

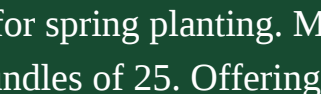
WADENA
Soil & Water
Conservation District



Welcoming Winter

The vegetation has long gone dormant and many critters have made it south or tucked into hibernation for the winter. Ice and snow cover the lakes and fields but our staff at EOT and Wadena SWCD are working away, preparing for spring!

Winter is the season of meetings, trainings, reporting, and planning. Now is the time for reflecting on what worked and what didn't so we can sharpen our skills for the next growing season. While we prepare for the year, please enjoy reading about upcoming opportunities and highlighted staff. Make sure to check out the offerings on our online Tree Store - it just opened!



Upcoming Opportunities



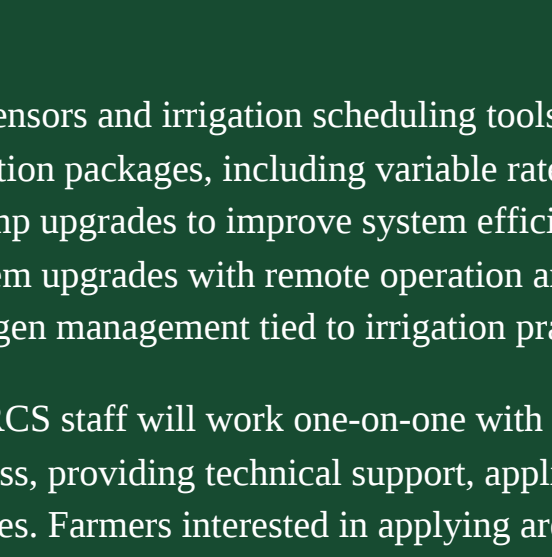
Online Tree Store is Open!

Each year, East Otter Tail and Wadena SWCD team up to offer a wide variety of trees and shrubs for spring planting. Most species are offered as seedlings which come in bundles of 25. Offerings are available on our websites or paper order forms at our office locations. You can use the button below to navigate to our online Tree Store. Make sure your orders are in while supplies lasts!

[Shop the Tree Store](#)



