

WATERSHED WEEKLY

FEBRUARY 6, 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 will be recorded and uploaded to the District's website.

Local Option Sales Tax vs. Property Tax

What's the Difference?

Local Option Sales Tax

VS.

Property Taxes

- Added to Sales Purchases
- Paid by Residents & Tourists
- Everyone Contributes
- Collected on Goods & Services

- Based on Property Value
- Paid by Homeowners
- Only Property Owners Pay
- 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!

Check out the Facebook page for more details!
www.facebook.com/ExploreAlbertLea

THE BIG FREEZE

SATURDAY, FEB. 14TH
ALBERT LEA, MINN.

17th annual

*A community Winter festival packed with fun **all around town**, & **all day long!***

MEDALLION HUNT
****Starts Monday Feb. 9th**
 Sponsor: Albert Lea-Freeborn County Chamber of Commerce

ICE FISHING TOURNAMENT
 1:30pm-3pm @ City Beach
 \$10 per hole - minnows provided
 All ages welcome
 Prizes for largest fish & raffles
 Bring your portable ice shelter
 Enjoy hot cocoa!
 Sponsored: Alerus formerly Home Federal Savings Bank & Albert Lea Anglers

LIVE MUSIC
**** Friday, 2/13 6:30pm**
 Melissa Schulz @ 112 on Broadway
 Sponsor: 112 on Broadway

CHILI COOKOFF + BAKE SALE
 11am-2pm @ Edgewater Bay Pavilion
 \$6 to taste+vote
 -or- \$5 w/non-perishable food donation
 Proceeds benefit the Miracle Field

BROOM BALL TOURNAMENT
 9am-2pm @ Lakeview Park
 3-on-3 teams
 All Ages. Register details coming soon!

PLUNGE FOR THE FIELD
 11am @ Edgewater Bay
 Get your teams together!
 Plunge into the frozen lake for a great cause!
 Proceeds benefit the Miracle Field

A REAL MERMAID EXPERIENCE
 12-2pm @ HeartWaves Studio
 Photo ops with Mermaid Analise tattoos and seaweed hair wraps at 105 N Broadway Ave

Buff Bash
 ONE 12 BROADWAY

LIVE MUSIC @ 8:30pm
WEAR BUFFALO PLaid & GET \$1 OFF DRINKS

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
 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



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

ISG THE FUTURE OF SOUTHERN MINNESOTA LAKES

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.