Is this email not displaying correctly? View it in your browser.

East Otter Tail Soil & Water Conservation District

WADENA Soil & Water Conservation District

Soothing into Spring

The shift into spring happens gently, almost quietly, as the area slowly stretches itself awake after the long winter. The air feels softer as it carries the faint scent of wet earth and the soothing tones of migrating songbirds perched on budding trees. Spring ephemerals are blooming over the remnant snow patches, and for a moment, everything feels unhurried.

However, the moment doesn't last long for EOT and Wadena SWCD staff as we continue to finalize preparations the year's conservation projects. As we are busy planting trees, drilling in native seed, restoring shorelines, and placing irrigation gages, please enjoy reading about upcoming opportunities, springtime reminders, highlighted staff, and what we've been up too over the somber winter months.

Upcoming Opportunities

Last Call for Tree Orders

Each year, East Otter Tail and Wadena SWCDs 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. Individuals can place their orders through our websites or by paper forms at our office locations. Our tree store will remain open until inventory runs out or our annual pick-up days arrive, whichever comes first!

2026 Tree Order Pick Up

Friday, May 1st, 8am-6pm

Saturday, May 2nd, 9am-12pm

South Fairground Entrance

Tree Pick-Up Map

Last year, we distributed over 56,000 trees, 1,330 native plugs, and approximately 85 acres worth of native seed! Contact our staff if you need assistance with making a selection or would like guidance on preparation and maintenance.

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 also expanded our selection to include kits for songbirds, buckthorn replacement, and the rusty patch bumblebee! You can find these unique plant kits and specialty seed mixes for the 2026 planting season on our Tree Store as well.

Shop Native Plants

50 Gallon Rain Barrels Now Available

Rain barrels offer many benefits such as:

-Capture rainwater for watering plants

-Conserving water

-Reduce stormwater runoff

-Minimize drought effects

Shop Other Products

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

Winter Recaps

2026 Winter Producer Meeting

At our annual winter meeting, a strong emphasis was placed on gathering input from our attendees. This was achieved through roundtable discussions, where approximately 40 producers shared the current conservation practices they are utilizing, discussed future plans, and communicated how we, as the SWCD, can assist them.

Speakers Anna Teeter of Cargill, Matt Bischoff of the MN Department of Agriculture, and Pete Kramer, a Soil Health Coalition mentor, were also present. Teeter provided an overview of a new market for winter camelina, an ‘up-and-coming’ hardy cash cover crop; Bischoff gave an update on the MDA’s weather station expansion; and Kramer explained his journey in adopting soil health practices (cover crops, no-till/strip-till) and how the practices helped him achieve bottom-line goals.

Thank you to everyone who attended and participated!

Water Testing Outreach

In late January, SWCD and Extension staff visited the Perham Middle School 6th grade science classes to talk to students about the SWCD and the importance of safe drinking water. We tested over 100 water samples for nitrate that were brought in by students. If you have a well, it is important to test your water regularly.

The East Otter Tail and Wadena SWCDs offer free testing for nitrate at our offices. For information about testing your water for bacteria, arsenic, or other substances, visit the Minnesota Department of Health's website by clicking the button below.

Well Testing Information

Agriculture Videos Now Available

Want to know more about irrigation or soil health practices and how they benefit residents in East Otter Tail and Wadena Counties? Check out our new agriculture videos that highlight local producers implementing irrigation water management and strip tillage in their operations!

Interested in adopting one of these practices on your own farm? Contact your respective SWCD office to learn of funding opportunities or for technical assistance.

Watch Agriculture Videos Here

Timely Reminders

Spring Blooming Noxious Weeds

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 Eradicate and Control Species to watch out for and plan ahead on control methods.

