

# Environmental nnections

Spring 2013 CHISAGO COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

## PICKM Alliance of Lake and River Associations

**C**hisago County is fortunate to have many high quality lakes and rivers, and we all value these water resources for their scenic beauty and their abundance of recreational opportunities. In many instances, homeowners have formed associations to help organize around a specific lake or river. There are several examples in the County, including the Rush Lake Improvement Association and Friends of the Sunrise River.

Lake and river associations provide many valuable services, including control of aquatic invasive species, constructing water quality improvement projects, and educating members. Active lake and river associations are fortunately found throughout Minnesota. While these associations do much for our lakes, many feel somewhat isolated. They are often not aware of the good and valuable work taking place in neighboring lakes and counties.

To connect these various groups with one another, the lake and river associations in the 5 "PICKM" counties (Pine, Isanti, Chisago, Kanabec, and Mille Lacs) have decided to unite to form the PICKM Alliance of Lake and River Associations. The vision of the PICKM Alliance is to become a united group of lake and river associations whose primary purpose is to achieve and maintain healthy clean water, now and forever, within the PICKM counties.

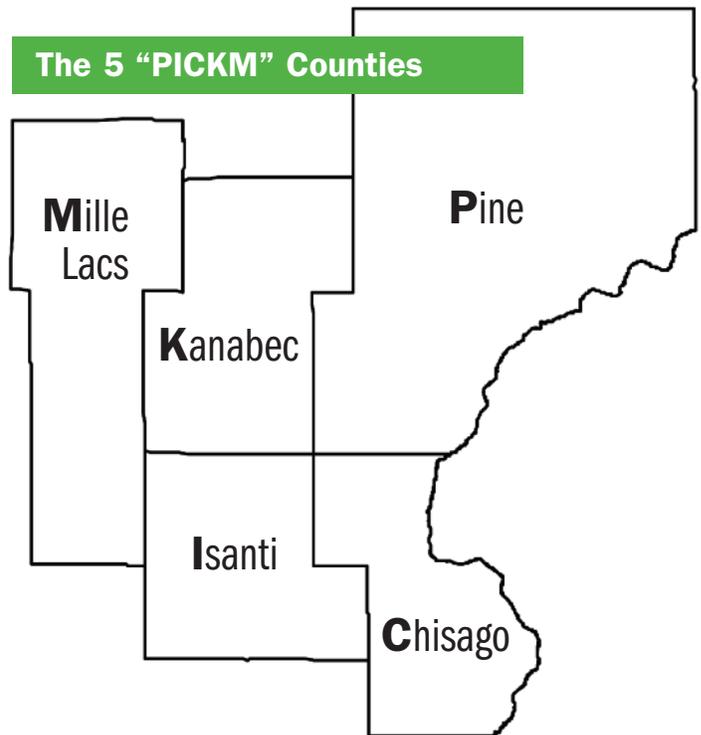
Members of the PICKM Alliance appreciate the value of collaboration and learning from the experiences of other lake and river associations. PICKM Alliance members meet regularly to share resources and ideas, and to find ways to leverage resources and work together.

PICKM is not the originator of this idea to form an alliance of lake and river associations. Many Minnesota counties with an abundance of lakes have formed such alliances, and these county groups have now united to form a statewide association, the Minnesota COLA (coalition of lake associations).

The Minnesota COLA represents hundreds of lake and river associations across the state, and it has made reducing the spread of aquatic invasive plants and animals its highest priority.

