

SWCD STREAM

Wabasha County Soil & Water Conservation District



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July-August 2026 News

- Come see us at the Wabasha County Fair July 15th-18th! Live

demonstrations on soil health and

native plants & invasive species! July

17th we will have FREE Nitrate

testing- visit our website for more

info under "News!"

- Cover crop sign up deadline is

August 31st! As always funding is

limited- stop in to talk to us soon!

- We are still conducting our county

well inventory, please submit your

water for generations to come! Scan

the QR code below for our inventory

- Free test kits are still available

through the MN Dept. of Health.

visit our website under the "Well and

Groundwater" tab to be directed to

the test kit request form.

Well Inventory Form



Scan this

QR code for more

info or visit the

MN DNR invasive

species webpage.



<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasiv/es/terrestrialplants/index.html>

WANTED



POISON HEMLOCK

MOST WANTED INVASIVE SPECIES

WABASHA SWCD'S

Poison Hemlock is also known as *Conium maculatum* was first introduced to North America in the 1800s as a garden plant. This herbaceous plant has clusters of white flowers and fern-like leaves. It can grow three to eight feet tall and has purple spots or splotches along the stem. Small white flowers with five petals are found in umbrella-shaped clusters that are 3-6 inches across. It can be found along streams and roadsides, and in wet areas, fields, and disturbed habitats. This plant is highly poisonous. Do not ingest any parts of the plant as it is poisonous to humans and livestock. It is highly recommended that you call a professional to handle this plant. However, if you choose to manage poison hemlock yourself, be sure to wear gloves and other protective clothing including eye wear. Shower afterwards to be sure you have no toxic sap on your skin and launder your clothes. Mechanical control can be done by hand pulling of small infestations while wearing gloves. Cutting the taproot 1-2 inches below the ground using a shovel can also be effective. Mowing after flowers emerge, but before seeds are formed, can reduce the population if repeated in future years. Herbicide control can be done using a foliar spray of triclopyr, glyphosate, or 2-4-D. These are systemic herbicides that are taken up by plants and move within the plant, which can kill leaves, stems, and roots.



Wabasha County Soil & Water Conservation District

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WabashaSWCD.com

THE WABASHA SWCD WELCOMES NEW STAFF MEMBER



Keaton Tollakson District Technician

Hey Folks, I will be stepping in as the new District Technician for Wabasha SWCD. Originally from Amery WI, I studied soil and land management and water resources at UW Stevens Point. After graduating in May of 2025, I worked for the University as a Research Technician and then as a Zoning Specialist at Polk County WI before joining Wabasha SWCD this past May. In my free time I can be found anywhere with wood or water, chasing anything that runs, flies or swims. I specifically love ripping weed edges for Muskies in the summer and hang-n-hunting Whitetails in the fall. I am particularly excited to take advantage

of the many hunting and fishing opportunities that southeast MN has to offer between the Mississippi backwaters and bluff country bucks. With Wabasha SWCD I will be working with landowners to design and install structural conservation practices to address erosion and stormwater concerns. If you have any concerns about your property that you think I could help you with, please reach out to me! KeatonTollakson@wabshaswcd.net or (651) 560-2058.

IT'S TIME TO GET MONEY FOR UNPRODUCTIVE CROPLAND

Prior to European settlement, Minnesota was defined by an expansive, interconnected aquatic system with wetlands and rivers covering about 35% of the state. Beginning in the late 1800s, European settlers began to drain wetlands to convert land for agriculture. Today, Minnesota has lost over 50% of its original wetland acreage but in SE counties, the loss is even more severe, with an estimated 90 to 95% loss wetlands. This is a catastrophic loss that has resulted in habitat loss for birds, fish, amphibians and plants. The Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) program through MN Board of Soil and Water Resources is now offering payment for producers to convert cropland that was once wetland as well as cropland bordering rivers, streams, lakes & wetlands into permanent native vegetation. Increasing perennial vegetation on wetlands and cropland near riverbanks will greatly reduce erosion into the water and increase wildlife habitat. The payment rate per acre depends on the township the land is in and ranges from \$4,000 to \$10,000 per acre. Additional payment is available for establishing grasses and/or trees. Land that is eligible is existing row crop within a riparian area or a designated wetland. There is a minimum of 8 acres per additional.



