

Mantrap Township Annual Newsletter

February 2025

Annual meeting: March 11th, 2025 at 7 pm in the town hall

Other Important Dates

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)

Nevis ISD 308 Referendum vote: April 8th, 2025

Local Board of Appeal and Equalization: April 22nd, 2025 @1:30 pm

Next year's annual meeting: March 10th, 2026 at 7 pm in the town hall

Your Township Board

Kim Olson, Chair, (907) 382-0473, mantrapsupervisorb@gmail.com

Milica Stanfel, Vice Chair, (218) 536-1474, mantrapsupervisora@gmail.com

Eric Landstrom, Supervisor, (218) 255-5518, mantrapsupervisorc@gmail.com

Lonna Theede, Clerk, (506) 313-9721, mantrapclerk@gmail.com

Laura Scanlon, Treasurer, (612) 751-6666, mantraptreasurer@gmail.com

Milestones

Lonna Theede graciously stepped up last year as clerk. Now that we are able to advertise and hire outside the township, she's moving on. Please thank her for all she did to keep us going these past 15 months!

We are in the process of hiring a new clerk. We expect to complete that process at the March regular board meeting, so stand by for further information.

We said goodbye to one of our supervisors—Russ Keller. He wasn't on the board for very long, but he brought a fresh perspective to everything. We welcomed Eric Landstrom to the board in November as his replacement and is rapidly coming up to speed.

Congratulations and a big thank you to Milica Stanfel for 20 years on the township board! She brings a lot of experience and knowledge to the board.

Notes from the Chair

By Kim Olson

Greetings from your chairman! My goal this year is to find places where we can press the “easy” button in order to save time and money.

Roads:

- BIG ISSUES this past year: VANDALISM and ROAD DAMAGE! These two things cost us between \$5-10,000 of unbudgeted/unlevied funds!
 - Vandalism:
 - An individual on an ATV was caught tearing up an intersection, creating very deep circular ruts. This is not just costly to repair, it also presents a safety hazard. He was charged with a misdemeanor, so restitution was limited to \$550.
 - The same incident occurred 3 other times in the same intersection, but unfortunately, we didn't have evidence to prove who did it.
 - Please take pictures with your phone or trail cams and provide the information to the Hubbard County Sheriff if you see any vandalism.
 - Road damage:
 - Heavy rains and sloped driveway approaches caused runoff to damage some roads. Unfortunately, because the driveway was not fixed right away, the problem recurred.
 - Because it's the property owner's responsibility to ensure drainage from the driveway approach doesn't damage township roads, we'll be notifying property owners in the future when we see the problem and will try to recoup the repair costs.
 - We'll also be watching out for property owners pushing snow across roads and leaving trails of snow that cross the road. It can freeze and damage the plows.
- Based on research, information from other townships, and the condition of our roads, we will be skipping a year for Durablend (calcium chloride) application to save money. We'll see how it goes and reevaluate after this season to determine if we need to go back to every year.
- Starting in 2026, we will be limiting Durablend to the heaviest trafficked roads. We're working on a policy for anyone who wants Durablend on the road in front of their parcel at their own expense..
- We're looking at doing an 18-month contract on road maintenance to cut down on administrative costs and time.

Gravel:

- Heartland, 244th, and Gunnison (5.9 miles of road) received 2" of new gravel in early summer through participation in the county's gravel program
- Next graveling will be in 2026; we'll be looking at the roads this summer to determine which ones need gravel

Weeds:

- We haven't done weed control in a couple of years, so it's time to do it.
- We'll be out inspecting for weeds, but if you notice noxious weeds in the ditches, please let us know.

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 School District Referendum

By Kim Olson

On April 8, 2025, Nevis school district voters will consider a \$41.55 million (plus interest)/21-year referendum to expand and renovate the school facilities.

