



PO Box 584, Fertile, MN 56540
218-945-3204
www.sandhillwatershed.org

September 8, 2026

Dear Landowner,

The Sand Hill River Watershed District (District) will host an informational meeting on October 7, 2026, at 6:30 PM at the District office (101 Washington Avenue NW, Fertile, MN) for all landowners regarding the outlet for Union and Sarah Lakes.

As you are aware, the recent discovery of zebra mussels in Union Lake has prevented operation of the Union Lake pump station under the Minnesota DNR Public Waters Permit. In response, the District has been pursuing funding opportunities to retrofit the existing outlet system to address zebra mussel restrictions and allow continued pumping in the future.

Recently, the District was awarded \$750,000 through the Flood Hazard Mitigation (FHM) Grant Program. This funding includes a 50% match requirement, meaning that for every grant dollar spent, an equal amount of non-grant funds must also be expended.

The approved FHM grant application assumes retrofitting the existing system with the filters required for zebra mussel compliance, along with installation of a new pump capable of maintaining adequate drawdown while operating through the filters. While this grant award represents a significant opportunity, the required match may still present a funding challenge. To help address this, the District is exploring additional options to meet the match requirement.

The informational meeting will provide additional details about the awarded FHM grant, the currently assumed retrofit approach, and other alternatives that could be considered. The District's Board of Managers would like your feedback before determining the best path forward.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (218) 945-3204 or by email at april.swenby@sandhillwatershed.org. If you are unable to attend but would like to attend virtually, please e-mail me for a remote link. We appreciate your participation and look forward to seeing you on October 7.

Sincerely,

April Swenby, SHRWD Administrator

cc: Paul Reese, Polk County Commissioner
Shane Johnson, Union Lake/Sarah Improvement District
Mark Johnson, MN State Senator
Steve Gander, MN House of Representatives
John Kolb, Rinke-Noonan