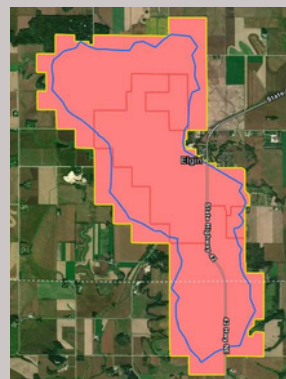
Acres subjected to Buffer Law may be included but will have a lower rate per acre compared to cropland. Under certain circumstances, non-cropland may be included in the application and be paid for. Funding is limited so ask questions now if you are interested. Other RIM programs are available so if you don't have cropland that once wetland or borders a riparian feature, you may be eligible for a different program.

Call or email Wabasha Soil and Water Conservation District at 651-560-2045 or Katelyn.abts@mn.nacdnet.net.

ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE IN THE ELGIN DRINKING WATER SUPPLY MANAGEMENT AREA (DWSMA)

The drinking water supply of our rural towns is important as they provide water for larger populations and often have limited funds to maintain that supply. This is why it's important to ensure this water remains in good condition for drinking. Currently, the City of Elgin public drinking water supply is listed as a Level 2 DWSMA by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture under the MN Groundwater Protection Rule of 2019. What does this mean? Level 2 DWSMAs have nitrate levels in public wells (from MN Dept. of Health) at or exceeding 8 mg/L nitrate-nitrogen at any point within the last ten years OR are projected to exceed 10 mg/L in the next ten years. Nitrate is a form of nitrogen, a nutrient generally sourced from fertilizer, septic systems, feedlots or poorly constructed wells. Nitrate levels above 10 mg/Liter are known to be harmful, especially for infants and pregnant women.

The land area delineated by the MN Dept. of Health that drains toward the public wells is referred to as the Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA), see map. This is the area where improved land management could help maintain and, over time, decrease nitrate levels in drinking water in both public and private wells. Land best management practices such as perennial vegetation, fall cover crops, conservation easement, and cropland nutrient management can help in these efforts. This is where the Wabasha SWCD can help. We work voluntarily with landowners/operators within the management area on the installation of these practices.



ELGIN DWSMA

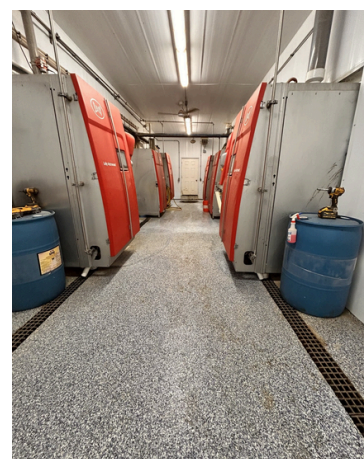
Questions? call (651) 560-2060, ask for Deanna.

THE HIDDEN BENEFITS OF MANURE PITS: IMPROVING FARM EFFICIENCY

Tom and Kathy Miller started their farming journey in 1986 when they bought the farm, they now call home. The Millers just off Hwy 42, started with only 42 dairy cows. Now they milk with their sons and have expanded to a few hundred dairy cows. They still milk some cows in a traditional milking parlor, but most cows are milked using a robotic milking system! The Millers are no stranger to how manure pits greatly benefit a farm. They had their first pit installed in the 90's through funding programs, and just recently a second was installed in 2023 to accommodate the expansion of their operation. Tom still remembers well the days when it was well below zero and having to haul manure daily, before they had storage. He recalls that manure did not always get where it needed to go. Due to weather conditions, farmers in these circumstances often haul manure closest to the farmstead. Who can blame them! Today, the Millers can haul manure in the spring and fall to where it needs to go, as their manure pits provide year-round storage. Their manure, what some may call waste; has become more valuable than one can imagine. They test their manure during hauling to learn its nutrient composition and spread according to where it's needed. The Millers have brought their fertilizer bill down to near zero, only applying fertilizer on newly seeded alfalfa. They are fully utilizing the nutrients from the manure and have benefited from higher yields. Manure pits are amazing assets to a farm. They also benefit the greater community through improved water quality. Manure pits provide essential storage to prevent nutrient runoff and leaching.



Manure Pit Completed in 2023



Robotic Milking System

Manure no longer needs to be applied daily when weather conditions may lead to runoff. Wabasha SWCD provides nutrient management planning assistance and at times may be able to offer financial assistance for manure storage projects. The advice the Miller's offer to others seeking funding for manure storage: "Keep on it, and work with the staff along the way with the planning". Call Wabasha SWCD today to learn how you can harness the full potential of the manure on your farm! Start your planning early, **call (651) 560-2060, ask for Deanna.**