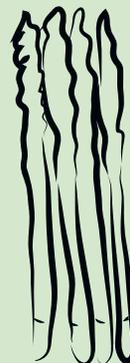
For more information on the PICKM Alliance of Lake and River Associations, or to contact and learn more about other lake and water quality initiatives, please contact Environmental Services Water Resource Manager, Jerry Spetzman, at 651-213-8383, or [jpspetz@co.chisago.mn.us](mailto:jpspetz@co.chisago.mn.us)

### The 5 "PICKM" Counties



## Chisago County Master Gardeners to hold annual plant sale

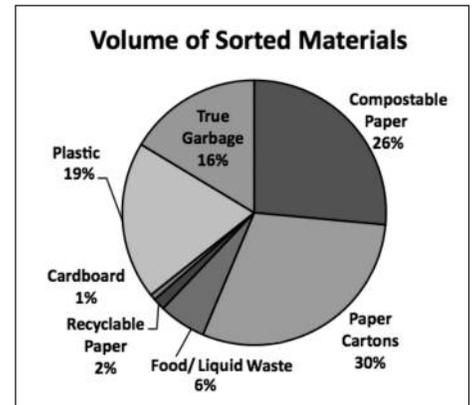
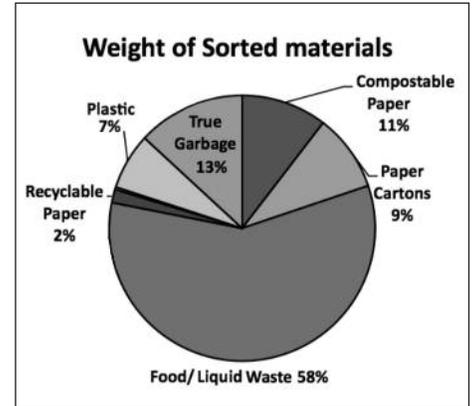
THE CHISAGO COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS are holding their annual plant sale where you can purchase raspberries, strawberries, asparagus, onion sets, and blueberries. Check their website at [z.umn.edu/chisagomgs](http://z.umn.edu/chisagomgs) for an order form. Pick up the plants on May 3rd & 4th in North Branch.



## GreenCorps' Waste Prevention and Recycling Work in Chisago County Schools



To carry out the waste sort, a group of volunteers sorted through almost 400 pounds of daily trash.



While the results of the waste sort showed that Chisago Lakes district schools recycle almost everything they can, there is still potential to increase the amount of recyclables. This waste sort information shows us where to focus our efforts on increasing collection of recyclables through education, increased access to recycling and more. Stay tuned for the next issue of this newsletter to find out how the data from this sort was put to use!

**T**he Minnesota GreenCorps member for the East Central Solid Waste Commission is Maggie Barnick, who is currently working with the Chisago Lakes School District to help revamp their recycling efforts to collect more recyclables from the schools. The GreenCorps program is a State AmeriCorps program run by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and GreenCorp members perform focused environmental projects throughout the State.

As part of a plan to help increase recycling efforts in the Chisago Lakes School District, a waste sort was conducted at Chisago Lakes Middle School to analyze the composition of their trash. The purpose of the waste sort was to determine what items thrown in the trash can be recycled, composted, or reduced by the school and kept out of the waste stream. For the Middle School sort, trash was collected and an audit of an average day at the school was conducted (days with special events create waste uncharacteristic of the site and were not included).

In a typical week at Chisago Lakes Middle School, a previous study showed the school produced 1384 pounds of trash, 1900 pounds of recycling and ten to fifteen 55-gallon barrels of food waste, which was collected for a local farm's Food-to-Hog program.

To carry out the waste sort, a group of volunteers sorted through almost 400 pounds of daily trash. This waste was sorted into seven categories based on the school's current collection systems and the potential for future reduction or diversion. Currently, the majority of the schools in the Chisago Lakes School District recycle bottles, cans, paper, cardboard, and food/liquid waste.

For more information, contact GreenCorps member, Maggie Barnick at: 651-213-8921 or mebarni@co.chisago.mn.us

### For more information

For simple ways to reduce waste at your school or school district visit:

[www.jeffersfoundation.org/wrap.php](http://www.jeffersfoundation.org/wrap.php) or  
[www.recyclemoreminnesota.org/schools](http://www.recyclemoreminnesota.org/schools)

## Hurry—Order Rain Barrels and Compost Bins Now!

The Chisago County Environmental Services Department, and the Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District are again partnering with the Recycling Association of Minnesota to offer affordable rain barrels and compost bins to residents of Chisago County.

