this program," said Angie Hong, water educator. "We have a team of enthusiastic, highly engaged volunteers who really want to make a difference in their communities. The curriculum developed by Freshwater Society gives them the foundation to understand complicated water science and policy so that they can direct their volunteer efforts to meaningful projects, and the capstone projects provide important hands-on experience."

Washington Conservation District has support from a Minnesota Clean Water Fund grant to train a total of 20 stewards between 2017 and 2019. The participating watershed management organizations are also providing financial and in-kind support to train and advise the incoming stewards.



Andy Schilling of South Washington Watershed District talks to stewards about flood prevention in Woodbury.

## MEET DREW CHIRPICH

2017-18 Minnesota GreenCorps Member



Drew is serving as a member of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Greencorps program in the stormwater track. He is a Twin Cities native with a degree in Environmental Studies from the University of Minnesota Duluth, and has spent the past two years in Kellogg, Minnesota, working as an Engineering Technician for Wabasha SWCD.

Drew will be working at the Washington Conservation District for one year, helping to create a maintenance program for stormwater projects (BMPs) and provide support for the new Master Water Stewards Program. Drew has a passion for conservation and is excited to put his agricultural project experience to work in a more urban environment.

## WATCH YOUR SALT THIS WINTER!

Salt helps to melt ice but it also harms pets and wildlife, pollutes water, and corrodes buildings, cars and bridges. Currently 39 metro-area lakes and streams are impaired by too much salt, and an additional 39 have almost surpassed health limits. In addition, 30% of shallow monitoring wells in the metro have too high of levels of chloride.

One pound of salt (one heaping coffee mug) is enough to clear a 20-foot driveway or 10 sidewalk squares (250 sq. ft.). Skip the salt when it is colder than 15° and sweep up and reuse left-over salt the rest of the winter.



Sweep up excess salt to avoid polluting water

## Washington Conservation District (WCD) Board of Supervisors:

District 1 ..... Bob Rosenquist  
 District 2 ..... Jim Levitt  
 District 3 ..... John Rheinberger  
 District 4 ..... Louise Smallidge  
 District 5 ..... Diane M. Blake

Board meetings are held at the WCD office on the 2nd Wednesday each month, at 2:00 pm. The public is welcome. Board meeting agendas will be posted on the [www.mnwcd.org](http://www.mnwcd.org) website when they are available, and meeting minutes will be posted after they have been approved.

THE WCD IS LOCATED AT:  
455 Hayward Ave N, Oakdale, MN 55128  
OFFICE HOURS: 8:00am-4:30pm  
CALL US AT 651-330-8220  
CONTACT US: [www.mnwcd.org/wcd-staff-board/](http://www.mnwcd.org/wcd-staff-board/)

WE'RE ON FACEBOOK:  
[www.facebook.com/mnwcd](http://www.facebook.com/mnwcd)

WE'RE ON TWITTER:  
[twitter.com/EMWREP](https://twitter.com/EMWREP)

WE HAVE A BLOG:  
[eastmetrowater.areavoices.com](http://eastmetrowater.areavoices.com)

[www.mnwcd.org](http://www.mnwcd.org)

PROVIDING QUALITY TECHNICAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR THE  
CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN WASHINGTON COUNTY SINCE 1942.

455 Hayward Avenue North, Oakdale, MN 55128 / 651-330-8220 / [www.mnwcd.org](http://www.mnwcd.org)

## Complying with Minnesota's Buffer Law



Buffers help to reduce erosion and can also provide wildlife habitat.

Minnesota's Buffer Law requires a 50-foot vegetated buffer along public waters (lakes, rivers and streams) and a 16.5-foot vegetated buffer along public ditches. The compliance deadline for public waters was November 1, 2017 and is November 1, 2018 for public ditches.

In October 2017, Washington Conservation District accepted enforcement responsibility for the Buffer Law. Over the past two years, Washington Conservation District has reached out to people who may not yet be in compliance and will soon be providing Washington County with a list of non-compliant parcels subject to enforcement. If you received a letter but have not yet met with our office, please contact us as soon as possible.

If you received a letter and believe your property is in compliance, please contact the WCD so we can verify compliance for Washington County. If you did not receive a letter but want to check if your property is subject to the law, please see the Department of Natural Resources Buffer Map at <http://arcgis.dnr.state.mn.us/gis/buffersviewer>.

For more information, contact Angela Defenbaugh at 651-330-8220 x 23 or [adefenbaugh@mnwcd.org](mailto:adefenbaugh@mnwcd.org).

Washington Conservation District is excited to display the work of local artists in our office building. Currently, we are hosting the artwork of **Amy Siqueland**.



*OUR VIEW OF THE WORLD DEPENDS ON OUR LENS: "I write and shoot photographs because I believe art is the most important medium for exchanging dialogue and creating change. I am a former social worker and am passionate about human rights issues and the empowerment of women and marginalized communities. I believe in using my pen and camera as grassroots tools to both honor hope and fight oppression in a nonviolent manner."*

- Amy Siqueland

Currently, the WCD has a call for artists to showcase their work for 1-3 months. All work must be natural resource focused and able to hang on the wall. Artists handle all sales of their work. Contact Tara Kline at [tkline@mnwcd.org](mailto:tkline@mnwcd.org) for further details.

Find Amy Siqueland's work at [amysiqueland.com](http://amysiqueland.com).

## TIME TO ORDER TREES

The WCD sells bundles of bare-root seedlings for conservation and habitat projects. NEW for 2018, we are offering on-line ordering! Order now for pick-up in the spring – [www.mnwcd.org/land/trees](http://www.mnwcd.org/land/trees).



Washington Conservation District  
455 Hayward Avenue North  
Oakdale, MN 55128

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Students in Andy Weaver's biology class collect macroinvertebrates in Brown's Creek.

## MONITORING STREAM HEALTH IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

Dozens of streams crisscross Washington County, including cold, groundwater-fed trout streams like Brown's Creek, Arcola Creek and Valley Creek; warm-water streams like Hardwood Creek and Clearwater Creek; and intermittent streams that only flow when the snow melts or lake levels get too high. In total, the Washington Conservation District monitors 44 stream locations in the county, including a handful of stormwater pipes that transport water underground through now-developed landscapes. WCD also partners with Stillwater Area High School to conduct macroinvertebrate

sampling on Brown's Creek and Valley Creek twice a year.

Water quality monitoring provides the Conservation District and local watershed districts with consistent data that can be used to evaluate long-term trends (ie. Is a stream getting better or worse?) and also enables us to detect invisible pollutants like E. coli that can make people sick. Fish surveys and macroinvertebrate sampling conducted by the Minnesota DNR and other partners also help to measure overall stream health.

The Conservation District uses automated sampling equipment to collect water samples during storm events. The samplers activate when water levels reach a certain depth and then collect samples once every 15-min. or once every 30-min. until the rain is over. Monitoring staff also collect water samples by hand once a month between April and November, as well as during the spring snowmelt. Staff record water levels, flow rate, temperature and dissolved oxygen and send water samples to a laboratory to measure phosphorus, total suspended solids (TSS), chlorides (salt), nitrates, heavy metals, and E. coli (bacteria).



## ORDER YOUR TREE ON-LINE OR BY ORDER FORM

[www.mnwcd.org/land/trees](http://www.mnwcd.org/land/trees)

WCD is now taking orders for our 2018 tree sale. Trees can be ordered in bundles of 25 for only \$35.

### 2018 Tree Sale Pick Up

Washington County Fairgrounds – Rabbit Building

Friday, April 27 ..... 9am-6pm  
Saturday, April 28 ..... 9am-12pm