

Le Sueur County Environmental Services



NEWSLETTER
October 2, 2023

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Aquatic Invasive Species-Take the Pledge

The State of Minnesota and Le Sueur County are asking you take the Pledge to Protect Minnesota Waters!

Take the pledge on the following website: <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/data/ais-pledge>.

It only takes a few minutes to sign up. You must be 18 years old.

I will always take these required steps to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS):



Clean my boat and gear to remove plants and prohibited invasive species.



Drain all water and leave plugs out during transport.



Dispose of unwanted bait in the trash.



Never release bait, plants, or aquarium pets into Minnesota waters.



Dry docks, lifts, and rafts for 21 days before moving them from one water body to another.

Figure 1. Aquatic Invasive Species-Pledge to Protect Minnesota Waters. Photo Credit: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

I will take these additional steps to reduce the risk of spreading AIS whenever possible:



Decontaminate my equipment.



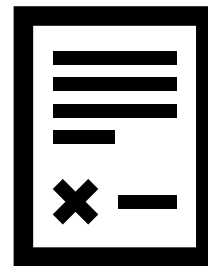
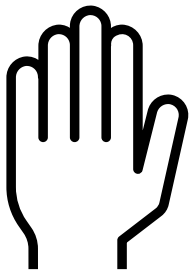
Spray my equipment with high pressure water or rinse it with very hot water (120 degrees for 2+ minutes or 140 degrees for 10+ seconds).



Dry my boat and gear for 5 days before using in another water body.

Figure 2. Aquatic Invasive Species-Pledge to Protect Minnesota Waters. Photo Credit: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Are you committed to preventing and limiting the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species?



Le Sueur County Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan

Le Sueur County in partnership with the Le Sueur County Aquatic Invasive Species Advisory Committee will be updating our Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan. The County and Advisory Committee have made it a priority to update our plan every 3-5 years. The Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan is intended to assist with administering and coordinating federal, state, and local resources in order to help prevent and limit the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species. Each county is unique in how their plans are written and what activities they focus on for aquatic invasive species prevention and management. Activities of interest within Le Sueur County include: education and outreach, watercraft inspections, decontamination, assessments (research/studies), management, monitoring, and enforcement.



The purpose of updating the Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan is to assess current efforts and activities and determine their effectiveness. Additionally, the Aquatic Invasive Species realm is constantly changing due to new research, new infestations, and funding sources. Le Sueur County has taken an adaptive management approach to account for these changes as time goes on.

When the Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan is updated, Le Sueur County will update it's website on the following webpage: <https://www.co.le-sueur.mn.us/301/Aquatic-Invasive-Species>.

Figure 3. Le Sueur County's existing Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan Cover Page. Photo Credit: Holly Bushman

Middle Minnesota River-Mankato One Watershed One Plan

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) has selected the Middle Minnesota River-Mankato Watershed Planning Area for a planning grant for the One Watershed One Plan program. This is the final watershed within Le Sueur County that needs to start planning efforts in order to develop a 10 year comprehensive watershed management plan.

The watershed includes the following local government units: Le Sueur County and SWCD, Blue Earth County and SWCD, and Nicollet County and SWCD. Additionally, there are three municipalities, which are MS4 communities, within the planning area: City of Saint Peter, City of Mankato, and City of North Mankato.

Planning efforts are in the very beginning stages; however, Le Sueur County will provide updates on planning efforts on our website. The following webpage is dedicated to the Middle Minnesota River-Mankato One Watershed One Plan: <https://www.co.le-sueur.mn.us/755/6616/Middle-Minnesota-River-Mankato-One-Water>.