Rain barrels are a great way to reduce the amount of runoff leaving your yard, thus helping reduce erosion and improve water quality in local lakes and rivers. Rain barrels should be placed beneath a gutter downspout to capture rainwater coming off your roof. The water can be used for flower gardens or landscaping in your yard. Two barrel options are offered in this year's sale, and both come with a screen top to prevent leaves and mosquitoes from entering the rain barrel, an overflow hose, and a faucet hook up for a garden hose. **Choose from a white System 55-gallon rain barrel or the brown Raincatcher 54-gallon rain barrel, each for \$69 plus tax.**

Compost bins help you save money on trash disposal, reduce the amount of waste you create in the kitchen and outdoors, and convert that waste into a usable soil amendment. Use the compost to reduce your fertilizer needs and to mulch around new plants. The Earth Machine composter, which includes a lid and harvest door at its base, is black and holds 80 gallons. Composting is easy and effective. Instructions on how to compost will be provided when you purchase **The Earth Machine for \$55 plus tax.**

**HURRY order your rain barrel or compost bin by April 10th at [www.recycleminnesota.org](http://www.recycleminnesota.org).** Payment in the form of a credit card will be required at the time of purchase. Orders will be accepted until the products run out, so the sooner you order, the better! You must pick-up your order on April 13, 2013, at the Chisago County Public Works Facility from 9am to 1pm, at 31325 Oasis Avenue Center City, MN 55012.

### HOW-TO COMPOST

**It's REALLY easy to compost:** Pick a mostly sunny spot away from your house, layer the following items, keep the pile moist, and give it some air by turning it a bit with a pitchfork every once in a while.

#### Greens provide nitrogen:

- green leaves
- coffee grounds and tea bags
- plant trimmings
- raw fruit and vegetable scraps
- grass clippings
- hair

#### Browns are a source of carbon:

- dried grass and leaves
- straw
- woodchips
- small twigs
- sawdust
- shredded newspaper
- corn cobs and stalks

#### Do NOT put the following materials in your compost pile as they may cause problems.

- food with meat, dairy and oils
- pet feces
- diseased plants
- weeds gone to seed
- ashes



Rain Catcher barrel

System rain barrel

← The Earth Machine is an 80 gallon round compost bin made with 50% recycled materials.

## Chisago SWCD Assessments



**Perhaps the most important tool in the Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District's (SWCD) toolbox is the assessment.** Assessments are a way for the SWCD to prioritize projects that give the "best bang for their buck" and are the basis for many of the SWCD's grant applications. The SWCD has already completed several assessments, is working on a few currently,

and has plans to continue in the future.

An assessment is a focused look at one specific area, such as a watershed or an important land formation. Often, the large area is broken down into smaller areas, sometimes called "catchments." By tabulating different factors and weighing them against one another, an assessment is able to separate out high and low priority areas. The SWCD uses assessments to look at watersheds and sort out which catchment areas contribute the most pollutants to a nearby surface water of concern. The pollutants that are weighed are most commonly sediment and phosphorus.

**Contact Chisago SWCD at: 651-674-2333.**

### SWCD ASSESSMENT PROJECTS:

#### Urban Subwatershed Retrofit Assessments

Three urban Subwatershed Retrofit Assessments (SRAs) have been completed for the cities of Lindstrom (2010), Center City (2010), and Chisago City (2011). These assessments break down the urban areas into smaller areas, called "catchments." A catchment is an area where all the runoff water drains to one outlet, often a stormwater pipe. By taking into account stormwater treatment, impervious surface, slope, and estimated cost for different levels of pollutant reduction (for example, a 20% reduction in phosphorus and sediment), the catchments are ranked in order of importance. Top catchment areas are identified as locations where the most pollution reduction value will come at the least cost.

