

WATERSHED WEEKLY

JANUARY 23, 2026

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BOARD MEETING

The Shell Rock River Watershed District Board of Managers will host their monthly board meeting on February 10, 2026, at 8:30 AM. The meeting will be recorded and uploaded to the District's website.



CONTINUING EDUCATION

Administrative Assistant/ Education and Outreach Coordinator, Leah Stadheim, virtually attended Marketing Smarter in 2026 hosted by the Albert Lea-Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce. She learned new ways to engage audiences, build community, and use AI for research.



HOW DO FISH BREATHE IN THE WINTER?

According to the MN DNR, cold water is no problem for Minnesota's fish. During winter, the layer of ice that forms over Minnesota's lakes and streams acts as natural insulation. Water is most dense at 39°F; during winter, water at that temperature sinks to the bottom. Water is the least dense when it freezes, so ice floats and thickens from there. The density difference is why most lakes don't freeze all the way through. The deepest parts of lakes serve as warmer refuges for schools of fish to gather and overwinter. Fish are cold blooded, so their metabolism slows in winter and they use less oxygen as a result. As waters cool in fall, surface water eventually reaches the same temperature as deeper waters and allows full mixing, saturating the water with oxygen. This process is called fall turnover! In shallow lakes, especially those with a lot of algae, winterkill can happen. When snow covers the ice, it blocks the sunlight that algae needs to survive. As the algae dies, the decomposition process eats up oxygen. Eventually so much oxygen is used up that fish start to die in these systems. Trout need a lot of oxygen in the water, while species like bass and walleye need a moderate amount. Some species like black bullheads only need a little oxygen to survive and that's why they're sometimes the only ones left in turbid, shallow lakes.

ICE IS NEVER 100% SAFE! Recommended Minimum Ice Thickness

(Guidelines for New, Clear Ice Only)



ICE THICKNESS

According to the Freeborn County Sheriff's Office, ice west of the beach entrance was checked a few days ago. They reported 16.5-17 inches of ice thickness. They also reminded people to stay away from the aerators.



WINTER SALT WEEK

Winter Salt Week (January 26-30) is a collaboration of governmental and non-governmental organizations across the United States and Canada. Register for free featured 30-minute livestreams where experts will be diving into chloride, effects, success stories, monitoring, leading change and solutions to using less chloride. Participate in hour-long conversation tables on January 30. [Register online](#) to receive livestream links and session and updates.

HOLD THE DATE → March 6-7



2026 CONFERENCE

HOLD THE DATE

Join ISG for the fourth annual Future of Southern Minnesota Lakes Conference! This dynamic event will highlight inspiring project successes, expert-led lake restoration and water quality sessions, and case studies from Southern Minnesota and throughout the Midwest. New this year is a Lake Management Planning Workshop, designed to provide attendees with actionable tools and strategies for effective planning. Connect with water resource professionals, deepen your understanding of lake dynamics, and gain practical knowledge to support healthy, thriving lakes in your community. Space is limited. Register by February 27, 2026, to secure your spot.

HWY-14 TOUR STOP

SOIL HEALTH WINTER WORKSHOP

OWATONNA, MN
FEBRUARY 17TH, 2026
8:30 AM - 2:00 PM

TOREY'S RESTAURANT
208 N CEDAR AVE.
OWATONNA, MN 55060

STRIP TILL MAKES DOLLARS AND SENSE

Free Event with Lunch Provided
CEUs Available

PAT DUNCANSON
Pat will present on soil health as a whole and debunking myths that are often associated with strip-till, cover crops, etc.

RANDY DEPUYDT
Randy will be focusing on strip-till as a key component in a regenerative ag system with observations from multiple points of view.

GREG ENTINGER
Greg will be talking about the economics of strip-till and how he saved time and money by utilizing the practice.

KRISTEN DIETERMAN
Will be speaking about the Rice Creek project and how practices like strip-till and cover crops can directly affect the community.

AGENDA

8:30-8:50 Registration/Welcome/Ice Breaker
8:50-9:00 Welcome/ Ice Breaker
9:00-10:00 Pat Duncanson
• Soil Health and Debunking Common Myths
10:00-10:15 Break
10:15-11:15 Randy Depuydt
• Strip-till in Regenerative Ag Systems
11:15-11:45 Q&A with Randy and Pat
11:45-12:30 Lunch
12:30-1:15 Greg Entinger
• Strip-till Economics
1:15-2:00 Kristen Dieterman
• Rice Creek Project

SCAN QR CODE TO RSVP AND LEARN MORE
INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRESENTERS
You may also RSVP by calling 507-320-3728
or emailing Lindsey.Cornell@mn.nacdn.net
*RSVP's due by Feb. 10th, 2026