1. If you reside in the Nevis school district, you can vote. You DO NOT have to be a resident of the city of Nevis.
2. Early/absentee voting is available.
3. Information about the referendum, including the estimated annual impact on your taxes, is on nevisforward.org.
4. Nevis C&C is sponsoring a chili dinner and presentation about the referendum on Feb 27 at 5:00 at Bethany Lutheran Church.
5. The school district is hosting an ice cream social on March 18th from 6pm-8pm. You can drop in anytime during the two-hour period to get answers about the referendum, take a building tour, and speak directly with school district leaders.

Zoning

All structures in Mantrap Township require land use permits and all driveways connecting to a township road require a permit. Both are issued by the Zoning Administrator. The Zoning Administrator is Al Winterberger, 218-255-1722 or email winterberger@arvig.net. Check out the township website for copies of the land use ordinance and other helpful info.

Financial Matters

By Laura Scanlon

On January 28, Mantrap Township Board held its annual Budget Meeting. Table 1 provides data that includes the 2026 proposed levy totaling \$305,850. This is an increase of .61% over the 2025 levy.

Table 1	Proposed Levy/Comparison			Change over 2024 Levy	
	2024 Levy	2025 Levy	2026 Proposed	\$	%
Road & Bridge Fund	\$174,500	\$198,000	\$188,500	-\$9,500	-4.8%
General Fund	\$73,502	\$71,000	\$77,000	+\$6,000	+8.5%
Fire Fund	\$35,750	\$35,000	\$40,350	+\$5,350	+15.3
Capital Improvement Fund	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
Total	\$283,752	\$304,000	305,850	+\$1,850	+.61%

Important Date: The Annual Meeting is Tuesday, March 11, 2025 at 7:00 pm at the Township Hall. Mantrap residents have the opportunity to vote on the 2026 proposed levies.

The township operates four funds as outlined in Table 1.

Road & Bridge Fund: The goal is to provide well-maintained gravel roads that have a smooth, even surface with proper drainage, defined shoulders, minimal potholes, a consistent grade providing stability and traction for vehicular traffic. This is only achieved through regular maintenance like grading, compaction, and binding measures. The board continues to work creatively to meet this goal and solve issues on the 29.4 miles of township roads. It's not always easy to balance the goal of maintaining quality roadways within the constraints of an affordable levy. Road maintenance costs continue to rise. The unpredictable nature of climate conditions, traffic volume and misuse of roadways play a huge role in road management expenses. The following expense categories are paid with road and bridge funds.

- Hubbard County gravel contract services
- Maintaining and storing gravel pile for spot graveling
- Road grading
- Snow and ice control
- Application of Durablend/Calcium Chloride products

- Weed control
- Ditch and shoulder mowing
- Tree removal
- Recording of township roads
- Purchase and installation of signage
- Special project expenses

The 2026 road and bridge fund accounts for 61.6% of the total levy.

General Fund: This fund supports the operational and human resource expenses encountered by the township.

- Costs to operate the town hall include insurance, utilities, web page, upkeep, public notices, supplies and equipment.
- There will be one election in 2026 with two supervisor positions on the ballot. Election costs include Truth-In-Taxation statements mailed to property owners; training, mileage and election hours for our election workers.
- The Planning Commission continues to meet regularly to research, discuss and make recommendations on ordinance and land-use issues.
- The township pays dues to local and state township organizations who provide guidance, training and support to township supervisors, clerks and treasurers.
- On occasion, the township needs to consult with legal partners on matters to assure proper and principled courses of action.
- The zoning administrator is paid for writing permits, meeting and communicating with residents and researching land-use feasibility.
- Salaries for the township assessor, clerk and treasurer come from the General Fund. Township supervisors attend a myriad of board, local, and state meetings in addition to tending to a variety of issues that surface throughout the year.

The 2026 general fund accounts for 25% of the total levy.

Fire Fund: The 2026 proposed fire budget presented by the City of Nevis is \$192,097. This figure represents an 11.2% increase over the 2025 fire budget of \$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
- Structure values
- Population of community

Based on the current formula, Mantrap Township is responsible for 21% of the shared fire budget which is equal to \$40,350.

The 2026 fire fund expense accounts for 13.2% of the total township levy.

Capital Improvement Fund: No levy request for Capital Improvement for 2026.

