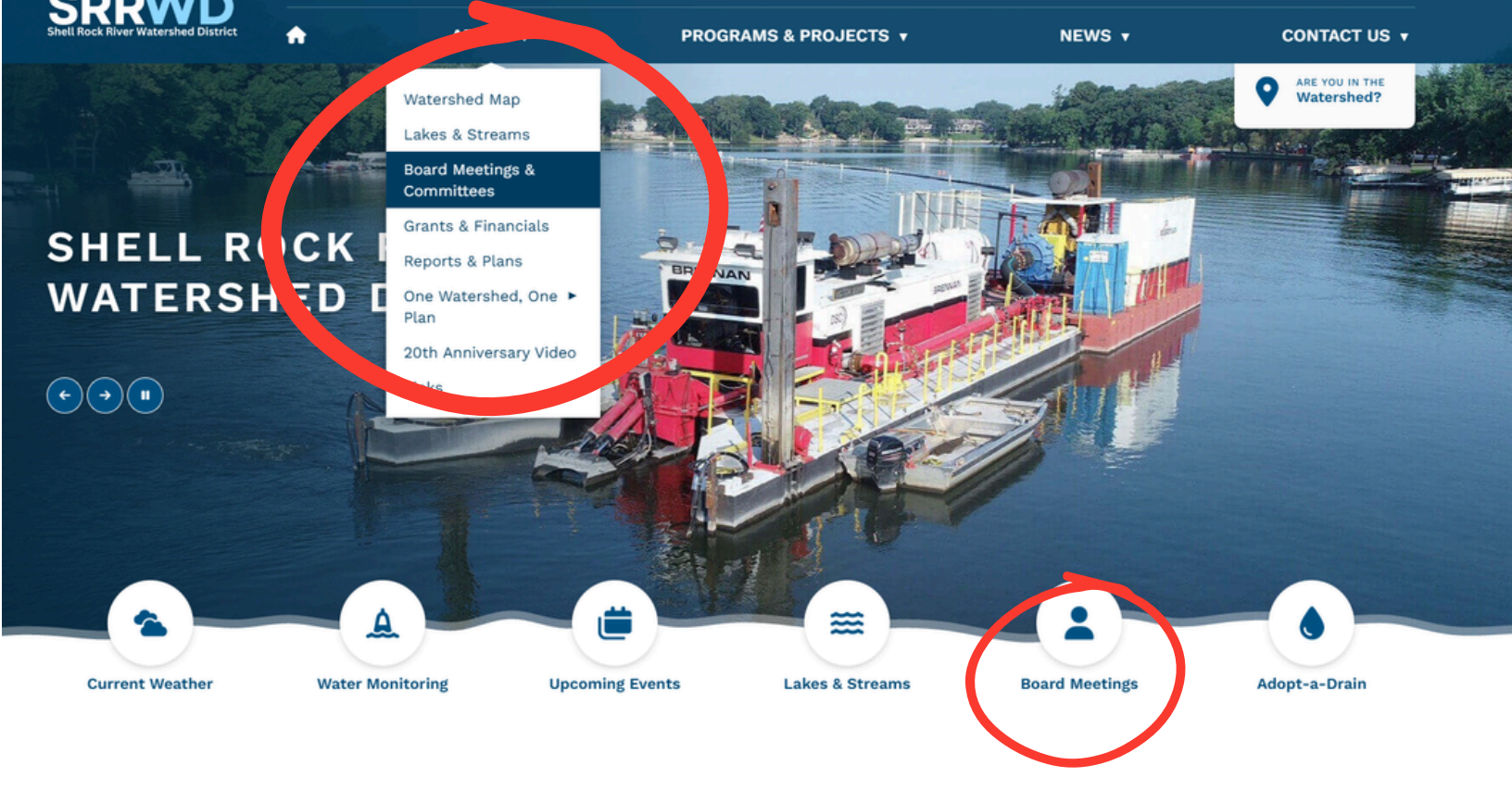


WATERSHED WEEKLY

MAY 22, 2026

WWW.SHELLROCK.ORG



BOARD MEETINGS

The Shell Rock River Watershed District encourages community members to stay informed and involved by attending monthly board meetings and utilizing the resources available on the District's website at www.shellrock.org.

Visitors to the website can easily access board meeting information by selecting the "Board Meetings" section highlighted on the homepage. This section provides convenient access to meeting agendas, approved meeting minutes, and recorded meeting videos. These resources allow residents, landowners, and interested stakeholders to stay up to date on District projects, programs, financial decisions, and ongoing watershed initiatives even if they are unable to attend meetings in person.

