

# Mantrap Township Annual Newsletter February 2024

Annual meeting: March 12th, 2024 at 7 pm in the town hall

## Other Important 2024 Dates

March 5th: presidential nominating primary

June 16th: motocross event

Aug 13th: primary election

Nov 5th: election day

1st Monday of the month: Planning Commission meeting @7pm (moves to Wednesday if Monday is a holiday)

2nd Monday of the month: Township Board meeting @7 pm (moves to Tuesday if Monday is a holiday)

## Your Township Board

Kim Olson, Chair, (907) 382-0473, [mantrapsupervisorb@gmail.com](mailto:mantrapsupervisorb@gmail.com)

Russ Keller, Vice Chair, (320) 360-7276, [mantrapsupervisorc@gmail.com](mailto:mantrapsupervisorc@gmail.com)

Milica Stanfel, Supervisor, (218) 536-1474, [mantrapsupervisora@gmail.com](mailto:mantrapsupervisora@gmail.com)

Lonna Theede, Clerk, (506) 313-9721, [mantrapclerk@gmail.com](mailto:mantrapclerk@gmail.com)

Laura Scanlon, Treasurer, (612) 751-6666, [mantraptreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:mantraptreasurer@gmail.com)

## Another year...another change

This year we say goodbye to our clerk, Carice Golberg-Cummins. Carice did an outstanding job for us for over 10 years, keeping the board on track and the township running smoothly. Please thank her for her service when you see her!

We also want to give Lonna Theede a warm welcome—she stepped up to take Carice's place. Please thank her when you see her and remember to be patient as she learns the ropes. It's a big job!

# Notes from the Chair

By Kim Olson

Greetings from your chairman! I'm going to give you information in bullet points like I did last year. 😊

## Roads:

- Expect a rough spring for the roads due to the damage from the weird thaw/freeze cycle we had going on this winter
- Great responsiveness from the road contractor—he gets out on the roads very quickly to plow or to grade when we get rain
- Snow and Ice Control policy posted on website; township follows Hubbard County's mailbox policy
- Unless it's an EMERGENCY (one where you would call 9-1-1 or the sheriff's department), do not contact the contractor directly for any road issues; instead, contact a supervisor
- 224th is now designated as a minimum maintenance road with no winter maintenance to save costs
- All township minimum maintenance roads are now posted as no winter maintenance

## Gravel:

- Purchased 5000 yds of gravel for spot graveling; pit is in White Oak township so still hoping to find a closer source
- Heartland, 244th, and Gunnison will receive 2" of new gravel in early summer through participation in the county's gravel contract

## Elections:

- Excellent pool of presidential nominating primary judges, but we could use more for the primary in August and the election in November.
- Township has two questions on the ballot

If you have any questions or comments about these topics or any other, please come to a township meeting or contact a supervisor, clerk, or treasurer.

# Nevis Fire District News

By Milica Stanfel

The Nevis Fire Department held its annual meeting January 11th, 2024. The fire department levied \$162,460.00 for 2024. Our share is \$35,750.00. For 2025, they levied \$172,787.00. Our share will be \$34,557.00. We had 3 fire calls in 2023. The fire department bought a new rescue truck with the help of the Fireman's Relief Fund. The old truck will be converted into a brusher.

The city and fire department have met with an engineering firm to do a feasibility study to see how the building can be updated and expanded. The firefighters no longer have pagers; all are now connected by cell phone and 2-way radios. Currently we have 17 firefighters; all have updated equipment. This year the department started charging for fire calls, but the billing aspect of this still needs to be improved. We will no longer have an ambulance stationed in Akeley or Nevis—they will be coming from Park Rapids or Walker resulting in longer response times for Nevis.

## Financial Matters

By Laura Scanlon

On January 22, Mantrap Township Board held its annual Budget Meeting. Table 1 provides data that includes the 2025 proposed levy totaling \$304,000. This is an increase of 7.1% over the 2024 levy.

Important Date: The Annual Meeting is Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at 7:00 pm at the Township Hall. Mantrap residents have the opportunity to vote on the 2025 proposed levies.