Wild Parsnip

- Blooms: June - July
- Grows 4-6' and displays 2-6" wide yellow umbles and has alternate leaves with hollow stems
- Contact with sap can cause severe blistering

Leafy Spurge

- Blooms May - June
- Grows up to 4' and displays distinctive greenish-yellowish bracts and has opposite leaves with a blue-gray hue
- Stems and leaves produce a milky sap if broken

Canadian Thistle

- Blooms June - October
- Grows 2-5' with clusters of pink/purple flowers and has alternate, spiny leaves on smooth stems
- Widespread throughout Minnesota

Poison Hemlock

- Blooms May - August
- Grows 8' and displays white umbles, has fern-like leaves, and hollow stems with purple spots
- Prefers wet habitats and his highly poisonous to humans and livestock

Noxious Weed List Update

Every three years, the noxious weed list is reviewed and updated. In 2026, six plants were added:

-Stiltgrass (Prohibited Eradicate)
-Autumn olive (Restricted)
-Creeping meadow foxtail (Restricted)
-Common butterbur (Specially Regulated)
-Giant butterbur (Specially Regulated)
-Rowan mountain ash (Specially Regulated)

Other noteworthy changes include Callery pear moving from the Specially regulated list to Restricted and Poison ivy being delisted.

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

Noxious Weed Control

Noxious Weed List

Aquatic Invasive Species

No matter how you enjoy Minnesota lake life, always take these steps, which are required by Minnesota State Law, to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS):

-**Clean** all water related equipment to remove AIS and other aquatic plants

-**Drain** all water from equipment and leave drain plugs out during transport

-**Dispose** all unwanted bait in the trash

-**Dry** docks, lifts, and rafts for 21 days before moving to another waterbody

-**Never release** bait, plants, aquarium pets into Minnesota waters

Folks Worth Highlighting

District Technician Alyson Levig

Alyson Levig was hired as a District Technician for Wadena Soil and Water Conservation District in 2022. As a jack-of-all-trades position, she’s involved with a variety of programs including Aquatic Invasive Species, Buffers, and County Ag Inspecting in addition to assisting landowners in various cost-share opportunities.

Though she is involved with some regulatory programs, Alyson explained that the SWCD focuses more on education than enforcement. This approach helps landowners understand the benefits to their own operations while also protecting natural resources for future generations - a shared value between the SWCD and local landowners.

Alyson also enjoys learning about local producers' operations and using critical thinking and planning to help them reach their goals, which benefits the local landscape – an achievement that is both fun and rewarding to her. Because of this, she hopes to continue her education in the conservation planning process to better assist the producers who come in for either technical or financial assistance to the best of her ability.

EOT Board Supervisor Bruce Albright

SWCD District I Supervisor for Candor, Hobart, Dora, Edna, Star Lake, and Dead Lake Townships, Bruce Albright grew up on a dairy farm in Dora Township. Bruce's background includes graduating from Perham High School, attending Moorhead Vocational-Technical School, and later attending Wadena Vocational-Technical School to obtain a degree in civil engineering technology. The degree led Bruce to work for over 40 years with Houston Engineering and as the Administrator for the Buffalo-Red Watershed District, retiring in 2020.

Upon retirement, he turned his focus to becoming a SWCD board supervisor because of the similarities of his work with the Watershed District. In addition to this, Bruce is active with the Vergas EDA/HRA, currently serving as President, and has also served on the Vergas City Council since first elected in 2020.

In regard to being a board supervisor, Bruce finds it exciting to "learn about and observe the various water quality and soil conservation practices offered by SWCDs—especially when landowners are willing to try them."

Outside of being an EOT Board Supervisor, Bruce also enjoys being active in his church community, hunting and fishing, improving habitat on his own land, spending time with his wife, family, and friends, and traveling.

Before you go...

Check out our annual year-in-reviews which highlight many of our accomplishments from 2025. Both districts had a great year, and we want you to know all about it!

EOT Year in Review

Wadena Year in Review

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter! 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.

East Otter Tail
Soil & Water Conservation District

Website | Staff Page | Programs

WADENA
Soil & Water
Conservation District

Website | Staff Page | Programs

If you would like to unsubscribe, please click here.

DELIVERED USING
Sender