



Environmental Connections

Chisago County Environmental News

Winter 2020-2021 | www.chisagocounty.us

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Environmental Connections

provides Chisago County residents with information and news from the Chisago County Department of Environmental Services/Zoning, located in Center City and North Branch. Funding is provided by the Solid Waste Management Fund. To contact your Chisago County Commissioner:

1ST DISTRICT

Chris DuBose; 651-213-8831
Center City, Chisago Lake Twp-N,
Lent Twp, North Branch-C

2ND DISTRICT

Rick Greene; 651-213-8832
Amador Twp, Franconia Twp,
North Branch-B, Shafer, Shafer
Twp A and B, Sunrise Twp,
Taylors Falls

3RD DISTRICT

George McMahon (12/20) -
Marlys Dunne (1/21); 651-213-8833
Chisago City, Chisago Lake Twp-S,
Lindstrom

4TH DISTRICT

Ben Montzka; 651-213-8834
Wyoming, Stacy

5TH DISTRICT

Mike Robinson; 651-213-8835
Fish Lake, Harris, Nessel Twp, North
Branch-A, Rush City, Rusheba Twp

Slow-Down-To-Get-Around! (SDTGA)

SDTGA is a national safety campaign to save lives reminding motorists to drive more carefully near waste and recycling collection vehicles.



Photo credit: www.swana.org

Did you know, in addition to slowing down and moving over for law enforcement and emergency vehicles on the roadside, in 2019 it also became the law in Minnesota (MN Statute 169.18) to "Slow-Down-To-Get-Around" when also passing waste and recycling vehicles (and tow trucks) that are in the process of collecting garbage and recycling?

Being struck by a motorist is a leading cause of death for waste and recycling collection employees, and this law helps to prevent these needless accidents.

Next time you pass one of those big double parked garbage trucks with their lights flashing, treat them with the same respect you would any emergency vehicle: **slow down, pass only when safe, and with as much room as you can.** That way everyone can go home safe and sound at the end of the day.

SWANA
SOLID WASTE ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA

To learn more about SDTGA, visit:

<https://swana.org/initiatives/safety/slow-down-to-get-around>

Household Hazardous Waste's **MOST WANTED**: Pentachlorophenol

A regular series highlighting the most hazardous or toxic chemical offenders you may find around your home or farm.



Pentachlorophenol (pen-tuh-klawr-uh-fee-nawl), also known as Penta or PCP, is a synthetic chemical first produced in the 1930s that was widely used as a pesticide and a wood preservative. When used as a pesticide, the chemical can move through the soil into water where it may contaminate fish and break down into other harmful compounds. As a wood preservative, the chemical may be released into the air by evaporation or exposure can result from physical contact with treated wood.



It can enter your body through the digestive tract, lungs, or skin. Studies show it can be harmful to the liver, kidneys, blood, lungs, nervous system, immune system and gastrointestinal tract. Signs of exposure include elevated body temperature, profuse sweating, uncoordinated movement, muscle twitching, or coma.

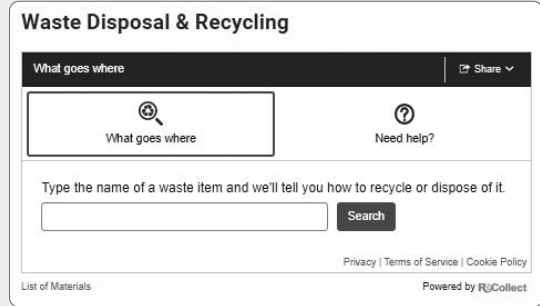
The EPA has classified Pentachlorophenol as a probable human carcinogen. Since 1984, Penta has not been available to the general public; its use is restricted to certified applicators and is still used commercially for treating wood utility poles and railroad ties. For this reason, NEVER use railroad ties near gardens or private wells. Timber bridges, piers, and similar structures may also be treated with Penta.

You may have old containers of Penta pesticides or wood treatment products in your basement, garage, or barn unbeknownst to you! These should be brought to the **Household Hazardous Waste Facility (HHWF)** for safe disposal. As you can see from the above photos, these products still come in to the HHWF quite often!