Reserve Funds: The board is committed to maintaining a solid financial status. This means being prepared for unexpected and unpredictable hardships. It also means having the ability to pay for all expenses on time. The township is working hard to build up emergency funds to meet the reserve goals listed below in Table 2.

Table 2: Reserve Goals			
Road & Bridge	General Fund	Fire Fund	Total
\$250,000	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$400,000

Year-End Financial Status: Table 3 reports the township's liquid assets at the end of 2024. Please keep in mind that this is a financial snapshot on one day. Township funds 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 a valuable asset, but also requires upkeep throughout the year. Our committed staff includes the assessor, zoning administrator, 6-member planning commission, three board supervisors, clerk and treasurer. We encourage our supervisors, clerk and treasurer to learn as much as possible about grass roots government by attending local, county and state meetings, in addition to enrolling in training opportunities offered by the *Minnesota Association of Townships* on a variety of topics related to township government.

Table 3: Mantrap Township Financial Status 2024		
January 1, 2024	Opening Balance	\$458,097.26
	Plus Revenues	\$344,849.42
	Minus Expenses	\$352,703.43
December 31, 2024	Closing Balance	\$450,243.24

Did You Know? Minnesota statutes govern how townships can invest public monies. Cities and townships are allowed to invest money in certain securities which tend to be among the safest available. (See chapter 118 of MN Statutes.) Common examples include federal, state and local securities, money market accounts and certificates of deposit. The Mantrap Township board partners with a local bank and a cash management program that is customized to meet the needs of Minnesota township governments. In addition, the program meets all requirements of Minnesota statutes for managing public funds. The township's 2024 revenue flow included interest earnings of \$22,568.02. That is nearly a 100% increase over interest earned in 2023.

Question of the Year: I pay a lot of money in taxes. Why don't you pave my road?

By Kim Olson

I get this question fairly frequently. To answer it, I first need to point out some things on your property tax statement.

The property tax statement is a combined bill: it includes county tax (line 6), township tax (line 7), state tax (line 8), school district taxes (lines 9 and 11), special taxes (line 10), and special assessments like solid waste (line 13). The ONLY funds we receive from your property tax are the ones on line 7. In this example, which is a large residential homestead with lakefront, that's \$780 (about 17% of the total tax bill).

Taxes Payable Year:		2023	2024
1.	Use this amount on Form M1PR to see if you are eligible for a property tax refund. File by August 15. If this box is checked, you owe delinquent taxes and are not eligible. <input type="checkbox"/>		4,214.00
2.	Use these amounts on Form M1PR to see if you are eligible for a special refund.	3,428.00	
Property Tax and Credits			
3.	Property taxes before credits	3,548.04	4,346.16
4.	Credits that reduce your property taxes	-6.04	-6.16
	A. Agricultural and rural land credits		
	B. Other Credits		
5.	Property taxes after credits	3,542.00	4,340.00
Property Tax by Jurisdiction			
6.	County	1,944.16	2,301.34
7.	City or Town: MANTRAP	509.72	780.18
8.	State General Tax		
9.	School District (0308)	146.70	171.02
	A. Voter approved levies		
	B. Other local levies	915.70	1,057.32
10.	Special Taxing Districts	25.72	30.14
	A. Other		
	B. Tax Increment		
	C. Fiscal disparity		
11.	Non-school voter approved referenda levies		
12.	Total property tax before special assessments	3,542.00	4,340.00
Special Assessments on Your Property			
13.	Special Assessments	200.00	210.00
	A. SOLID WASTE ASSESSMENT		
	B.		
	C.		
14.	YOUR TOTAL PROPERTY TAX AND SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS	3,742.00	4,550.00

The cost for paving 1 mile of gravel road that is in perfect condition for paving is \$250,000. Most of our roads, including this one, are not in perfect condition. Prepping the road adds an additional \$100,000 to \$250,000. So the minimum to pave 1 mile of road is \$350,000.

This particular parcel is on a 2 ½ mile road with 29 properties. Total township tax revenue from all the parcels for 2024 was \$10,575. Cost for paving would be at least \$875,000—and we would still have maintenance costs for the paved road. It's just not feasible to pave. We are always looking for outside funding, though, because it would be great to have some paved roads!

