

Reflections from colorful leaves in our lakes area

Earlier this week, the colorful leaves on the forest roads in our lakes area were a terrific reminder about how much land in our watersheds actually contain a diversity of trees. The sprinkling of yellows, oranges, reds and greens of the deciduous trees and the deep green of the variety of pines was beautiful! It is good to remember that these



SHARON NATZEL
COLA President

"It is good to remember that these trees in the forests all help protect our pristine water quality here on the lakes in our watersheds"

trees in the forests all help protect our pristine water quality here on the lakes in our watersheds. At our Sept. 30 Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations (COLA) meeting, we learned from our guest speaker Dan Steward, retired Board of Soil and Water Resources (BSWR), that the forests act like a sponge. The rains are

absorbed by the trees. This slows the runoff and helps prevent soil erosion into streams and lakes. The rain may even become part of the groundwater. Steward also explained how the fisheries are supported by the forests. Healthy oxygen levels in lakes are maintained when excess nutrients are taken up by the trees. Algae blooms are minimized. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has found that if 75% of a watershed is forested, this helps protect the quality of the water. Steward's video presentation is here:

www.hubbardcolumnn.org/presentations.html. As the colorful leaves fall and cushion the trails on family hunting lands, it may be helpful for families to consider protecting the forests for the future generations, too. You would be helping preserve our healthy lakes area in your watershed. There is a program through DNR Forestry called Sustainable Forest Incentive Act that provides annual incentive payments to encourage private landowners to keep their wooded areas undeveloped. Learn more at www.dnr.state.mn.us/foreststewardship/sfia/index.html

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Members of the Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations write a monthly column in the Enterprise addressing water issues.

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Tips: The importance of keeping your vehicle clean through winter.

The cold affects the way your car runs. Salt and snow on roads can cause your frame to rust and scraping off snow or ice often results in scratches in the paint. Keeping a clean car during the winter can help it last longer or retain its resale value. Check out these tips for maintaining your vehicle this season.

- **Wash off the salt** – We can't stress this one enough. Take your car to a local car wash to keep it spotless. All that salt and snow causes damage to your frame, suspension,

- undercarriage, and paint job.
- **Don't tailgate** – A good rule on the road on any day. In the winter, keep a large following distance to prevent the cars in front of you from kicking extra dust, dirt, snow, salt, and whatever else is in the streets into your car's exterior.
- **Use rubber mats inside** – Your vehicles might get water damage if you don't take care to keep excess water out. Get some rubber mats to keep things dry.
- **Get it waxed** – It's recommended to use

- high-quality car wax or polymer sealant every three to four months. The extra coating will help keep dirt, dust, and grime off your car.
- **Wipe your windshield** – Use a towel and cleaning products to hand-clean your windshield and windows a few times a month. This will keep grime from building up and inhibiting your visibility.
- **Protect your wheels** – Salt and dirt can cake onto your wheels and mess with the mechanics. There are protective waxes and sprays

- available for wheels, so check with your local car wash and see what options they have.
- **Use heavy towels** – Place these under the rubber mats to help absorb any excess muddy water, slush, and dirt. You can throw these in the washer every few weeks to keep things clean. Slush on the floor of the car can cause unnoticed rust and damage that's expensive to fix.
- **Invest in mud flaps** – These deflect road debris from the fender walls, keeping your car protected from the elements.

- **Inspect your car regularly** – Do a check at least once a week to make sure there's no rust on your frame. If you catch it early, you can have it taken care of before the problem gets worse.
- **Park indoors** – This is not a possibility for everyone, but if you live in an area where there are regular snowstorms, you may want to consider investing in an indoor parking spot. Keeping your car away from the elements will keep it clean and running smoothly.

Bob Meier

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