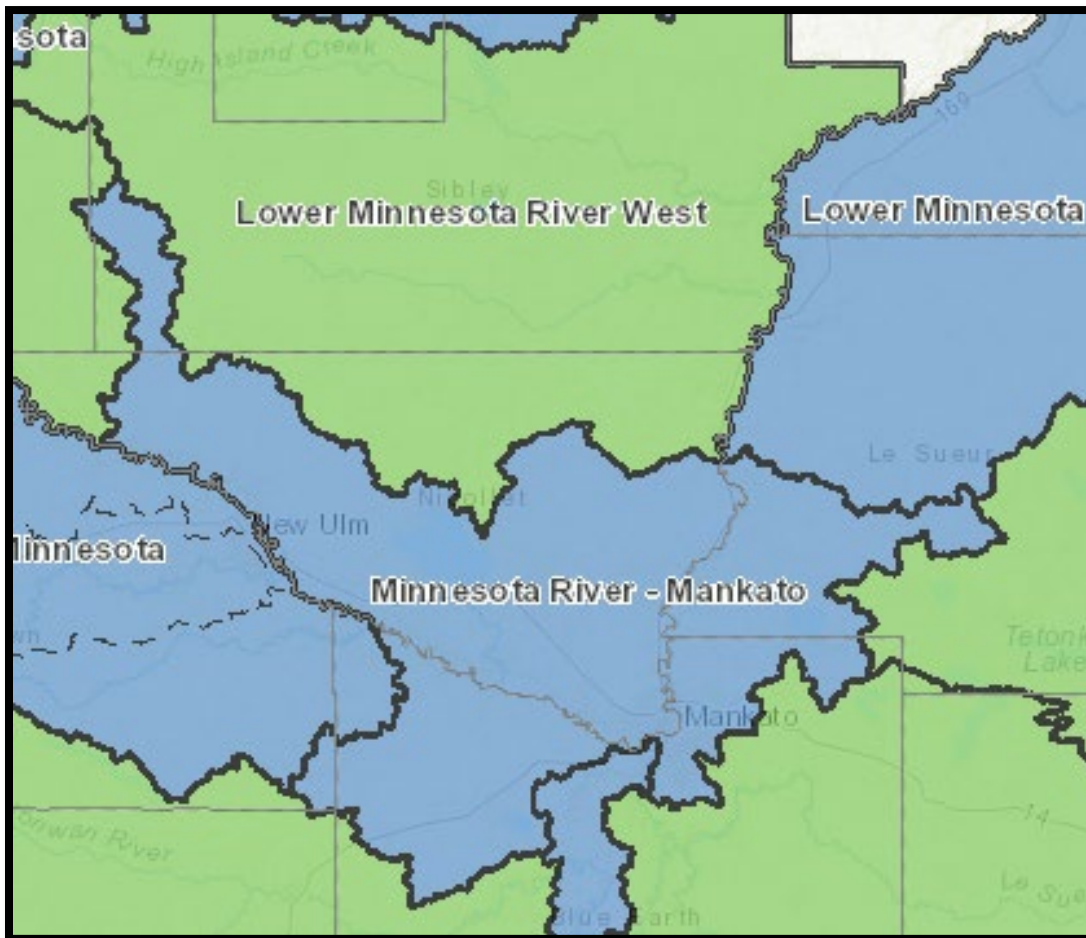


Figure 4. Middle Minnesota River-Mankato One Watershed One Plan Planning Boundary. Photo Credit: The Board of Water and Soil Resources-One Watershed One Plan Program

Le Sueur County Water Testing Clinic

Le Sueur County Environmental Services Department has partnered with the Le Sueur County Soil and Water Conservation District to host a Fall Water Testing Clinic on **Thursday, November 2nd, 2023.**

There are three different kits available:

- Arsenic
- Lead
- Coliform Bacteria



Figure 5. Residential Well on Lake Shore Property. Photo Credit: Holly Bushman.



Figure 6. Water Testing Bottle to Grab Samples. Photo Credit: Holly Bushman

Each kit will be \$17.00. A water test order form with payment is required before picking up your kit(s). Kits may be picked up any time, but an appointment is required. There are a limited number of kit,, and will be available on a first come first serve basis.

There will be an informational meeting held virtually on **Monday, October 30th from 6:00pm-7:00pm** to learn more about the importance of testing your water and picking up your kits. If you are unable to attend the informational meeting, please let us know so we can provide the information to you.

If you would like to print off a copy of the water test order form, access the virtual meeting information, or learn more about the clinic, please visit the following website:

[https://www.co.le-sueur.mn.us/684/Water-Testing.](https://www.co.le-sueur.mn.us/684/Water-Testing)

City of Le Center-Municipal Well Sealing Project Update

The City of Le Center has sealed Old Municipal Well #1. Clean Water Funds were awarded to Le Sueur County to assist the City of Le Center in sealing the well. This project is building off existing efforts that the City of Le Center has already taken in protecting groundwater and drinking water.



Figure 7. Old Municipal Well #1 Before Well Sealing. Photo Credit: City of Le Center



Figure 8. Well Contractor removing sand and sediment build up from drilling the well. Photo Credit: Holly Bushman

Unsealed wells pose a health risk to drinking water because there is a direct connection to groundwater resources. Potential sources of contamination within city limits include: fertilizers, pesticides, animals, hazardous materials, and stormwater runoff.

The significance of this project is that it will reduce the overall risk of contaminated drinking water to residents within the City of Le Center.



Figure 9. Well Contractors Drilling into Municipal Well to remove debris before sealing.
Photo Credit: Holly Bushman



Water Resource Spotlight

This issue we are spotlighting Shanaska Creek!

Shanaska Creek (693) is located on the north side of the City of Kasota. The creek has a watershed area of 26,753 acres. The landscape around the stream is predominately agriculture and forested areas. Shanaska Creek does have some development, City of Kasota and Covia Mining, located adjacent to the creek's outlet into the Minnesota River.



