

Agricultural Drainage

What Is Agricultural Drainage?

Agricultural drainage refers to the human creation of features which allow water to drain into other bodies of water. To create a landscape more conducive to farming, farmers often want to drain small wetlands into larger wetlands or into streams to allow them to farm that land. Drainage includes

- Creation of surface ditches
- Increasing the size of existing channels in the land
- Installation of underground weeping tile.

What Are the Benefits of Agricultural Drainage?

The creation of drainage features can be a large economic incentive for land owner. Agricultural drainage can:

- Increase the percentage of land available to be farmed
- Increase land value
- Reduce tight navigation around wetlands
- Decrease the prevalence of wet soils which can damage equipment and reduce fuel efficiency
- May allow seeding earlier in the year



What Issues Arise from Agricultural Drainage?

Although there are many benefits to agricultural drainage, it can come at a cost to neighboring farmers, municipalities, wildlife, and water bodies.



- After a rainfall, water has a direct route to streams increasing peak and total flow which can cause flooding
- Runoff can carry nutrients and other substances into streams which can damage an ecosystem
- Nutrients in water bodies can cause algal blooms and toxin production
- Draining a wetland directly removes wildlife habitat

Can You Drain Responsibly?

Drainage plans must be approved by _____ before implementation. To improve the chance of permission and reduce your impact, you can follow these tips.

- Drain small wetlands into larger wetlands instead of streams
- Reduce surface water movement using weeping tile
- Keep water on your land for longer