Native Plug Kits

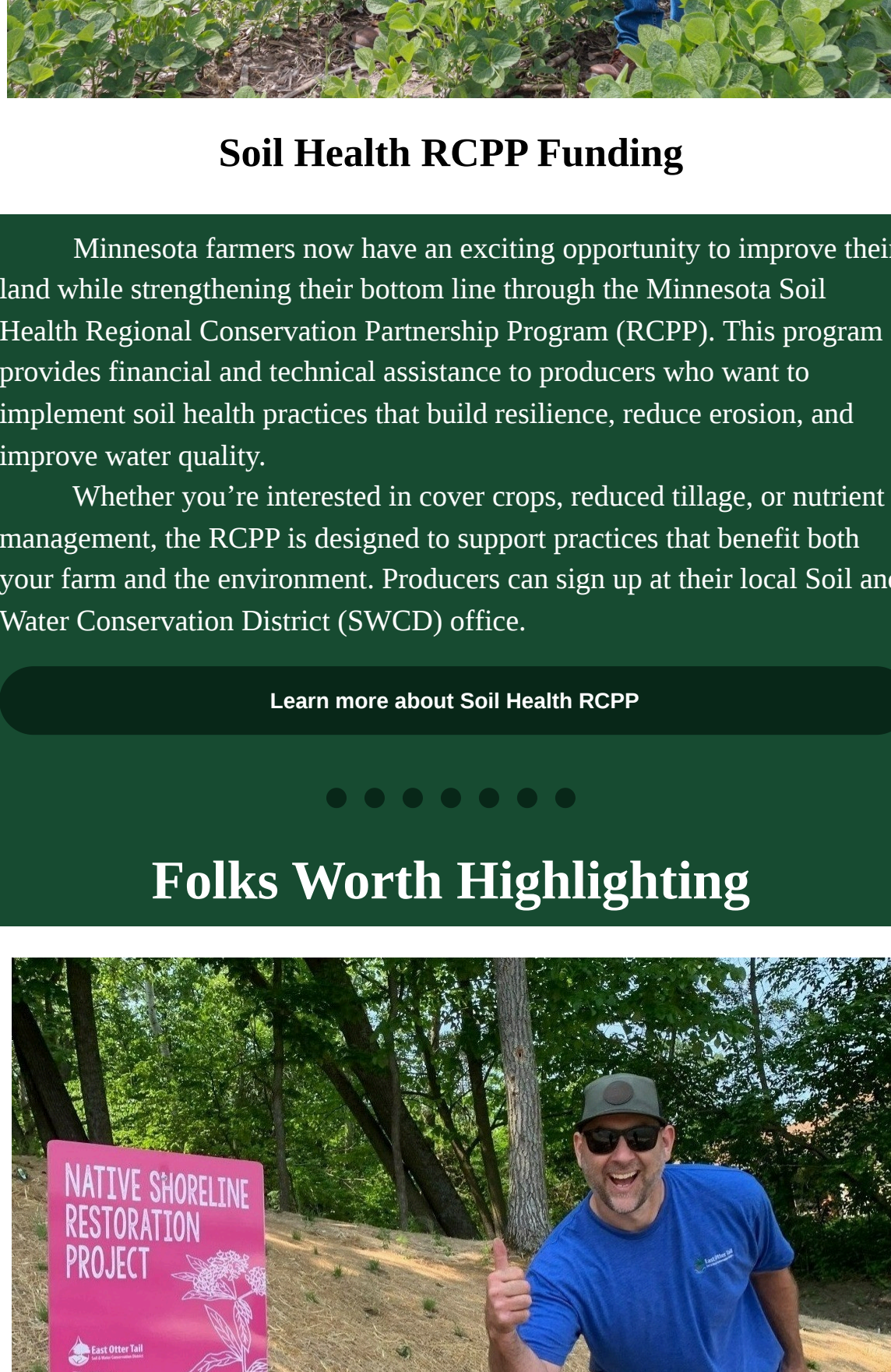


Seed Mixes

Our districts collaborate with Minnesota Native Landscapes (MNL) in their Community Habitat Partnership. The goal is to increase native vegetation and pollinator habitat within our community landscapes by making these plants and seed mixes available locally.

Native Plug Kits and Seed Mixes are perfect for projects like rain gardens and septic mounds. We have expanded our selection! You can find these unique plant kits and specialty seed mixes for the 2026 planting season on the Tree Store as well.

[Shop Native Plants](#)



Irrigation RCPP Application Period

Minnesota irrigators can soon apply for financial and technical assistance to upgrade irrigation systems and improve water and nutrient management. Through a new five-year project led by local SWCDs, farmers can access funding to adopt precision irrigation technologies that improve efficiency, protect groundwater, and support long-term farm profitability.

The project is supported by \$11.16 million through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and is administered in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Through the program, participating irrigators may receive assistance for:

- Soil moisture sensors and irrigation scheduling tools
- Precision irrigation packages, including variable rate technology
- Nozzle and pump upgrades to improve system efficiency
- Advanced system upgrades with remote operation and monitoring
- Improved nitrogen management tied to irrigation practices

SWCD and NRCS staff will work one-on-one with producers throughout the process, providing technical support, application assistance, and follow-up services. Farmers interested in applying are encouraged to contact their local SWCD office early during the application period to learn more about eligibility, available practices, and next steps.