Major Projects

By Kim Olson

We are still juggling quite a few major projects! 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 were replaced with a box culvert/bridge on Nov 24. Resurfacing will occur in late spring/early summer 2025.

Island View Repair

Repair of an approximately 40' section of the road was included in the request for bid on the culvert project. Expected completion for that section is 2025 when the road on the culvert is resurfaced. 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 2026-27.

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 2025.

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. It's currently being reviewed by the township lawyer. Expected completion is 2025.

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.

Mantrap Township Lakes and AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species)

By Laura Scanlon

Mantrap Township values the importance of AIS-free waters in our township lakes. Watercraft inspections and early detection continue to be proactive and the most effective measures of AIS defense.

Watercraft Inspection Partnership with Hubbard County Environmental Services

At its January 13th board meeting, the Mantrap Board of Supervisors approved an agreement to support 200 supplemental hours for watercraft inspections at three Mantrap Township public accesses. Costs increased from \$25 to \$26 per hour for the 2025 summer season. These costs cover the administration of hiring and scheduling, as well as paying the wages of our public access inspectors. Total dollars are calculated by multiplying hours by the \$26 cost per hour. The 2025 township contribution of \$5,200 is down from the \$8,800 in 2024.

Watercraft inspections are scheduled on selected weekend days 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 additional watercraft inspection hours for their lakes by making financial contributions directly to Hubbard County Environmental Services starting in 2025. Thank you to both lake associations from the entire Mantrap Township board and community.

Due to the higher number of inspections per hour and its status as a *destination lake*, the Big Mantrap public access is scheduled for inspectors to be on duty every day from fishing opener through October 31. The number of hours each access receives is based on a risk factor value that includes: the number of inspections per hour at each lake, the number of public accesses on the lake, the number of resorts on the lake, in addition to risk data taken by inspectors at each access from boaters entering and leaving the lake. Funding from state and local governments, lake associations and private parties all help support the 14,400 watercraft inspection hours scheduled on Hubbard County lakes in 2024.

Proposed 2025 Supplemental at \$26.00 per Hour		
Lake	Mantrap Township	
	Hours	Cost
Spider	95	\$ 2,470.00
East Crooked	75	\$ 1,950.00
Big Mantrap	30	\$ 780.00
Overall Total	200	\$ 5,200.00

Please consider checking out the [2024 Hubbard County Watercraft Inspection Schedule](#). (After clicking on this link, → go to *Environmental Services* → then to the *Aquatic Invasive Species* link → click on *Watercraft Inspections* → click on *Watercraft Inspection Schedule 2024*.)

Veliger/Spiny Water Flea Testing

Mantrap Township will contract with the Hubbard County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) in 2025 to sample water on Spider, the three Crooked Lakes and Ojibway. The table below identifies the cost of this AIS early detection effort over the last couple years. Veliger activity is highest in June and July so two water samples are taken and tested, one sample in June and one in July. RMB Labs can test for both invaders using the same sample. All testing results in 2024 reported no sign of either invasive species. To view the [Hubbard County Interactive AIS Distribution Map](#), click on the link. You will see a more comprehensive map view of which local lakes are infested with AIS.

Veliger/Spiny Water Fleas Sampling Costs			
Testing Completed by Hubbard County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)			
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
2025	tbd	5 lakes	Spider, East Crooked, Middle Crooked, West Crooked, Ojibway

Did You Know?

In 2023, this newsletter highlighted invasive [zebra mussels](#) and invasive [spiny water fleas](#). In 2024, invasive [Eurasian milfoil](#), invasive [curly leaf pondweed](#) and invasive [purple loosestrife](#) were featured. Please click on each link to learn more.

This year, the focus is on aquatic invasive [faucet snails](#), aquatic invasive [starry stonewort](#) and invasive land plant, [spotted knapweed](#). Faucet snails currently appear in 11 Hubbard County Lakes, while the nasty starry stonewort was identified in just one Hubbard County lake in 2023. Please refer to the [DNR's list of infested waters](#) last updated on November 8, 2024 and shown below for Hubbard County lakes. Click on the written links or on the pictures below to learn more.