Table 1	Proposed Levy/Comparison			Change over 2024 Levy	
	2023 Actual	2024 Levy	2025 Proposed	\$	%
General Fund	\$70,508.01	\$73,502.00	\$71,000.00	-\$2,502	-3.4%
Road & Bridge Fund	\$189,561.43	\$174,500.00	\$198,000.00	+\$23,500	+13.5%
Fire Fund	\$30,591.00	\$35,750.00	\$35,000.00	-\$750	-2.1%
Capital Improvement Fund	\$1,529.82	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
Total	\$290,660.44	\$283,752.00	\$304,000.00	+\$20,248	+7.1%

The township operates four funds as outlined in Table 1.

**Capital Improvement Fund:** No levy request for Capital Improvement for 2025

**Fire Fund:** The 2025 proposed fire budget presented by the City of Nevis is \$172,785. Five local municipalities share in this total cost. The City of Nevis and four townships: Nevis, Crow Wing, Mantrap and Thorpe each pay a percentage of this bill based on the following criteria:

- Average # of fire calls over the last 3 years
- 2018 structure values
- Population of community

This year, Mantrap Township is responsible for 20% of the shared fire budget which is equal to \$34,557. The 2025 fire fund accounts for 11.5% of the total levy. Fire Fund Reserve goal is \$50,000.

**General Fund:** Costs to operate the township municipality remain steady. There will be no election expenses in 2025. The 6-member Planning Commission continues to meet regularly to research, discuss and make recommendations on land-use issues. The 2025 general fund accounts for 23.4% of the total levy. General Fund Reserve goal is \$100,000.

**Road & Bridge Fund:** The board continues to work creatively to solve road issues—both expected and unexpected, both big and small. It's not always easy and tough decisions need to be made. Road maintenance costs continue to rise, and the weather plays an unpredictable role in road management expenses. The township services 29.4 miles of road which makes the township's largest expense. The 2025 road and bridge fund accounts for 65.1% of the total levy. Road & Bridge Reserve goal is \$250,000.

**Year-End Financial Status:** Table 2 reports the township's liquid assets at the end of 2023.

Please keep in mind that this is a financial snapshot on one day. Township monies arrive incrementally throughout the year, however, expenses remain constant on a monthly basis and liquid cash must be available to meet those needs. We are lucky to have a beautiful township hall that is not only valuable equity, but also requires upkeep throughout the entire year. Our committed staff includes the assessor, zoning administrator, board supervisors, clerk and treasurer. We encourage attendance at local, county and staff meetings, in addition to training that is offered by the *Minnesota Association of Townships* on a variety of topics related to township government.

One opportunity the board took advantage of in 2023 was to join 4M, an AAA certified cash management organization that caters to Minnesota public townships and municipalities. Minnesota Municipal Money Market Fund, aka 4M, operates in accordance with Minnesota statutes that townships are legally bound to operate under. The township was able to increase its revenue flow through its investments with 4M—earning \$11,321.92 in interest income during 2023. That is nearly a 300% increase over the \$2,874.03 interest earned in 2022.

Table 2: Mantrap Township Financial Status 2023		
January 1, 2023	Opening Balance	\$504,933.11
	Plus Revenues	\$243,824.58
	Minus Expenses	\$290,660.44
December 31, 2023	Closing Balance	\$458,097.25

# Ballot Questions

By Kim Olson

The township can't function without a clerk and a treasurer. Due to the difficulty we've had filling those positions, the board is placing two important questions on the ballot for the township this year—changing the clerk and treasurer positions to appointed rather than elected. Currently, both the clerk and the treasurer are elected positions. Because of that, the clerk and the treasurer must be residents/eligible to vote in the township. The size and demographics of our township really limit the amount of possible candidates. Changing the positions to appointed opens them up to qualified individuals who aren't township residents. It expands the pool of candidates and will hopefully make it easier to fill them.

# Planning Commission

By Russ Keller

It has been about 20 years since the land use plan was updated, hence it was time to revise it where needed.