The Chisago SWCD has secured over \$500,000 of Clean Water Fund grant money based on the projects identified in these three completed assessments. The Chisago Lakes Lake Improvement District, the Cities of Lindstrom and Center City, Chisago County, and local landowners have contributed an additional \$100,000 in matching funds. This funding has been used to implement over 100 water quality projects in the Chisago Lakes area. **Visit the Chisago SWCD's website at [www.chisagoswcd.org](http://www.chisagoswcd.org)** to take a virtual tour of these projects and to view the assessment reports.



**Curbside rain garden in Lindstrom (Urban Subwatershed Retrofit Assessment)**



**Taylor's Falls Public Works Facility gully stabilization project (Gully Inventory)**



**Wetland restoration (Drained Wetland Inventory)**

## Provide Focused Results

### Rural Assessments

Similar to the urban SRA's, rural assessments look at the rural land rather than the developed areas. Factors including soil type, slope, land cover, and precipitation are combined to highlight rural areas that are most prone to soil erosion. This allows the SWCD staff to pinpoint the areas where projects are needed most to reduce the amount of sediment and phosphorus reaching local surface waters.

Currently, the SWCD is working on rural assessments in portions of the Rush Lake Watershed and the Chisago Lakes Chain of Lakes Watershed. Once these assessments are completed, the SWCD will assist willing landowners to correct erosion issues in the highest priority areas.

### Gully Inventory

Chisago County is bordered by the St. Croix River, a designated National Scenic Riverway. One of the SWCD's goals is to reduce the amount of phosphorus and sediment reaching the St. Croix River. In 2011, an inventory of the actively eroding gullies along the St. Croix Escarpment (the steep slope along the riverway) from the south end of Wild River State Park south to the Chisago County border was completed. Over 400 gullies were identified and ranked based on the severity of erosion. The result of the assessment highlighted 33 high priority actively eroding gullies. The SWCD secured a Clean Water Fund Grant in 2012 to provide cost sharing to landowners who are willing to correct one of the priority gullies on their property. The first project was completed in 2012 at the Taylors Falls Public Works Garage and several more projects are planned for the upcoming season. Visit the Chisago SWCD's website at [www.chisagoswcd.org](http://www.chisagoswcd.org) to view these projects and the assessment report.

### Drained Wetland Inventory

Starting this year, the Chisago SWCD and the Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District will begin an inventory of the drained wetlands within the Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District. Historically, many wetlands were ditched and drained to allow the area to be farmed. Many of these wetlands were important for wildlife as well as for filtering runoff water. When drained, the important functions of a wetland are lost and the ditches act as a conduit for sediment-laden runoff water to reach streams and lakes.

The drained wetland inventory would identify prime locations for wetland restorations, which will restore the valuable function of wetlands. This inventory also could be used as a tool to leverage grant funding to help landowners offset the cost of restoration work.

### Value

The SWCD views assessments as a valuable tool. Rather than "random acts of conservation," these assessments help the SWCD focus on the areas that require the most attention. Each assessment produces a priority list that directs staff where to begin. When contacting a landowner, SWCD staff has good information to explain why a project is needed on their property. Assessment data often allows the SWCD to secure grant funding that can be offered to landowners to help offset construction costs.

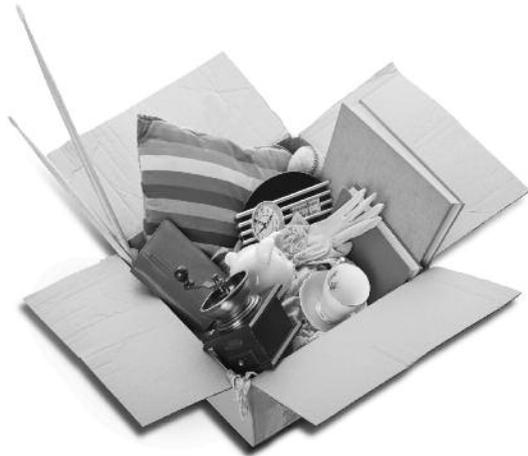
By picking the "best bang for the buck" projects, the SWCD hopes to efficiently use state and federal grant money to implement important projects that will improve or maintain water quality. The assessment is one tool the Chisago SWCD will continue to use to *Bring Conservation to Chisago County!*