ReCollect

Got Recycling and Disposal Questions?

Try the **WASTE WIZARD** to search for and access this amazing information! Once inside the tool, you can even make suggestions on items to include. Try it out! Visit: <https://www.chisagocounty.us/wastewizard>



Chisago County Household Hazardous Waste Facility (HHWF)

39649 Grand Avenue,
North Branch, MN 55056
651-213-8920

www.chisagocounty.us

Waste Collection Hours:

Every non-holiday Monday: Noon-7:00 PM
Last Saturday of each month: 9:00 AM-1:00 PM
December 26, 2020: CLOSED

- Residents can drop off unwanted household chemicals and paint free of charge:
 - First come first serve basis
 - Stay in your vehicle
 - Turn engine off
 - If boxing items, make sure they are boxes you can leave
 - Also accepting unwanted, used, or broken holiday lights
- Residents can get FREE home improvement products off the reuse shelves with "COVID" protocols:
 - By appointment only at www.chisagocounty.us/activities
- Small Business Hazardous Waste Services available. Call for information, costs and appointment



Wish-cycling

/wiSH-'sīk(ə)liNG/

The practice of tossing questionable items in the recycling bin instead of in the trash, **HOPING** they will somehow get recycled.

.....

Please be careful about what you put in your recycle bin – DON'T "WISH-CYCLE" or hope or guess whether or not the item in your hand can be recycled. "Single-Sort" recycling - where you put it all together in one cart, has led to contamination issues. Recycle right! Check with your hauler or call the Chisago County Solid Waste Administrator at **651-213-8923** if you have questions.



Yes

Always in the recycle bin, recyclables must be loose in the cart - not bagged.

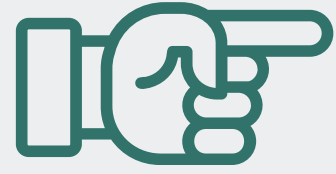
- **Paper:** cardboard, cartons (food & beverage) junk mail (no unusual items), magazines (remove plastic bag), newspaper (unwaxed & no unusual items), office paper, paper, paperboard (unwaxed), phone books
- **Aluminum Beverage Containers**
- **Tin/Metal Food Cans**
- **Glass Bottles & Jars:** rinse & put cover back on
- **Plastic #1 & #2 Bottles & Containers** (other #'s check with your hauler)



No

Never in the recycle bin - when in doubt, throw it out!

- **Batteries** (HHWF)
- **Diapers**
- **Electronics**
- **Foam or Styrofoam:** cups, plates, containers
- **Food** (compost instead)
- **Glass-type Materials:** dishes, mirrors, window glass, heat treated glass or ceramic cooking containers
- **Light Bulbs** (HHWF)
- **Metals:** aerosol cans (HHWF), blades or sharp metal objects, foil, pie tins & cookware, propane tanks of any size, scrap metal
- **Needles/Sharps** (HHWF)
- **Paper-type Materials:** egg cartons, gift wrap paper/ribbon, paper cups, plates, napkins & towels, shredded
- **Plastics:** #6 & #7, bags & films, toys & other molded plastic items
- **Tanglers:** wire, chains, ropes, cords, hoses, etc.
- **Textiles & Clothing** (unless using SRC or Croix Valley haulers – must be packed separately)
- **Wood Scraps**



Here's What You Can Do

.....

1

Stop "Wish-Cycling."

2

When in doubt, throw it out.

3

Only recycle what you know is clean & recyclable.

4

Never bag your recyclables - they must be loose in recycle bin.

5

Take control over what you buy and ultimately toss into the recycle bin.

6

Buy post-consumer recycled materials.



Local Farms Protect Water Quality with MAWQCP Certification!

You may have seen these signs popping up around the county and wondered what they are for. If you don't live on a farm, you probably have never heard of the **Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Program (MAWQCP)**.