The town planning commission is made up of five members; all are residents in the township plus one town board member. They are tasked with the responsibility for making recommendations to the town board for possible plan revisions. They have met monthly to work on planning and zoning issues at hand which currently is updating the town land use plan and land use ordinance. The goal is to develop a comprehensive plan setting forth a vision to guide future development of the land.

The process started last summer with a survey request for township residents and property owners to voice their opinions, concerns, and offer direction for the town board to take in updating the plan.

Results from the survey were consistent with the 2001 survey. Respondents want to protect property values, character of the community, open spaces, and recreational areas. They favor preservation of the natural environment and rural lifestyle. In short "we like it as it is."

With this guidance, no radical changes or revisions are anticipated. We will likely do more tweaking and clarification of definitions to the current plan. We anticipate a final draft later this year. Please check the website later for the completed plan.

# Major Projects

By Kim Olson

We are juggling quite a few major projects right now. They all take time and money. We are doing our best to prioritize and to do some longer range planning to make sure we have the resources we need to complete them.

## Island View Culvert/Bridge

The culverts on the unnamed waterway connecting Mantrap and Upper Bottle lakes are being replaced with a box culvert wide enough to qualify as a bridge. The township has obtained \$338K in township bridge funding for engineering costs and construction; township pays an additional \$20K. Completing a road survey and obtaining property owner signatures for the road/bridge easement are in progress. Once that step is complete, the project will go out for bids. Expected completion date is 2024.

## Island View Repair

Repair of an approximately 25' section of the road will be included in the request for bid on the culvert project. Expected completion for that section is 2024. Research for repair of the remainder of the road is ongoing.

## Spider Island Causeway

The two areas this project addresses are the width of the road (trees in the middle make the lanes very narrow) and erosion. The township is working with the road contractor on estimates for bringing the road closer to road standards and Soil & Water to develop a plan for the erosion. Expected completion is 2025-2026.

## Road Recording

There are a lot of roads that appear to have never been formally recorded. Documentation for some may be in the piles of old records in the town hall. Hubbard County is helping us sort through some of the record books. The board has been going through the rest. As we determine which roads still need to be recorded, we will contact the property owners to make it happen. Expected completion is 2025-2026.

## Land Use Plan Update

The text of the Land Use Plan is complete. The only item left before it can be published is the update to the current zoning map. Expected completion is 2024.

## Ordinance Update

The Planning Commission is using the updated Land Use Plan to revise the Land Use Ordinance. They are bringing the ordinance more in line with the county's Shoreland Management Ordinance where it makes sense while ensuring that the township's interests are protected. This is a lengthy process, so please watch for updates on the website. Expected completion is 2024-2025.

## Mantrap Township Lakes and AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species)

By Laura Scanlon

The year was 2012. The mission was to begin the effort to safeguard Spider, the three Crooked Lakes, Ojibway and Big Mantrap from AIS. These efforts continue to be proactive as early detection is the most effective form of AIS defense. The two components the township has supported to date include 1) watercraft inspection hours, and 2) veliger/spiny water flea testing.

## Watercraft Inspection Partnership with Hubbard County Environmental Services

At its January 8th board meeting, the Mantrap Board of Supervisors approved an agreement to support 524 supplemental hours of watercraft inspection hours at three Mantrap Township lake public accesses. Costs remain \$25 per hour in 2024 to cover the administration of hiring and scheduling, as well as paying the wages of our public access inspectors. Table 1 shows the number of inspection hours supported by the township, lake associations and the state of Minnesota.

Watercraft inspections are scheduled on weekends covering the period from fishing opener in May through Labor Day weekend for Spider and East Crooked accesses. Spider Lake Association and East Crooked Lake Association continue to support watercraft inspection hours for their lakes by making financial contributions to the township watercraft supplemental hours initiative. Thank you to both lake associations from the entire Mantrap Township board and community.