## SWCD Bare Root Tree and Shrub Sale!



The Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) holds an **Annual Spring Bare Root Tree and Shrub Sale** selling approximately 25 species ranging from evergreens and deciduous trees to a variety of smaller shrubs. This is an opportunity for landowners in Chisago County to help replenish our natural resources. **To learn**

**more about this program** and what trees are available, call the Chisago SWCD office at 651-674-2333 or visit our web site at: [www.chisagoswcd.org](http://www.chisagoswcd.org). **Mark your calendar! Tree pick-up dates for 2013 are: April 25, 26, & 27. Order deadline is April 19, or when stock is depleted.**



# Time for Spring

## 2013 Chisago County Residential Recycling Program Summary

### Clean-Up dates are planned for the following:

**Center City:** AAA Recycling will be at the Chisago Lakes Lutheran Church on April 27th from 8 am – 2 pm. Accepting for a fee: appliances, electronics, scrap metal, tires, light bulbs, batteries, furniture, carpet, mattresses, no garbage, no hazardous waste. Phone: 651-238-0226.

**Chisago City:** Saturday, May 18th, Chisago City Industrial Park, call city for more info 651-257-4162.

**Fish Lake Township:** Fall clean up every other year, 2014 is next scheduled time. Phone: 651-674-8837.

**Franconia Township:** Saturday, June 8, from 9 am – 1 pm at the township hall located at 25156 St. Croix Trail North, Shafer, MN 55074.

**Lent Township:** Wednesday, May 22, 5 pm – 8 pm, Lent Township Maintenance Building (across the street from the Town Hall at 33155 Hemingway Ave., Stacy, MN). Accepting for a fee: appliances, electronics, tires, misc. items, batteries; mattresses accepted for free. Phone: 651-462-3009.

**Lindstrom:** Saturday, May 18, Chisago City Industrial Park, call City for more information at 651-257-0620.

**Rush City:** Saturday, May 18, 8 am – 10:30 am, RC Public Works Garage, 51569 Forest Blvd. Pick-up available for elderly and handicapped residents only, call 320-358-4743. Accepting for a fee: appliances, furniture, mattresses, tires, electronics, brush, bulbs, and garbage. No hazardous waste accepted. Phone: 320-358-4743.

**Taylor Falls:** Historically the first Saturday of May, check with City on date. City Hall phone: 651-465-5133.

- Residential recycling options for Tires, Appliances, Mattresses and Electronics.
- The County pays part of the costs to make it affordable to recycle.
- Proof of Chisago County residency required and you must fill out a form to qualify for discount price.
- No items generated by commercial or business activities are accepted or paid for through this program.

