

WATERSHED WEEKLY

FEBRUARY 13, 2026

WWW.SHELLROCK.ORG



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 was recorded and uploaded to the District's website: www.shellrock.org



OUTREACH

The Shell Rock River Watershed District is proud to donate prizes to the winners of the Big Freeze Ice Fishing Tournament. Thank you for being good stewards of our natural resources!

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Natural Resource Technician, Mike Wacholz, attended the Minnesota Lake Management Society Lake Management Symposium. He learned perspectives on the value and management of shallow lakes and the unique threats to shallow lakes. He networked with lake management experts and shared his own knowledge and experiences.

AGENDA

- 8:30-8:50 Registration
- 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

Local Option Sales Tax vs. Property Tax - What's the Difference?

Local Option Sales Tax	Property Taxes
Added to Sales Purchases	Based on Property Value
Paid by Residents & Tourists	Paid by Homeowners
Everyone Contributes	Only Property Owners Pay
Collected on Goods & Services	Taxes on Real Estate

IN THE NEWS

Under Minnesota state law, watershed districts do not have the authority to impose a local option sales tax. Instead, a city or county must adopt a sales tax on behalf of a watershed district and dedicate the proceeds to water improvement projects.

In 2005, the City of Albert Lea, the Minnesota Legislature, and local voters approved a half-cent sales tax to support the Shell Rock River Watershed District. Sales tax revenue is often used as the required local match for state and federal grants. To date, this local investment has helped leverage nearly \$56 million in grant funding for watershed projects.

These funds have made major efforts possible, including the Fountain Lake dredging and channel restoration, the Albert Lea Lake Dam and Fish Barrier, the Pickerel Lake Dam and Reclamation, and many additional projects that improve water quality, habitat, conservation, and flood storage across the watershed.

This sales tax is scheduled to expire in February 2026. The City of Albert Lea will again ask the Minnesota Legislature for permission to place a half-cent sales tax question before voters in November. This would not be a new sales tax, but a continuation of the existing one. However, the City is proposing that future proceeds be divided, with half continuing to support the Shell Rock River Watershed District and half dedicated to City projects.

A common misconception involves the difference between a local option sales tax and a property tax. Most notably, a sales tax is paid by anyone making purchases locally – including visitors, commuters passing through, and shoppers from outside the area – which helps spread the cost beyond local property owners.

Thank you for your continued support!

MINNESOTA WATERSHEDS

Connecting People. Protecting Water.

LEGISLATIVE EVENT

The Minnesota Watersheds annual Legislative Briefing and Reception will be held on March 3 at the Capitol Ridge Radisson Hotel in St. Paul. This event provides the opportunity to hear from our lobbying team about our legislative priorities and get updates from state agencies on their legislative efforts. In addition to our lobbying team, MPCA Watershed Division Director Glenn Skuta, DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen, and BWSR Assistant Executive Director Justin Hanson are scheduled to speak.

HOLD THE DATE → March 6-7

2026 CONFERENCE

HOLD THE DATE

ISG is bringing back The Future of Southern Minnesota Lakes Conference for its fourth year from March 6-7, 2026, creating space for lake association members, environmental professionals, and community leaders dedicated to preserving and restoring Southern Minnesota lakes. 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.