

NEWS | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | June 14, 2021

Wind erosion steals soil, nutrients, and impairs water quality

BISMARCK, N.D. – March 29, 2021, left more like a lion than a lamb in North Dakota. The winds roared, blowing unprotected soils across the state’s landscape to fence rows, shelterbelts, streams, rivers, and lakes—even highway rest stops. Tons of topsoil and nutrients were lost. While nutrients can be replaced at a significant cost, the topsoil is lost forever. Without a change in soil health management, this process will continue.

Soil health and water quality are linked. Poorly managed soils are more likely to erode resulting in valuable topsoil and nutrients being deposited in streams and lakes. Soil fills up the water bodies, and excess nutrients feed blue-green algae that cause harmful algal blooms (HABs). HABs can make people ill and kill pets and livestock that ingest the toxins produced by the algae.

The North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality (NDDEQ) Watershed Management Program actively promotes soil health through its watershed improvement projects. The NDDEQ recommends producers adopt the five principles of soil health to improve soil health and minimize erosion:

1. Soil armor
2. Minimizing soil disturbance
3. Plant diversity
4. Continual live plant/root
5. Livestock integration.

Producers and the public may visit www.soil.nd.gov to learn more about how the soil health principles can preserve our North Dakota land assets for generations to come.

A photo of one of 25 truckloads of eroded topsoil removed from a central North Dakota rest area is available for public use at <https://flic.kr/p/2m3nkVb>. Please credit the LaMoure County Soil Conservation District.

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