Figure 10. Shanaska Creek. Photo Credit: Holly Bushman

Shanaska Creek is located within the Middle Minnesota River-Mankato Watershed. According to the Middle Minnesota River-Mankato WRAPS, the creek is impaired for E. Coli and does not support aquatic life. There are a variety of practices that have been

identified to help improve the water quality and restore fish habitat within Shanaska Creek. Practices that can assist with these efforts for Shanaska Creek include: septic system improvements, nutrient management, manure management, updating Wastewater Treatment Plants, installing riparian buffers and habitat, and stream restorations. State agencies as well as Le Sueur County recognize that limited data has been collected for Shanaska Creek. We will be increasing our sampling efforts for this stream in 2024 and 2025 to collect more chemistry and biological data. This will inform us on how to better manage this resource and its watershed.

Minnesota Native Plant

Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*)

Common Milkweed is a perennial that is a part of the Apocynaceae (Dogbane) family. It grows anywhere from 2-5 feet in height. The root structure of a Common Milkweed plant comprises of large taproot with rhizomes that allows the plant to spread out quickly. The leaves can range anywhere from 6-8 inches long, and 2-4 inches wide.

Additionally, the leaves are thick, waxy in texture, have a prominent midrib, and are arranged opposite on the stem. The



Figure 11. Common Milkweed Inflorescence. Photo Credit: Holly Bushman

inflorescence (flower head) are clusters of tiny flowers that form an umbel. Flowers can range in color from a dull pink to a rosy pink and blooms from June to August.

This plant prefers well drained soils and can thrive in a variety of different soil types. Common Milkweed is known to be drought resistant due to its large taproot. Lastly, this species prefers full or partial sunny areas. You'll find this species thriving in a variety of habitat types such as prairies, fields, roadsides, pastures, along edges of woods, and in urban areas. Common Milkweed attracts a wide range of pollinators such as bees, hummingbirds, butterflies, and other insects. Common Milkweed contains a milky white latex sap that oozes out of the plant when damaged. This sap is toxic to most animals and insects.



Figure 12. Colony of Common Milkweed. Photo Credit: Holly Bushman

Fun Fact: Monarch Butterflies utilize Common Milkweed to lay their eggs. Additionally, this plant acts as the sole food source for monarch larvae.



Figure 13. Common Milkweed Plant. Photo Credit: Holly Bushman

Fun Fact: Common Milkweed is one of the easiest and fastest Milkweeds to become established.

Non-Native Plant

Creeping Charlie (*Glechoma hederacea*)

Creeping Charlie is a perennial that is a part of the Lamiaceae (Mint) family. It is also commonly referred to as Ground Ivy. This species is native to Europe. Creeping Charlies has been in the United States since the 1800s and was likely introduced for food and medicinal purposes.

Creeping Charlie only grows 5 to 8 inches tall; therefore, is considered ground cover. The leaves are small, heart shaped, and have blunt tooth leaf margins.

The inflorescence (flower head) is attached to short stalks derived from the stem and blooms from April to June. The flower color ranges from blue to purple.

The root structure of Creeping Charlie starts off with one plant and spreads out laterally across the ground. This species prefers moist soils and fine textured soils. Lastly, this species prefers partial to full shade areas.



Figure 14. Creeping Charlie Leaf. Photo Credit: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources



Figure 15. Creeping Charlie Inflorescence. Photo Credit: Wisconsin Horticulture Division University of Wisconsin Madison

Creeping Charlie can be found in lawns, disturbed areas, and wooded areas. It is an excellent source of nectar for pollinators. However, this species is very aggressive and can outcompete other species.

Fun Fact: Creeping Charlie has a sweet fragrance when crushed in between your fingers.



Figure 16. Creeping Charlie crowding out other species. Photo Credit: Holly Bushman

Environmental Services Department Changes

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Our Office Has

Moved

to a New Location



COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER 3rd Floor

88 S. Park Avenue,
Le Center, MN 56057

Our contact information remains the same

Phone:
507.357.8538

Email:
environmentalservices@co.le-sueur.mn.us

The Environmental Services Department Contact Information will stay the same!

Our physical address has now changed to our mailing address (which is located above).

Contact Information

Environmental Services Department

Planning & Zoning, Feedlots, Solid Waste, & Septics

Phone: 507-357-8538

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Environmental Resources Specialist/Water Planner-Holly Bushman

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Joe Jirik-District Technician

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Nik Kadel-Ditch Inspector

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Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

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Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

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Carli Wagner-Aquatic Invasive Species Specialist

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Email: Carli.Wagner@state.mn.us

Todd Piepho-Area Hydrologist

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Email: todd.piepho@state.mn.us

To see which DNR staff is the Area Hydrologist for your region, please click on the following link:
https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/area_hydros.pdf