RECYCLER	AAA	E Cycling	ECSWC	Evergreen	RFW	SRC	County Pays the Add'l
	County Resident Discount Fee: Your Cost						
<b>APPLIANCES:</b>							
w/o refrigerant	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$2	\$10	\$10	\$5
w/refrigerant	\$15	\$10	\$10	\$5	\$10	\$15	\$5
ammonia (sm/lg)	\$100	N/A	\$75	N/A	N/A	\$25/100	\$50
<b>TIRES:</b>							
automobile	\$1.50	N/A	\$3	Free	\$.50	\$1.50/2.50	\$2.50
truck w or w/o rim	\$2.50	N/A	\$3	\$.50	\$1	\$3.50/4.50	\$2.50
semi w or w/o rim	\$8	N/A	\$15	\$3/4	\$5/6	\$15	\$5
tractor/w rim	\$35	N/A	\$40	\$20	\$25/35	\$30/40	\$10
<b>MATTRESSES:</b>							
Mattresses	\$7	N/A	\$11	Free	Free	\$11	\$13
<b>ELECTRONICS:</b>							
Computer package	\$10	\$8	N/A	\$6	\$10	N/A	\$5
Monitor (sm/lg)	\$8	\$5	\$10	\$5	\$5	\$11	\$5
CPU	\$1	Free	\$3	Free	\$1	\$4	\$1
Laptop	\$2	Free	\$3	Free	\$2	\$13	\$3
Printers etc.	\$5	\$3	\$3	\$2	\$2	\$13	\$3
Large Copier	\$10	\$10	\$30	\$15	\$25	\$45	\$5
Typewriter, Stereo	\$5	\$3	\$3	\$2	\$2	\$7	\$3
VCR/DVD	\$5	\$3	\$3	\$2	\$2	\$7	\$3
TV-small	\$5	\$3	\$10	Free	\$10	\$15	\$10
*TV-large	\$5/20	\$5/15	\$30	Free/\$5	\$20	\$20	\$20

N/A= Not an Option; Prices accepted by bid 2013; \*Extra charges may apply to exceptionally large TVs

### CHISAGO COUNTY HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE FACILITY

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

**FREE TO RESIDENTS**

Every non-holiday Mon. 12 – 7 pm, Last Sat. of each month 9 – 1 pm

[www.co.chisago.mn.us](http://www.co.chisago.mn.us)—Environmental Services, HHW Page

## Cleaning!!

Please refer to the chart at left, call Chisago County (651) 213-8920, or you local recycler for info:

- **AAA Appliance, Electronic and Metal Recycling:**  
Pick up only, Lindstrom, (651) 238-0226.
- **E Cycling Solutions:** 10544 Liberty Lane, Chisago City, 55013  
(651) 815-0423. [www.ecyclingsolutions.com](http://www.ecyclingsolutions.com)
- **ECSWC—Cambridge Transfer Station:** East of Cambridge, Highway 95 (763)  
689-4056. [www.ecswc.cog.mn.us](http://www.ecswc.cog.mn.us)
- **Evergreen Recycling, LLC:** 53427 Forest Blvd., Rush City, 55069  
(320) 358-3988. [www.evergreenrecyclingllc.com](http://www.evergreenrecyclingllc.com)
- **Recycling for Wildlife:** 42775 Forest Blvd., Harris, 55032  
(651) 674-7268
- **SRC, Inc.:** East Viking Blvd., Wyoming, 55092, (651) 462-5298  
[www.mytrashservice.com](http://www.mytrashservice.com)

Trash Disposal is available at these East Central Solid Waste Commission facilities:

**Hinckley Transfer Station**, ½ mile east of I-35, Fire # 339198, County Highway 61, Hinckley, MN, 55037, 320-384-6596

**Cambridge Transfer Station**, South Side of Highway 95, 4194 Highway 95 NE, Cambridge MN, 55008, 763-689-4056

**Sanitary Landfill**, MN Highway 23 and Co. Rd. 60, 1756 - 180th Ave, P.O. Box 29, Mora, MN, 55051, 320-679-4930

### Help Chisago Lakes Rotary and Bridging, Inc. furnish homes this year!



**Chisago Lakes Rotary** is again working with the non-profit Bridging, Inc., to collect gently used furniture including mattresses, clean household goods and bedding/blankets, during the **Chisago City/Lindstrom Annual Spring Clean-Up Day on Saturday May 18,**

**2013, at the Chisago City Industrial Park.** Area residents may drop off donations that morning on site, or may request limited curb-side pick-up by appointment. Watch the paper for more details. Donation receipts will be available for your convenience. Donate and help Rotary and Bridging, Inc. furnish homes with hope while keeping good usable items out of the landfill!

## Grant Funds Available for Septic System Repair & Installations



**Chisago County is proud to announce a grant awarded to the Department of Environmental Services/Zoning** to help low income families

with septic system repair and replacement.

