



## **14 Mile Watershed Alliance Spring Newsletter Articles for the Rome Tri-Lakes Associations**

***Save the Date! State of Our Lakes  
Annual update on Lakes health and actions taken to protect our Lakes.***

**June 7, 2025 11 AM to 2 PM. Rome Town Hall  
Free Lunch Provided, Prizes, Presentations, Information, Raffles**

### **Spring Thaw, Water's Moving!**

Time to thaw out from a very cold Winter! This is the time of the year when the ground may still be somewhat frozen but Winter runoff is in progress. Be very careful what you add to that runoff. The lakes and most of the drainage ditches in the Watershed are generally free of ice so any movement of surface water will make its way through the 14 Mile Creek and Spring Branch Creek into our lakes. In addition, in the rainy Spring, water that doesn't percolate through the soil/sand washes off into the nearest body of water.

That means you need to be very thoughtful about what you put on your property during this time. By now, you already know there is more than enough of the fertilizer you need in the grass alone to sprout any grass on your property. No need to add any additional either through a service or by your own sweat! Each time you cut the grass, you fertilize it with the grass clippings. If you pull water from one of the lakes to water the grass or use a well, there is plenty of nitrogen and phosphorus going on your grass (and likely running off into the lakes).

After an overwhelmingly popular vote, twice, thanks to Tri-Lakes Management last year, nano bubblers will be installed this Spring. The community has spoken telling whoever will listen they want clean water. While it's not the only solution, it looks like it will be a big step in addressing the nutrients in our lake water. These nutrients come to the lakes from lakeshore properties, bad septic systems, legacy nutrients from when the lakes were built over 50 years ago and through the surface water that flows into the lakes from all directions. 14 Mile Watershed and our partners are working to have an impact on all sources of this additional nitrogen and phosphorus. You can help by doing your part to reduce or eliminate those sources you can control. As residents of the Town of Rome, we all thank you! **[14MileWatershed.org](http://14MileWatershed.org)**

### **Short Sips of Water: Issues and Solutions**

- 14 Mile Watershed Alliance and Adams County Land and Water Conservation Department doubled down on the resources outlined in the very valuable 9 Key Elements Plan covering our Watershed. Adams County hired a very knowledgeable and

active coordinator for this and she hit the ground running. We are working with them to find external funding for key milestones that need to be funded over the next decade to clean our water from all sources.

- A producer-led group has been started that we are supporting, the Farmers of the Fourteenmile Creek. They are spooling up as we speak to determine the key water oriented activities they will embrace this year. This is a valuable addition to the work in the Watershed.
- One of our farm scientists who lives on Lake Camelot led a test of Biochar bags as a method to reduce the nutrients in our waterways throughout the Watershed. New to us here in Wisconsin but widely used elsewhere, the WIDNR approved this limited test. While the bags were in a single cove and only for less than 40 days, the subsequent testing showed promise in removing nutrients. The bags will be reinstalled in the Spring for the entire Summer and the effects will be measured. They are essentially burned wood, raw charcoal and do not harm humans or fish. They have applications on farms, at water's edge and at the edges of irrigated fields as well. More to come!
- 14 Mile Watershed Alliance returns in 2025 for our 5<sup>th</sup> year at the Rome Farmer's Market, every Friday morning from mid May through the end of September from 9 AM to 1 PM. Plenty of information, displays, maps, and discussion with members of the Alliance about our Watershed! See you there!
- As you might expect, some of the work we do has some cost to it and those costs are not going down. As a not-for-profit organization, the 14 Mile Watershed Alliance will always accept your donations. In addition, we are looking for some of the more non-traditional sources of funds, private foundations, to consider supporting the work we do that benefits you and your property in the Watershed. If you have contact with such an organization, know someone who does, or would like to donate to the 14 Mile Watershed Alliance, please contact us at [phil.rockenbach@14Mile.org](mailto:phil.rockenbach@14Mile.org).

### **14 Mile Watershed Alliance is Hiring!**

Well, of course, we're all volunteers but you get the drift! Our strategic plan for the next few years will require adding specific capabilities and skills some of you may have! With a little luck, we hope you'll share these skills with your fellow watershed residents (or part-time residents!) or alert someone that can help.

<b>Data Management</b>	<b>Public Relations</b>	<b>Water Science</b>	<b>Education</b>
<b>Graphic Arts</b>	<b>Farm Science</b>	<b>Government Relations</b>	<b>Social Media</b>
<b>Grant Writer</b>	<b>Event and Program Management</b>		

*Go to [14MileWatershed.org/qr-recruiting](http://14MileWatershed.org/qr-recruiting). Learn more about our need for skilled people.*



Recruiting QR Code