The program was born out of the need to recognize farmers who are conscious of how their farm impacts water quality and have *voluntarily* taken steps to protect local waters. Agriculture

can be a source of phosphorus and nitrogen runoff which causes various problems when found at high levels in water, but it is important to realize that all farms are not the same. Many farmers have taken initiatives to protect water quality without the need for regulation by law. They have quietly been installing conservation practices like water and sediment control basins and buffers, and adjusting operations to reduce erosion and runoff by using cover crops and reduced tillage. Certified Farmers have found unique ways to integrate conservation into their daily chores while still producing as much as their conventional neighbors.

MAWQCP is a program to identify and reward farms that are meeting a certain level of conservation that helps protect water quality. A farm is given a score based on a long list of variables including current operations, crop rotations, number of animals, vicinity to surface water, soil types; and a score of 8.5 out of 10 is needed to become certified. If a farm doesn't meet the score, the program identifies factors that could be improved. Certified Farms are exempt from new water quality laws for 10 years and qualify for extra financial assistance through the Farm Bill.



Andrew received the MAWQCP sign to post at Clover Bee Farm in Shafer, MN

One local farm that has earned the MAWQCP Certification is Clover Bee Farm. Andrew and Margo Hanson-Pierre converted their conventionally-farmed annual cropland to an organic Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). Their farming mission is to "utilize holistic farming practices intended to heal and renew the land." Years of tillage, commercial fertilizers, heavy equipment, and pesticide use left the soil depleted. "Right away we knew that bringing the soil back to life was our biggest challenge, but also the most important thing we could do"

said Margo. The key areas that helped achieve certification were converting erosion-prone fields to perennial crops and using cover crops to anchor soil between plantings. These practices improved overall soil health and increased water infiltration which lead to a decrease in runoff of sediment and phosphorus.



Petersen Farms utilized strip tillage to reduce the amount of soil at risk of erosion by minimizing disturbance.

Petersen Farms of Rush City, Inc, a multi-generation farm, shows that a more conventional corn-soybean farm can also become certified. Lance Petersen uses "strip tillage" which is the farming practice of only tilling in

the row where the seed will be planted rather than the entire field. This keeps the soil in place by reducing disturbance between rows. By leaving two thirds of the soil undisturbed, water can infiltrate between the strips rather than run off. Two other conservation efforts that Petersen Farms uses are Nutrient and Integrated Pest Management. A Nutrient Management Plan is a guide to applying nitrogen fertilizer when plants need it, thus reducing over-applying, as excess nitrogen fertilizer easily leaches into groundwater. An Integrated Pest Management Plan eliminates blanket spraying of pesticides, instead monitoring to determine when a threshold has been reached that warrants pesticide use. This reduces the amount that is used or carried to surface waters through runoff.

Chisago County currently has 10 farms that have achieved MAWQCP Certification and a handful working towards implementing these initiatives. Throughout Minnesota over 900 producers and 650,000 acres are certified, showing that farmers around the state are working to protect and improve water quality.

For more information about MAWQCP, visit: www.mda.state.mn.us/environment-sustainability/minnesota-agricultural-water-quality-certification-program

Or contact Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District: **Shane Hultman** | 651-674-2333 | www.chisagoswcd.org



Re-Connecting the

Chisago Lakes Chain

Photo credit: Todd McBride

In 2019, for the first time in many years, boats were able to navigate through five of our area lakes (North & South Center, North & South Lindstrom and Chisago). This was due to high water and several bridge replacements.

The County Road 20 Bridge between North Center and North Lindstrom Lakes was the last bridge restricting navigation. The bridge deck was too low to allow navigation during times of high water. When designs were considered for a replacement, emphasis was given to restoring navigation access. The new bridge, which was constructed in 2018, was built high enough to allow for a pontoon boat with the canopy down to navigate under it during times of high water.

After years of low water levels, 2019 saw deeper winter snow melts and heavier spring rains which brought higher water levels. Boats could again travel from the south end of Chisago Lake, through the channel area, to the south end of South Center Lake. The total distance one way is about eight miles. This is one of the longest stretches of navigable water in the Twin Cities area, second only to Lake Minnetonka. On summer weekends, hundreds of boats navigated through the channel restoring the namesake "Big Lake".