Properties must be within the jurisdiction of the Chisago County Environmental

Services/Zoning department, which does

include many of the cities in our county.

As part of this grant, a property owner can apply for up to \$2,000 to repair or install a new septic system. Funding is limited, available on a first come first served basis, and has restricted income requirements. A family of four earning up to \$65,000 a year may still qualify for a grant.

If grant funding is unobtainable, septic system repair and installation help can be pursued through programs such as the MN Department of Agriculture *Agriculture Best Management Practices* low interest Loan Program, and the *Rural Housing Development and Chisago County Loan Programs*.

These programs are funded through the Clean Water Legacy Constitutional Amendment, a part of the State of Minnesota's Clean Water Fund (Lottery Money), whose purpose is to protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers and streams, in addition to protecting groundwater and drinking water sources from degradation. The Amendment has helped Chisago County residents in the following ways:

1. Funded 300 septic system compliance inspections and 60 permits
2. Given 22 grants up to \$5,000 for replacement of existing failing septic systems
3. Awarded \$216,600 to the unincorporated city of Almelund for a community septic system

#### For more information:

If you are interested in participating, would like more information or to see if you qualify, please contact County Sanitarian Kellie Strobel in the Environmental Services/Zoning Department at 651-213-8373. 🌿

## Roadside Safety: Where to Place Your Waste & Recycling Carts



**Garbage can placement on roadways isn't something most people spend a lot of time thinking about!**

It's usually a no-brainer...on garbage day, you put your garbage and recycling cart out at the end of your driveway; the garbage hauler picks it up; and at the end of the day you drag the cart back up to your house on your way home from work. It's a flawless process, until Mother Nature and the local plow truck gets involved, which sometime happens during snow events.

The garbage law in Chisago County (the Solid Waste Ordinance) states that for curbside collection, residents who hire a garbage service may place their carts "at the curb" or collection site, no sooner than the evening prior to scheduled collection, and that you must remove the empty containers from the right of way after collection. Remember, too that an empty garbage can sitting in front of your house for days can convey the message "I'm not home," which is not particularly good for home security!

To avoid damaged, buried, or spilled garbage carts and to help eliminate the risk of roadside accidents during all seasons, Chisago County Public Works and local waste haulers advise that all garbage and recycling carts be placed "at the curb" within your driveway; behind the shoulder of the road, and in line with the back of your mailbox. On gravel roads, the cart should be completely in your driveway and all the way off the gravel road. Proper cart placement gives plows and passing vehicles enough room to safely operate.



Following these refuse and recycling cart placement tips will position carts safely off the road right-of-way, reduce the risk of cart damage and clean-up mishaps, and allow the garbage trucks with auto-arms to reach your cart!

**Environmental Connections provides Chisago County residents with information and news from Chisago County Environmental Services, located in Center City and North Branch.**

**To contact your current Chisago County Commissioner:**

**1ST DISTRICT—Lora Walker, 651-462-2268 or 651-213-8831 (office)** Center City, Chisago Lake Twp-N, Lent Twp, North Branch-C.

**2ND DISTRICT—Rick Greene, 651-583-2513 or 651-213-8832 (office)** Amador Twp, Franconia Twp, North Branch-B, Shafer, Shafer Twp A and B, Sunrise Twp, Taylors Falls.

**3RD DISTRICT—George McMahon, 651-257-2701 or 651-213-8833 (office)** Chisago City, Chisago Lake Twp-S, Lindstrom.

**4TH DISTRICT—Ben Montzka, 651-462-4200 or 651-213-8834 (office)** Wyoming, Stacy.

**5TH DISTRICT—Mike Robinson, 320-358-3223 or 651-213-8835 (office)** Fish Lake, Harris, Nessel Twp, North Branch-A, Rush City, Rusheba Twp.

ECRWSS  
Postal Patron

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