Application period: February 2nd–27th, 2026

[Learn more about Irrigation RCPP](#)



Soil Health RCPP Funding

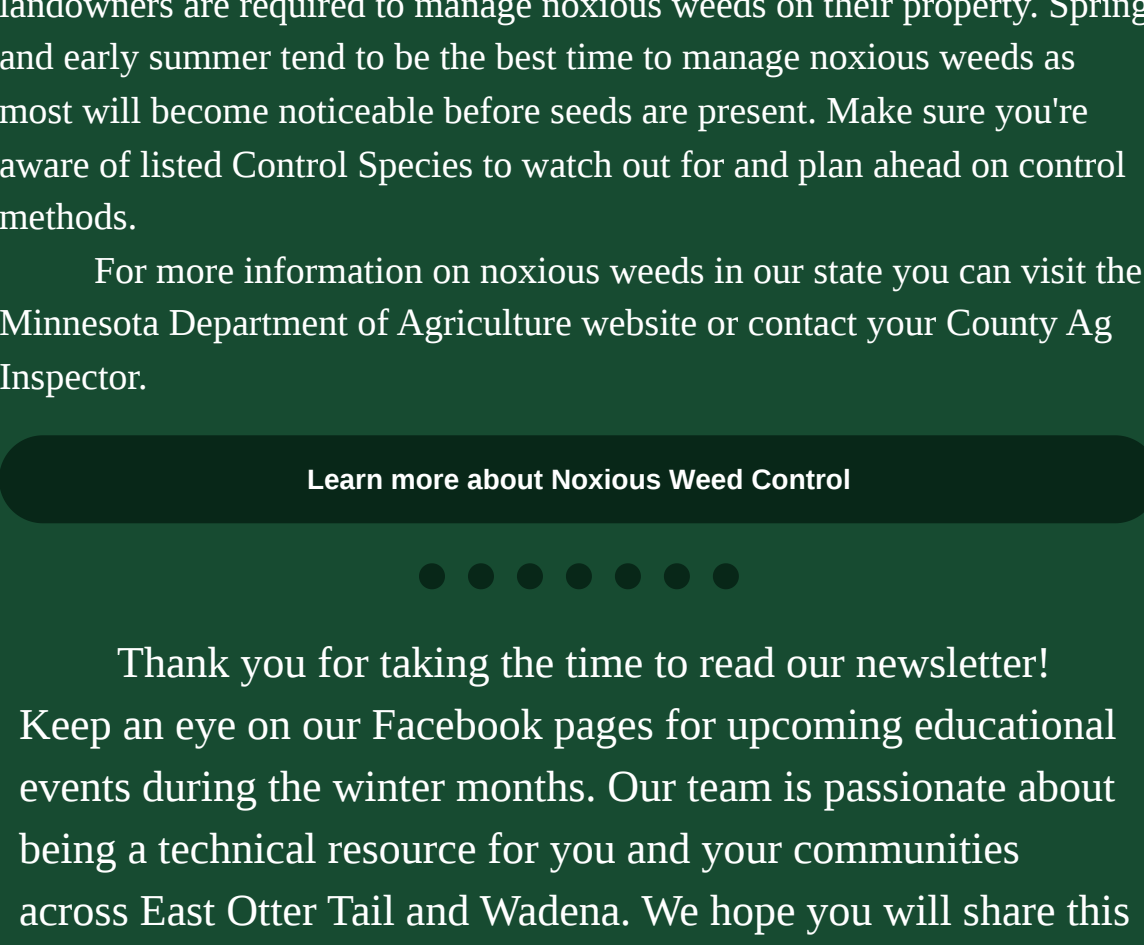
Minnesota farmers now have an exciting opportunity to improve their land while strengthening their bottom line through the Minnesota Soil Health Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). This program provides financial and technical assistance to producers who want to implement soil health practices that build resilience, reduce erosion, and improve water quality.

Whether you're interested in cover crops, reduced tillage, or nutrient management, the RCPP is designed to support practices that benefit both your farm and the environment. Producers can sign up at their local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) office.