In 2020 water levels remained high; however, cattail bogs began to move in and restrict navigation. The Chisago Lakes Lake Improvement District funded a project to cut and remove many of the bogs allowing for a 30 foot wide navigation path through most of the channel. It's difficult to predict what water levels will be in 2021, but based on historical records, water levels are high enough in about four of ten years to support navigation.

ADOPT-A-TRAIL

CHISAGO COUNTY
PARKS & TRAILS

TRAIL SECTION AVAILABLE

For information on adopting a trail segment, please contact the Chisago County Parks Department.

Chisago County Parks has **Adopt-A-Trail** sponsorship opportunities available for the **Sunrise Prairie Regional Trail**, which runs north/south through the center of the County. The **Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail** that runs east/west through the Chisago Lakes area, is currently full. Adoption is a great opportunity for family, friends or community/business groups to get outside and help the trails. Segments average 2 miles in length. For information on adopting a segment, please contact the Chisago County Parks Department at 651-213-8960 or www.chisagocounty.us/425/Parks-Trails.

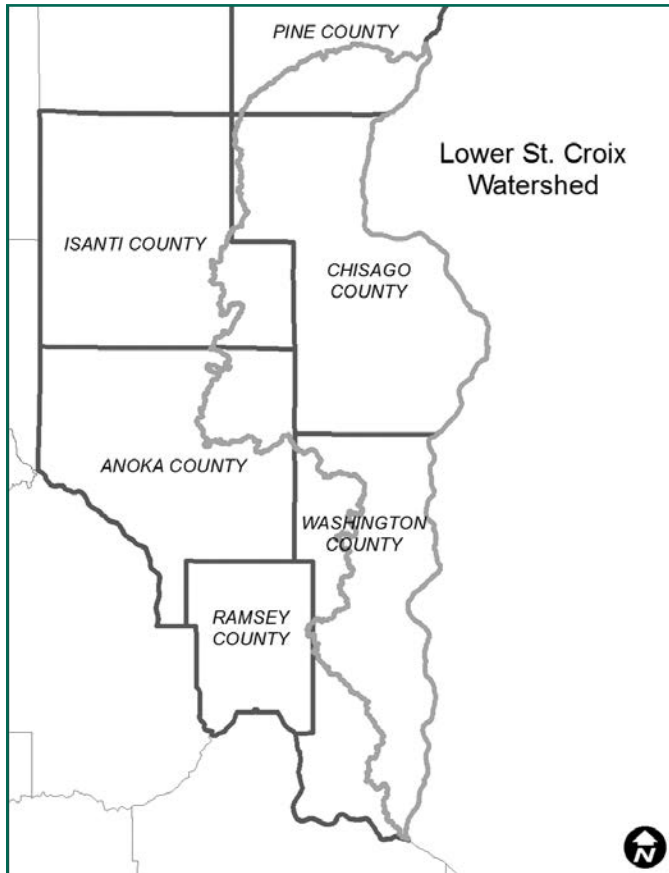
The new Swedish Immigrant Regional Trail segment through Minnesota Interstate State Park into the City of Taylors Falls is now open!! The trailhead is located at Taylors Falls City Hall at 637 First Street. Stop by and enjoy the majestic views of the St. Croix River Valley while going for a bike ride or walk along this beautiful section of this scenic trail, which extends 6.5 miles to the City of Shafer.

The County would like to thank Commissioners, local organizations, Cities, DNR, neighbors, and the Legislative-Citizen Commission on MN Resources and Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund for their support and funding. Chisago County's Regional Trail system continues to be an integral part of local communities by providing safe travel for all users.



Lower St. Croix River, Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan Approved!

On November 18, 2020, the Chisago County Board of Commissioners approved the new ten-year Lower St. Croix Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan and Chisago County Local Priorities Appendix! The new plan will replace the County’s former Local Water Management Plan that was set to expire in September of 2023. The Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District also approved the plan.



Since 2017, fifteen local government partners have been working together on a “One Watershed, One Plan” (1W1P) process to develop a 10-year plan to prioritize, protect and restore important natural resources in the Lower St. Croix watershed. 1W1P is a program through the Board of Water and Soil Resources that helps local governments develop plans to manage water resources.

