

Brush Disposal Time of Year

There are seven community brush disposal sites located throughout Cook County that accept brush and vegetation from property owners. These sites are strategically located throughout the county to give everyone the ability to reduce wildfire risk.

Firewise reminds all property owners they can dispose of wildfire fuels at these locations at no charge. The sites are open now through fall.

It is important that no trash, treated lumber, or stumps are disposed of at these sites. Trash and lumber disposal is prohibited because the burning of trash and treated lumber releases toxic chemicals. Stumps and root systems are also prohibited because they are difficult to burn and cause inefficient pile burning.

To find the closest site to you view the interactive map on the Cook County Firewise website, cookcountyfirewise.org

Gates are locked when sites are closed. Call ahead to ensure sites are open. 218-387-3630

Water Monitoring along the North Shore

Emily Nelson, *Conservation Outreach Coordinator, Lake County Soil & Water Conservatoin District*

Summer is here, and in the coming months, you may spot Lake County SWCD staff out on the lake or wading into a river. The field season has started, and we have begun intensively monitoring water quality along the North Shore as part of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) program to evaluate water quality in each of the state's 80 major watersheds. Each watershed is evaluated on a 10-year cycle, and the first step of the process is collecting water quality data in the field.

This year we are monitoring four rivers; Beaver, Split Rock, Gooseberry, and Knife, and six lakes; Lax, Bean, Bear, Tetagouche, Stewart, and Christianson, all which lie within the Lake Superior South watershed. The Lake Superior South watershed covers over 400,000 acres along the shore from Duluth to just northeast of Silver Bay, and precipitation that falls within the watershed drains to Lake Superior.

When we head out to take water samples, there is a lot of equipment we bring with us. A sonde is

an electronic piece of equipment that has a long cord with sensors on the end, and it allows us to measure the temperature, pH, conductivity, and dissolved oxygen of the water. In rivers, we take just one measurement of each parameter, but in lakes, we measure each parameter at the surface and at one-meter intervals down to the bottom. We use secchi tubes and secchi disks to measure water clarity, and a 2-meter tube helps us collect water column samples on lakes. The data we collect will help the MPCA evaluate the health of the watershed, and the data will be publicly available on the MPCA's website.

If water monitoring sounds like fun, you can get involved, too! The MPCA has a well-established citizen water monitoring program, and you can sign up to monitor a local lake or stream (lake monitors need access to a watercraft). The citizen monitoring program typically involves measuring water clarity with a secchi disk or tube, and yields valuable long-term data on water quality trends. You can sign up on the MPCA website or by emailing the program at watervolunteers.mPCA@state.mn.us or calling 1-800-657-3864.

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