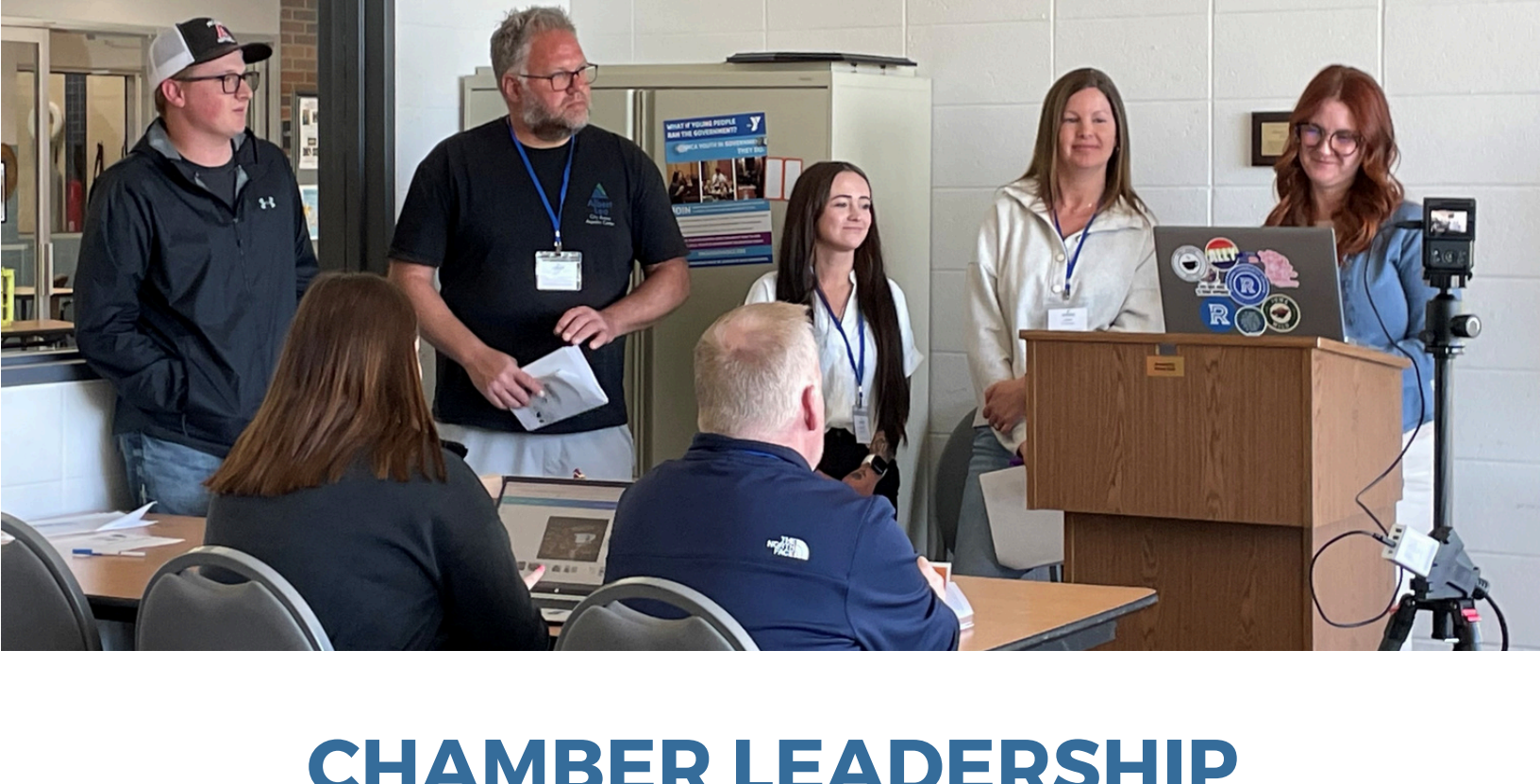
Board meetings are open to the public, and community participation is always welcomed as the District continues working to protect and improve water quality throughout the watershed. The next board meeting is scheduled for June 9, 2026.



ISG FIELD DAY

Program and Project Manager Courtney Phillips recently attended the ISG Agricultural Drainage + Future of Water Quality field tour. The two-day educational event focused on drainage challenges and water management solutions impacting communities across Southern Minnesota. The event featured visits to a variety of project sites, including storage basins, constructed wetlands, stream restorations, and open ditch construction projects, providing attendees with firsthand insight into innovative conservation and infrastructure practices.

New this year, the Minnesota Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) partnered with ISG to offer a professional development session focused on navigating difficult conversations, helping water resource professionals strengthen communication and collaboration skills. Attendance at events like this allows the Shell Rock River Watershed District to stay informed on current water management strategies and bring valuable knowledge and ideas back to the communities it serves.



