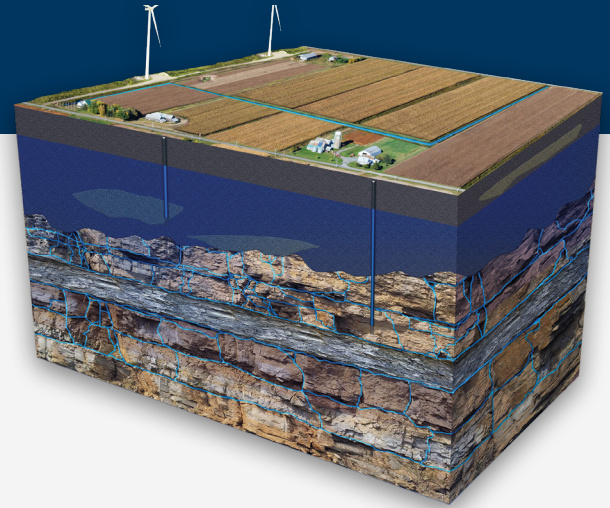


# How groundwater moves in southeast Minnesota: **Till landscape**

The flow of groundwater in southeast Minnesota is fascinating and complex because of the unique geology, it is like no other area of the state. The till landscape is one of three distinct geologic landscapes in this region. It is in the western region of the Root River Watershed and throughout portions of southeast Minnesota. Listed below are six key points to consider when thinking about water movement in the till landscape.



*See page 2 for a larger image*

**WHERE THE ROOT RIVER BEGINS:** This flat agricultural area in eastern Mower County is called the glacial till landscape. This is where the Root River begins its 80-mile course to the Mississippi River.

**DRAINAGE TILE:** A network of sub-surface pipes, called drainage tile, are placed four to five feet below the ground so crops can be grown. This tile directs about 20-30% of the annual precipitation to drainage ditches and streams. A small amount of precipitation slowly travels to deeper groundwater or runs off the surface, while most is evaporated and used by plants.

**THICK GLACIAL TILL:** Till is a dense mixture of clay to boulder size material that was laid down directly by glacial ice. Up to 200 feet of till covers the underlying bedrock. The thickness and amount of clay within this till affects the movement of groundwater.

**CLAY-RICH SEDIMENT:** The dense blanket of compacted clay acts like a barrier and slows the downward movement of groundwater.

**SPEED OF FLOW VARIES:** In isolated areas, buried sand and gravel channels left by glacial streams are located in layers of till. In these locations, water flows faster into the underlying aquifers and younger water can mix with older water.

**WHAT DECADE ARE YOU DRINKING?** Younger water is often from aquifers located above shale layers and can be years to decades old. Older water is typically contained deeper in the glacial till and bedrock layers and can be decades to centuries old. In many cases, drinking water is a mixture of both younger and older water.

## Root River Field to Stream Partnership



Minnesota Department of Agriculture  
Minnesota Agricultural Water Resource Center  
The Nature Conservancy

Mower SWCD  
Fillmore SWCD  
Root River SWCD

[www.mda.state.mn.us/segwresources](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/segwresources)



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EXTENSION



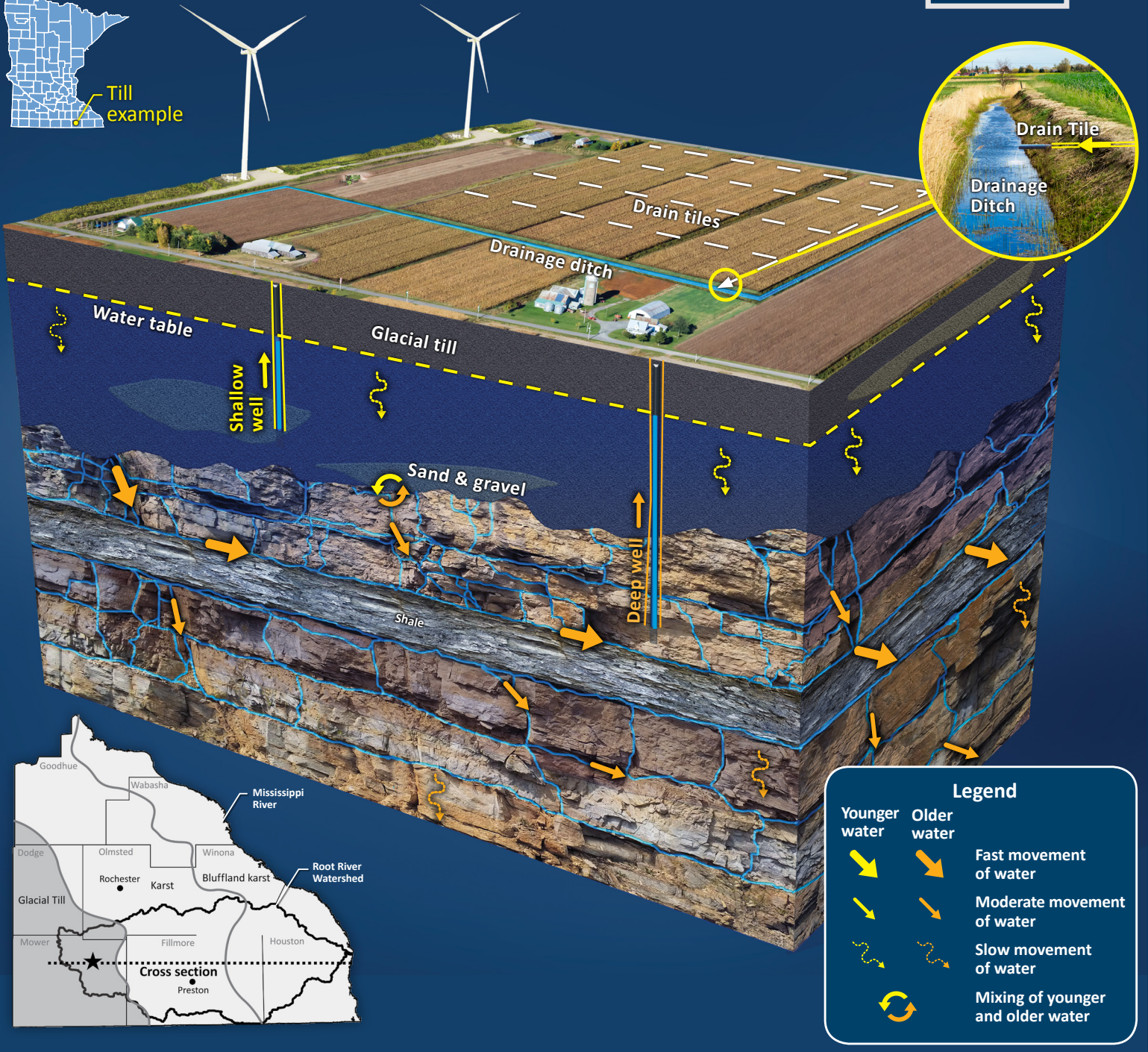
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# How groundwater moves in southeast Minnesota: Till landscape



Watch the Video



Till landscape example location

1,400' Elevation Mower Co Fillmore Co

Bedrock cross section

Fillmore Co Houston Co

