NEWSLETTER

Issue 54 January 19, 2026

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14 Mile Watershed Friends and Supporters . . .

EXCITING NEWS!

The 14 Mile Watershed Alliance recently received grants from Visit Rome and the Green Bay Packers Foundation!

These grants will help us to further evaluate the effectiveness of using Biochar Bags in the Rome lakes to remove nitrogen and phosphorus nutrients that feed into algae. Biochar is a form of charcoal that is intended for organic use, as in soil or water. It is the lightweight black remnants remaining after the pyrolysis of biomass (often trees), consisting of carbon and ashes. When used in soil or water, biochar is hygroscopic due to its porous structure and high surface area. It is known to capture and sequester nitrogen and phosphorus.

We intend to place biochar bags in selected areas on each of our three lakes. The bags will be hung below residents' docks for the summer. The textile bags are filled with the biochar material such that water can flow through them and filter out the nutrients. Use of these bags in our lakes has been approved by Wisconsin DNR.

By way of this biochar bag trial in 2026, we hope to determine whether biochar bags could be effectively deployed in the future to reduce or eliminate the algae blooms by placing them at a substantial number of the 1,400 lakeshore properties on our three lakes.

Thank You Visit Rome and Green Bay Packers Foundation!

2026 is already here, but before we get too deep into the new year, we'd like to share with you some of our accomplishments in 2025.

1. **Updated the Strategic Plan for our organization for the next 3-5 years. This plan is the blueprint for our future direction to focus our efforts and maximize our goal of reducing excess nutrients in the watershed.**
2. **In January, Board Members attended a Biochar Workshop to learn more about this potential aid in addressing water quality issues. Our organization sponsored the lunch for attendees, including producers.**
3. **Board Members served on an Adams County Advisory committee to develop Land and Water's 10-year plan.**
4. **Met with County Officials to lobby for continued funding of the 9KEP Coordinator position.**
5. **We supported the original grant application by Adams County to implement a biochar project. The 2-year project for $100,000 was approved in May.**
6. **For the 5th year, a Native Tree Sale for property owners was offered -280 saplings were ordered.**
7. **14 Mile Directors attended the WI Lakes and Rivers Convention in Stevens Point which included a wide variety of educational seminars.**
8. **The Healthy Lakes grant program continues to be promoted and we were awarded another Healthy Lakes grant for 2025. Additionally, we submitted 14 projects to the DNR for approval for 2026.**
9. **Work continued on the Walden Park native shoreline plantings project to include design and installation of an interpretive sign.**
10. **Work also continued on a shoreline project at Camelot on the Lake. Erosion issues were addressed with the installation of biobags and a Healthy Lakes grant will cover additional native plantings.**
11. **Another year of monthly water testing on the lakes as part of the statewide Citizen Lake Monitoring Network was completed.**
12. **We continued our efforts to educate and involve students at Nekoosa High School to understand the importance of a healthy watershed and methods to protect them for the future. We sponsored an educational field day in September. Three hands-on activities were offered to the students as well as a field trip to a local cranberry operation.**

13. **We manned our booth each Friday at the Rome Farmers Market from mid-May through September. This was a great way to engage lake residents, answer their questions and educate them on ways they could help to improve water quality. Also, a booth was set up for the Rome Community Halloween party.**
14. **Another successful State of Our Lakes event was held on June 7th with record attendance. Presentations included water quality monitoring by EOR, Producer-Led Farm Groups, the Camelot biochar bag testing initiated by resident and Advisor Member, Pat Rogers and finally, shoreline stewardship ideas were shared by President Dave Trudeau.**
15. **We supported formation of a producer-led watershed protection group in the watershed. The Farmers of Fourteen Mile Creek became official in late 2024. For the upcoming year, our organization will serve as the group's collaborator and fiscal agent.**
16. **We submitted a grant request to DATCP on behalf of the Farmers of Fourteen Mile Creek and received funding to support their operation in 2026.**
17. **A grant application to expand the use of biochar bags along the Rome lakes' shorelines was submitted to the Green Bay Packers Foundation and was approved!**
18. **A second grant application for biochar bag deployment was submitted to Visit Rome and was also approved!**

As an organization, we're proud of the progress that we've made -- BUT, there is much more to do and we welcome your support and involvement. We welcome your attendance at our monthly meeting held the second Monday of each month at 6 PM in the lower level of the Lake Sherwood Lodge. Plan to attend the 2026 State of Our Lakes luncheon to be held on June 7.

You are also encouraged to consider adding your skills to our group as we continue to work to keep clean water available for the long-term future! No time available? Consider a donation in support of our efforts.

DONATE

The 14 Mile Watershed Alliance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the improvement of surface and groundwater in the 14 Mile Creek Watershed in central Wisconsin. See us at 14milewatershed.org or https://www.facebook.com/14MileWatershed

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