Water body name	County or counties	Listed for aquatic invasive species	Year listed as infested
Bad Axe	Hubbard	Eurasian watermilfoil	2017
Bender Creek from Bender Creek Road downstream to First Crow Wing (29-0086)	Hubbard	faucet snail	2019
Benedict	Hubbard	zebra mussel	2017
Big Mantrap	Hubbard	Eurasian watermilfoil	2020
Boulder	Hubbard	faucet snail	2020
Duck	Hubbard	faucet snail	2019
First Crow Wing	Hubbard	faucet snail	2011
Fourth Crow Wing	Hubbard	faucet snail	2019
Garfield	Hubbard	zebra mussel	2017
George	Hubbard	faucet snail	2018
Long	Hubbard	faucet snail	2017
Long	Hubbard	zebra mussel	2020
Long	Hubbard	starry stonewort	2023
Plantagenet	Hubbard	zebra mussel	2023
Potato	Hubbard	zebra mussel	2024
Second Crow Wing	Hubbard	faucet snail	2011
Third Crow Wing	Hubbard	faucet snail	2018
Upper Bottle	Hubbard	faucet snail	2019
Upper Twin	Hubbard	faucet snail	2009

AIS is nasty! It spreads very quickly. When not detected or monitored, it can overtake the entire lake over time. Once a lake is infested, the chances of completely removing the invader is slim to none. Early detection allows stakeholders to isolate and control the area of infestation. For several invasive species, there is no known method of control, attack or eradication.

Three ways to remove invasive species include:

1. Mechanical control involves manual removal by people.
2. Chemical control uses herbicides that can attack and kill plants.
3. Biological control involves finding a natural species that attacks the invader. For example, the larvae of seedhead weevils eat the developing seeds of spotted knapweed.

Spotlight on Spotted Knapweed

Does the image below look familiar? You probably have seen spotted knapweed growing on your property or along your roadway. If you look carefully, you see groves of spotted knapweed along the county and country roads. The following excerpts are taken directly from the DNR website.

Threat to Minnesota

- *Spotted knapweed is poisonous to other plants (phytotoxic) and forms dense monocultures.*
- *It especially threatens dry prairie, oak and pine barrens, dunes, and sandy ridges.*
- *It spreads rapidly along road corridors and in gravel pits, agricultural field edges, and overgrazed pastures.*
- *Spotted knapweed reduces forage quality in pastures for livestock.*

Manual Control Method

Mechanical control can be done by digging or pulling the plant by hand or with equipment such as a sharp shovel. Spotted knapweed has a deep taproot so care must be taken to remove as much of the taproot as possible. Cover your skin by wearing gloves and long sleeves when working with this plant as it can be a skin irritant for some people. Mowing before seed has developed can help prevent seed spread. Mow from May to July to prevent flowers from forming. Do not mow if seed is present (July and later).

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/terrestrialplants/herbaceous/spottedknapweed.html>

Faucet Snail



Spotted Knapweed



Starry Stonewort



Photo Credits: Minnesota Department of Agriculture and dnr.state.mn.us website

Let's Do Our Part in Reducing the Risk of AIS and Noxious Weeds in Hubbard County!

If you are boating in infested waters, ALWAYS take your boat to the Decontamination Station for a 140 degree power wash before dropping the boat in another lake. Call for a same-day appointment. Decon Stations wash your boats, trailers, kayaks, canoes, etc for FREE!

Park Rapids

Hubbard County Decon Station
812 Henrietta Ave S
Park Rapids, MN 56470
Available 7 days/wk 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
On-call: 218-616-1631

Bemidji

Beltrami County Decon Station
2400 Middle School Drive
Bemidji, MN 56601
Available 7 days/wk
On-call: 218-760-8519

Click on the following links to learn more.

Always [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. Help sort through all the piles of old township records (contact Kim Olson if you're interested).
5. 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.
6. Report spotted knapweed in ditches to the supervisors.