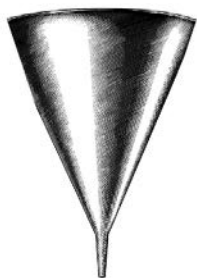
The partners combined their individual plans into one new plan based on the boundary of the Lower St. Croix watershed, as the flow of water does not follow jurisdictional boundary lines. Working together benefited the entire watershed, saving money by maximizing staff efficiency. The new plan is also eligible for targeted state funding to complete future projects.

The plan covers parts of Chisago, Isanti, Anoka, Pine and Washington counties. The area has 127 lakes, 152,000 acres of wetlands and more than 1,000 miles of rivers, streams and ditches. It seeks to improve the quality of surface and groundwater, as well as protect and restore upland and wetland habitat by providing technical assistance to landowners.

The Chisago County Board also approved the appointment of three representatives and two alternates to serve on a new Policy Committee which will oversee the new plan. Chisago County Commissioner Chris DuBose will represent the County, and the At-Large representatives are Lance Petersen and Mike Mergens. Dawn White and Steve Paquay will serve as Alternates.

A watershed is like a funnel...

collecting all water within the drainage area and channeling it into a stream, river or lake. Even if your home is not next to water, you still live in a watershed and the rain and snowmelt



from your property flows to area lakes and rivers. In Chisago County, runoff water drains through many streams, lakes and rivers and eventually flows into the St. Croix River. What we do in the Chisago County has an effect on the entire St. Croix River!

For more detailed information on the 1W1P plan and process, please visit:

<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2018-12/1W1P%20Fact%20Sheet%202018.pdf>

www.lsc1w1p.org

www.chisagocounty.us/399/Water-Plan

Or contact:

Susanna Wilson Witkowski,
Chisago County Water Resource Manager
651-213-8380 | susanna.wilson@chisagocounty.us

Craig Mell, Chisago SWCD Administrator
651-674-2333 | craig.mell@mn.nacdnet.net

Lindstrom Housing Development Uses PACE to Reduce Utility Costs

Rosehill Senior Living will be an 87-unit senior care housing development that recently broke ground in the City of Lindstrom. The developers, Rosehill Properties LLC, were the first in Chisago County to take advantage of the **Property Assessed Clean Energy** (PACE) program. This innovative program provides 100% up front loan funding for clean energy and energy efficiency projects, which allows expensive investments to be included in developments that might otherwise be cut because of the cost. The PACE loan is paid back over time as an assessment on the property taxes. Rosehill used PACE for design work, foundation and mechanical equipment.



Chisago County has a joint powers agreement with the St. Paul Port Authority to provide PACE financing. For more information about the PACE program, please contact: **Nancy Hoffman** | nancy@chisagocounty.org at the HRA-EDA

or to learn more about PACE visit:
<https://www.sppa.com/portfinancing/minnpace>

Chisago County Master Gardener Volunteer Program

The mission of the U of M Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program is to use research-based horticultural knowledge and practices to deliver educational outreach and project-based efforts that inspire change and promote healthy people, healthy communities and a healthy planet.

To get involved visit:

<https://local.extension.umn.edu/local/chisago/master-gardeners>



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
EXTENSION

MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Welcome to Our New Hires

The Chisago Department of Environmental Services/Zoning & Parks is welcoming two new faces to assist you:

Amy Hendrickson

Office Support Specialist

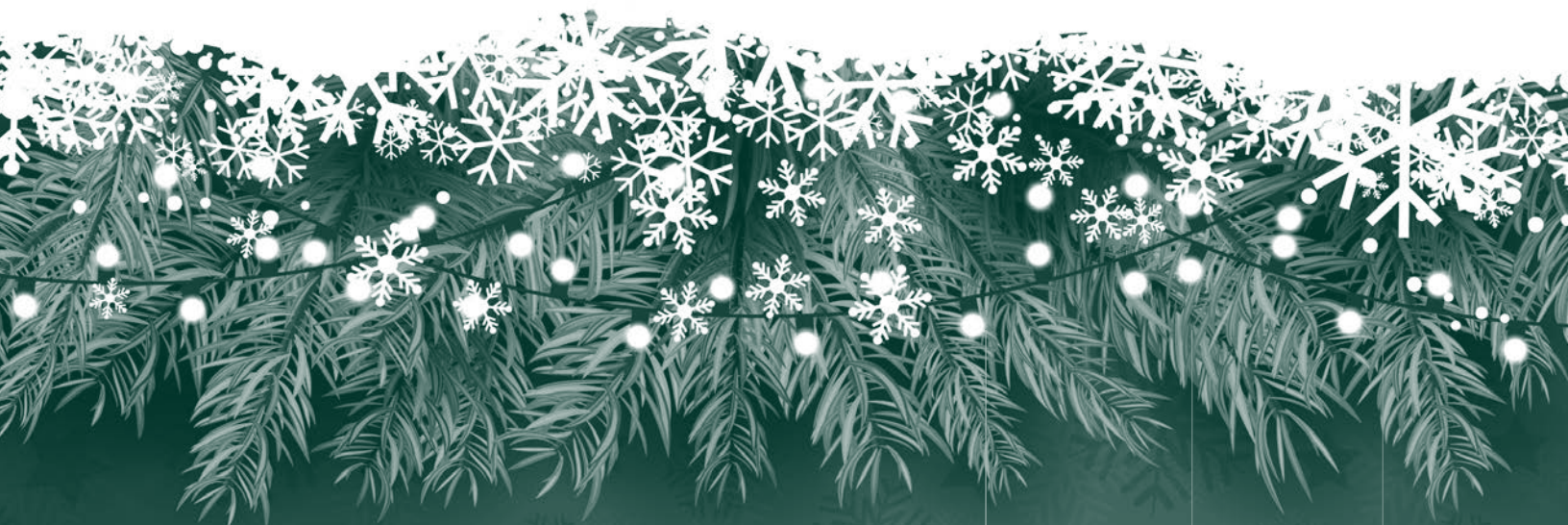
Amy most recently worked in sales and events within the recreation industry, also previously working as a program coordinator serving adults with severe intellectual disabilities. Thirteen years of customer service experience make her an ideal fit for the Department, and she holds a Bachelor's Degree in Human Services. Amy says, "I am really excited about working for Chisago County and learning more about permitting and environmental services!"



Jaime San Nicolas

Building Inspector

Jaime brings 13 years of construction experience in the skilled trades to the position, and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Leadership from Bethel University. Jaime grew up in Chisago County and now resides in Forest Lake with his wife and four children. He enjoys hiking, shooting, and gardening.



Unwanted Holiday Lights and Christmas Tree Disposal and Recycling

Unwanted holiday string lighting can be recycled at Chisago County Household Hazardous Waste Facility (39649 Grand Ave., North Branch), every non-holiday Monday 12-7pm. Other unwanted holiday lighting such as candles or figures should go in the trash.



Disposal of real Christmas trees varies. Check with your hauler or city/township compost site. Some haulers do not take them, and some will for a small fee. Some city compost sites are not open during the winter, and some will take trees ONLY FROM RESIDENTS (North Branch, Rush City, Shafer, & Taylors Falls). Transfer station/compost sites that accept trees for a fee are: privately run SRC in Wyoming (www.mytrashservice.com) and the publicly run East Central Solid Waste Commission just east of Cambridge on Hwy-95 (763-689-4056).

Artificial trees in good condition (with all the parts, stand, and if lighted - in working order) can be donated to Family Pathways in Lindstrom, North Branch or Wyoming, and must be boxed or bagged. If broken or incomplete, place in the garbage.

Chisago County Dept. of Environmental Services/Zoning
313 Main Street North, Room 240
Center City, MN 55012

EGR WSS
Postal Customer

PPSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Twin Cities, MN
Permit No. 1096

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Contact Solid Waste Administrator Lisa Thibodeau (651-213-8923 or lisa.thibodeau@chisagocounty.us) with your comments, questions, and concerns about this newsletter.
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