Big Mantrap Lake Association makes their contribution directly to Hubbard County Environmental Services. Due to the higher number of inspections per hour, Big Mantrap accesses are scheduled for daily inspectors to be on duty throughout the entire summer season. The financial investment the community makes to keep our lakes clean is to be commended. Total dollars are calculated by multiplying hours by the \$25 cost per hour. To view the [2023 Hubbard County Watercraft Inspection Schedule](#), click on the link.

Table 1: 2024 Watercraft Inspection Hours
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	Mantrap Township Contribution	Lake Association Contribution	State of MN Contribution	Other Townships on Big Mantrap	Total Inspection Hours
Spider Lake	112	72	64	n/a	248
East Crooked	88	100	64	n/a	252
Big Mantrap	152	462	584	194	1392
Total Hours	352	634	712	194	1892
<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$8,800.00</b>	<b>\$15,850.00</b>	<b>\$17,800.00</b>	<b>\$4,850.00</b>	<b>\$47,300.00</b>

## Veliger/Spiny Water Flea Testing

Mantrap Township contracts with the Hubbard County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) to sample water on Spider, the three Crooked Lakes and Ojibway. Table 2 identifies the cost of this AIS early detection effort. Note that from \*2012-2020, costs reflect veliger sampling only. Beginning in 2021, costs include both veliger and spiny waterflea testing. Two samples will be taken, one in June and one in July, when veliger activity is highest. RMB Labs will do the testing. All five lakes received negative testing results in 2023—meaning no indication of either invasive species. To view the [Hubbard County Interactive AIS Distribution Map](#), click on the link.

Table 2: Veliger/Spiny Water Fleas Sampling Costs				
Testing Completed by Hubbard County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)				
2021	\$ 2,042.16	3 lakes	Spider, East Crooked, Middle Crooked	
2022	\$ 2,556.96	4 lakes	Spider, East Crooked, Middle Crooked, West Crooked	
2023	\$ 3,205.80	5 lakes	Spider, East Crooked, Middle Crooked, West Crooked, Ojibway	
2024	\$ 3,555.60	5 lakes	Spider, East Crooked, Middle Crooked, West Crooked, Ojibway	
2021-2024 Total	\$ 11,360.52			
*2012-2020 Total	\$ 14,129.16			
Overall Total	\$ 25,489.68			

## Did You Know?

The following three aquatic invasive plants all appear on the 2024 priority list published by the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC.) All three invasive plants appear on the infested waters list for specific lakes located in Hubbard County. Click on each photo below to learn more.

**Curly Leaf Pondweed**



**Eurasian Watermilfoil**



**Purple Loosestrife**



Photo Credits: maisrc.umn.edu and dnr.state.mn.us

## We Can All Do Our Part in Reducing the Risk of AIS in Mantrap Township Lakes

Click on the following links to learn more.

[CLEAN. DRAIN. DISPOSE.](#)

[Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center \(MAISRC\)](#)

[Infested Waters List | Minnesota DNR](#)

[Decontamination Station Information](#)

[Watershed Health Assessment Framework for Lakes \(WHAF\)](#)

## It Takes a Village...How Can You Help?

Your township government is made up of five elected officials. They're your neighbors working part-time doing their very best to handle everything from potholes to bridge-building on a pretty limited budget. They'd love your help! Here are some ways you can pitch in. Some are things you can do with little or no effort.

1. Slow down on the gravel roads. The speed limit may be 55 mph, but the faster you go, the more dust (binder for the gravel!) there is. Think of the dust as your tax dollars going up in smoke.
2. Keep right-of-ways clear. Vehicles or other objects in the right-of-way interfere with road maintenance and plowing.
3. Don't cut corners when making a turn.
4. Become an election judge.

5. Help sort through all the piles of old township records (contact Kim Olson if you're interested).
6. Report road and tree problems to the supervisors. We ride the roads at least once a month, but we don't always know there's a problem in between our reviews.
7. Report spotted knapweed in ditches to the supervisors.

## Mark Your Calendars!

We won't be sending out reminder postcards next year, so please mark your calendars to attend the Annual Meeting on Township Tuesday, the second Tuesday in March. Next year's date: March 11th, 2025 at 7 pm in the town hall.