[Learn more about Soil Health RCPP](#)



Folks Worth Highlighting



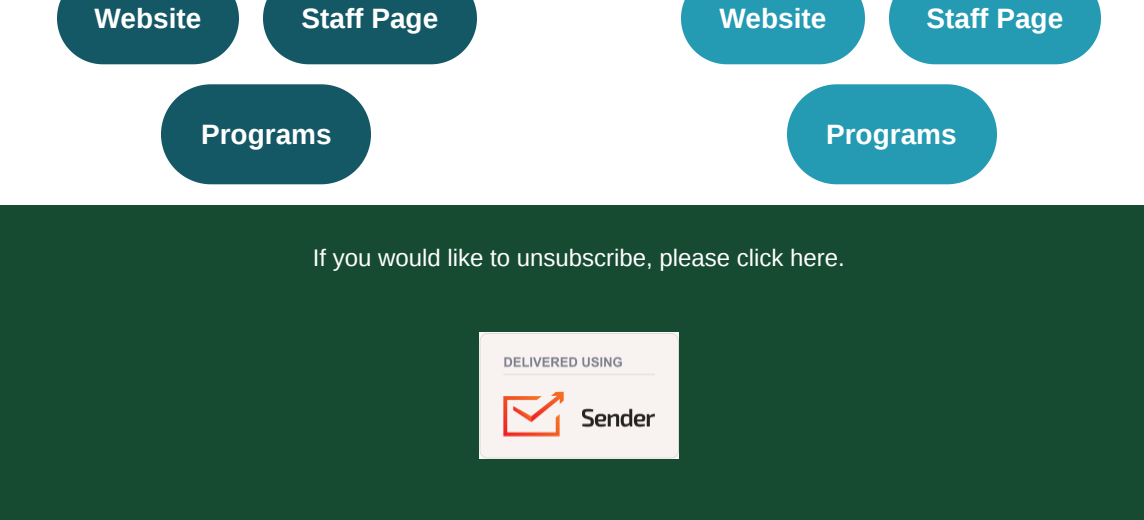
Riparian Specialist Pete Guck

Born and raised on Big Pine Lake, Pete Guck has returned to his roots in his role of Riparian Conservation Specialist. His focus – riparian areas – refers to the land adjacent to surface waters, such as lakes, rivers, and wetlands. The riparian zone is the last line of defense against pollutants like sediment and nutrients entering our prized waters. Maintaining and enhancing the native vegetation in the riparian zone is key to protecting water quality.

Pete is energized by the diversity of work at the SWCD. Every project completed and engagement with a landowner can help move the needle in a positive direction for our lake country, which holds a lot of meaning for him. He feels challenged with meeting the needs of a changing climate and strives to build resilience on our landscape. For this reason, he and other SWCD staff are constantly pursuing continuing education.

When asked about a common misconception people have with SWCDs, Pete noted that sometimes we are confused with being a strictly regulatory agency and can be seen as a barrier to landowners and their goals. He says the reality is quite the opposite. Landowners and the SWCD often share the same goal - which is making our area a better place to live.

Reminder from your County Ag Inspectors to plan ahead



Noxious Weed Wild Parsnip

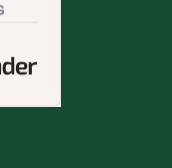
Friendly reminder that according to State Statute 18.78, all Minnesota landowners are required to manage noxious weeds on their property. Spring and early summer tend to be the best time to manage noxious weeds as most will become noticeable before seeds are present. Make sure you're aware of listed Control Species to watch out for and plan ahead on control methods.

For more information on noxious weeds in our state you can visit the Minnesota Department of Agriculture website or contact your County Ag Inspector.

[Learn more about Noxious Weed Control](#)

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter! Keep an eye on our Facebook pages for upcoming educational events during the winter months. Our team is passionate about being a technical resource for you and your communities across East Otter Tail and Wadena. We hope you will share this with neighbors, family, and friends.

Kindly,
East Otter Tail SWCD
& Wadena SWCD



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