

March 14, 2019

Darrick Wotachek
Isanti County-Water Planner
555 18th Ave SW
Cambridge, MN 55008

Dear Darrick Wotachek,

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) is pleased to provide priority concerns for consideration in the development of the Rum River Watershed One Watershed One Plan. The MPCA has contributed significant time and resources assisting our partners in addressing water quality issues in the watershed. We would invite you to consider the following reports and studies during 1Watershed 1Plan development.

Rum River Monitoring and Assessment Report (2016) Summary of intensive watershed monitoring efforts. <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/wq-ws3-07010207b.pdf>

Rum River Stressor ID (2016) This report summarizes and evaluates factors, natural and human, which are likely responsible for the impaired condition of the fish and macroinvertebrate communities. A thorough description of the natural features and processes occurring in the watershed and the extent of various human activity throughout the watershed that may have potential to degrade streams, rivers, and lakes. <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/wq-ws5-07010207.pdf>

Rum River WRAPS (2017) – High level summary of past assessment and diagnostic work that outlines ways to prioritize actions and strategies for continued implementation- specifically, see Section 3.8. <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/wq-ws4-34a.pdf>

Rum River TMDL (2017) Study documenting the impaired lakes and streams within the watershed. <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/wq-iw8-56e.pdf>

Rum River Groundwater Report (2016) Study documenting the condition of groundwater within the watershed. <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/wq-ws1-11.pdf>

In addition to the above-mentioned reports, other topics to consider include:

Manage for altered hydrology ditches carry nutrients and excess water through the system faster than historically (before ditching). Changes in the delivery and rate of water through the ditch system are causing increased peak flows and reduced base flows in area streams. Wetland restoration along with buffering of ditches would reduce the peak discharge and also help stabilize the ditch banks, reducing the amount of available fine material entering the streams. Tiling is another drainage practice which is becoming more prevalent in agricultural areas as it is associated with yield increases. Similar to ditching, tiling also contributes to the “flashiness” of hydrology, which plausibly is linked to increased bank erosion and more frequent and severe flooding.

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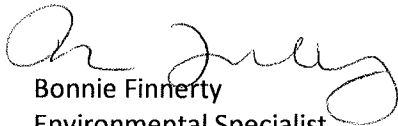
Minimize impervious surfaces Typically associated with residential development, impervious surfaces (especially those associated with storm sewer systems) contribute to “flashy” hydrological fluctuations. Much like ditching and tiling, they can contribute to increased bank instability, erosion, and more frequent and severe flooding. Consider creating standards for stormwater volume control for development/redevelopment projects.

Encouraging lake riparian/shoreline vegetation Although more focus has been given to stream/ditch riparian conditions over the last several years, riparian conditions and shoreline vegetation of lakes is also very important for both fish habitat and water quality. Fish utilize shoreline vegetation for cover and spawning habitat in the spring. Shoreline vegetation and unmowed vegetative buffers around lakes help to prevent erosion and excessive nutrients from reaching the water, which can improve quality and clarity.

Incorporate chloride reduction efforts in areas with increased development Chloride reduction efforts and examples can be found in the statewide chloride reduction plan.

<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/wq-iw11-06ff.pdf>

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments as we begin the 1Watershed 1Plan process for the Rum River Watershed- the MPCA looks forward to contributing throughout.



Bonnie Finnerty
Environmental Specialist
Watershed Division

BF:jmw