CHAMBER LEADERSHIP

Leadership Albert Lea-Freeborn County is a community leadership program that gives participants an in-depth look at the region's business, agriculture, education, health care, public safety, human services, and overall quality of life while encouraging future leadership and community involvement. The program runs from September through June and is designed to build strong relationships and collaboration among emerging leaders across the community. This year, participants were also asked to complete a group project, which they presented earlier this month. SRRWD employee Leah Stadheim is pictured above with her group presenting on mental health.



FOUNTAIN LAKE RESTORATION

The Shell Rock River Watershed District Board of Managers approved a \$7.7 million contract with J.F. Brennan Co. for the third and final phase of sediment removal on Fountain Lake. Sediment removal began this week in Bancroft Bay and will continue throughout the 2026 construction season!

The process removes phosphorus-rich sediment from the lake bottom, helping improve water quality and reduce internal phosphorus loading. The material removed from the lake is pumped to a dewatering site, where water is separated and eventually returned to Fountain Lake. The disposal area includes three engineered cells spanning more than 100 acres and can hold millions of cubic yards of sediment.

Work in East Main Bay is scheduled for the 2027 season.

HYDRAULIC DREDGING

REMOVING PHOSPHORUS-RICH SEDIMENT FOR HEALTHIER WATERS

Hydraulic dredging removes the active layer of concentrated phosphorus and exposes sediment with a lower potential for internal loading.

HOW THE DREDGE WORKS

The dredge floats on the water while a submerged cutterhead or suction intake loosens and removes soft, nutrient-rich sediment from the lake bottom.

1 SPUD POLES
Anchored to the lake bottom to hold the dredge in position while it moves side to side.

2 PUMP SYSTEM
Powerful pumps create suction that mixes water and sediment into a slurry.

3 CUTTERHEAD / SUCTION INTAKE
Loosens and lifts sediment from the lake bottom.

4 DREDGED SLURRY
Water + sediment + nutrients are drawn into the pump and sent to the discharge pipeline.

5 DISCHARGE PIPELINE
The slurry is pumped through a pipeline from the dredge to a confined disposal facility.

6 EXCAVATOR / CRANE
Used for maintenance, positioning equipment, and handling pipe sections.

WHAT IS REMOVED?

Active layer (phosphorus-rich)

Older, stable sediment (lower phosphorus)

Sediment removed exposes cleaner, lower-phosphorus sediment with less potential for internal loading.

WHY IT MATTERS

Reduces internal phosphorus loading

Improves water clarity

Reduces algae blooms

Improves aquatic habitat

Increases depth & storage capacity

FROM DREDGE TO CONFINED DISPOSAL FACILITY (CDF)

1 DREDGE PUMPS SLURRY
Sediment and water are mixed and pumped from the lake through the discharge pipeline.

2 PIPELINE TRANSPORT
The slurry travels through a large-diameter pipeline hundreds to thousands of feet to the CDF.

3 ENTERS CDF
The slurry is discharged into the confined disposal facility.

4 SETTLING PROCESS
Inside the basin, water velocity slows and sediment particles settle to the bottom.

5 WATER SEPARATION
Cleaner water rises to the top and is decanted, treated, or discharged as permitted.

The solids remain in the basin. Over time they consolidate, dewater, and can be reused or permanently contained.

CONFINED DISPOSAL FACILITY (CDF)

EARTHEN BERMS
Contain and isolate dredged material.

DECANT OUTLET
Cleaner water is discharged or treated according to permit.

INLET PIPELINE
Carries slurry from the dredge to the facility.

WHAT HAPPENS INSIDE THE CDF?

Slurry enters the basin.

Sediment settles to the bottom.

Water at the top becomes cleaner.

Water is decanted, treated, or discharged.

Solids consolidate and dry over time.

BENEFITS OF HYDRAULIC DREDGING

Removes phosphorus-rich "active" sediment that fuels algae blooms

Exposes older, stable sediment with much lower phosphorus potential

Improves water quality and clarity

Supports healthier fish and aquatic life

Provides long-term lake restoration when combined with watershed management practices

PART OF A COMPLETE SOLUTION

Hydraulic dredging is most effective when combined with watershed practices that reduce external nutrient loading, such as:

Cover crops

Wetland restoration

Shoreline buffers

Stormwater treatment

Agricultural nutrient management

THE GOAL:

Remove the source of internal phosphorus. Restore balance. Improve water quality. Protect our lakes for generations to come.

REMOVE PHOSPHORUS-RICH SEDIMENT

IMPROVE WATER QUALITY

HEALTHIER LAKES & COMMUNITIES

RAIN BARRELS

FOR SALE

FOR \$84

ASK ABOUT COST SHARE OPPORTUNITIES!



ADOPT A STORM DRAIN



Protect local waterways

Sign up!