



REPORT TO THE  
LEGISLATURE

MARCH 2024

# Pig's Eye Dump Task Force annual report

Status of coordination and planning efforts to clean up and restore the Pig's Eye Dump site and protect groundwater and nearby surface water

## Legislative charge

**Legal citation:** MN Laws 2022, ch. 94, Sec. 2, subd. 10j

**Appropriation language:** \$800,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of the Pollution Control Agency to establish a Pig's Eye Landfill Task Force to coordinate efforts to remediate and restore the Pig's Eye Landfill Superfund site and address perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination of Battle Creek, Pig's Eye Lake, and nearby groundwater. The task force must be made up of at least the commissioner of the Pollution Control Agency, the commissioner of natural resources, the commissioner of health, a representative from the Metropolitan Council, a representative from the city of St. Paul, a representative from the city of South St. Paul, a representative from the city of Newport, a representative from Ramsey County, a representative from Dakota County, a representative from Washington County, and representatives from relevant federal agencies. The task force is subject to Minnesota Statutes, section 15.059, subdivision 6. The task force must submit an annual report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees and divisions with jurisdiction over the environment and natural resources on the status of the task force's work. The final report is due February 15, 2026. The task force expires June 30, 2026. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2026.

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# Background of Pig's Eye Dump

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## Site history and previous remedial actions

Pig's Eye Dump is a closed waste disposal site in St. Paul, Minnesota. From 1956 to 1972, the site operated as a dump without a permit and accepted over 8 million cubic yards of municipal, commercial, and industrial waste, making Pig's Eye Dump the largest unpermitted dump in Minnesota with a fill area encompassing over 200 acres. From 1977 to 1985, the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) disposed of wastewater treatment sludge incinerator ash on 31 acres of the site under Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Permit SW-189. MCES placed the ash on top of existing waste and covered the ash and waste with approximately two to three feet of soil.

Various phases of environmental investigation have been conducted at the dump site, Battle Creek, and Pig's Eye Lake since the 1970s, and the MPCA placed Pig's Eye Dump on the State Superfund List in 1989. Contaminants detected in groundwater, surface water, and sediment have included per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), metals, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs), and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

From approximately 2000 to 2005, initial cleanup actions at the site were implemented and included the removal and disposal of batteries and drums containing hazardous waste, cleanup of lead-contaminated surface soil, removal/consolidation of waste, filling and grading of ponds, and installation of a two-foot soil cap over the dump's waste footprint. In addition, the cleanup included effort to limit the amount of leachate and contaminated groundwater that enters Pigs Eye Lake and Battle Creek. The strategy was to install an engineered fill material into Battle Creek and Pig's Eye Lake. The initial cleanup actions were a significant amount of work for modest environmental improvements, but more work is needed to address contamination from the Pig's Eye Dump.

## Current contaminants of concern

Since the implementation of the initial cleanup actions, some contaminants (VOCs, SVOCs, PCBs) have shown decreasing trends below surface water quality standards. Although the levels of some contaminants have decreased, there remains contamination at levels of concern at the site. MPCA is currently investigating the following contaminants:

- Groundwater and surface water:
  - PFAS – Perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) concentrations in monitoring wells, Battle Creek, and Pig's Eye Lake have been detected above surface water quality standards developed for Pool 2 of the Mississippi River.
  - 1,4-dioxane – 1,4-dioxane was sampled for the first time and discovered in several monitoring locations at the site in 2021. Work is ongoing to determine how 1,4-dioxane will impact the remedial action objectives and remedial options for the Site.
- Sediment:
  - Metals – Metals (cadmium, copper, lead, zinc) have been detected above the applicable sediment quality targets in Pig's Eye Lake.
  - PFAS – Several PFAS have been detected above laboratory reporting limits in Pig's Eye Lake, but concentrations were below soil reference values.



- Methane gas:
  - Elevated methane concentrations have been observed within the waste footprint of the site during gas monitoring events. Methane gas migration laterally off-site appears to be limited.

## Site challenges and remedial objectives

The Pig's Eye Dump is located within the floodplain of the Mississippi River. Battle Creek flows through the central portion of the site and discharges to Pig's Eye Lake. The Mississippi River is located approximately 800 feet west of the site. Major flooding is estimated to occur every two years in the wetland adjacent to Battle Creek and Pig's Eye Lake.

One of the main cleanup goals for the Pig's Eye Dump includes reducing the migration of PFAS-contaminated groundwater into Battle Creek and Pig's Eye Lake. The previous cleanup work conducted between 2000 and 2005 was implemented prior to the sampling and detection of PFAS and 1,4-dioxane. In addition, recent evaluations have identified several data gaps at the site that need further investigation, such as the need to further define flow patterns, upgradient contaminant sources, and risks, prior to selecting and implementing additional cleanup actions.

## Pig's Eye Neighborhood

Pig's Eye Dump and its surrounding area consists of several important shared uses, including different communities, businesses, and projects. According to the City of St. Paul's website for the Pig's Eye Regional Park (<https://www.stpaul.gov/facilities/pigs-eye-regional-park>), the Pig's Eye Regional Park is part of the East Side River District, which is an area of the Mississippi River that has many shared uses, including Dakota homeland and sacred sites, industry, parks and recreation, and natural areas that serve as a bird migration route.

Some of the current uses and projects directly on or adjacent to Pig's Eye Dump include the following:

- City of St. Paul – Pig's Eye Regional Park
  - The Pig's Eye Regional Park features trails and bird watching areas, and it contains one of the largest urban heron and egret rookeries in the Midwest.
- MCES – Metropolitan Wastewater Treatment Plant
  - The MCES wastewater treatment plant is located adjacent to Pig's Eye Dump to the southwest. As stated previously, MCES was also permitted to dispose of wastewater treatment sludge incinerator ash on 31 acres of the Site between 1977 to 1985.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Ramsey County Habitat Restoration Project
  - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in partnership with Ramsey County, is conducting a habitat restoration project on Pig's Eye Lake. The project consists of reusing dredged

Figure 1: Pig's Eye Dump with neighboring properties and natural areas



material to build islands within the lake with the goal of restoring backwater habitat and improving water quality (<https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/parks-recreation/planning-construction-restoration/pigs-eye-lake-island-building-project>).

- Railroad properties
  - A railroad switching yard is located adjacent to the Pig’s Eye Dump to the north/northeast. Part of the previous remedial actions from 2000-2005 included waste removal from railroad property and grading along the waste interface with the railroad drainage ditch.
- Department of Natural Resources – Pig’s Eye Island Heron Rookery Scientific and Natural Area
  - The southern portion of Pig’s Eye Lake is home to a Scientific and Natural Area (SNA), where native plants and animals flourish, rare species are protected, and natural features are studied. The SNA is adjacent to the Mississippi River.

## Pig’s Eye Dump Task Force

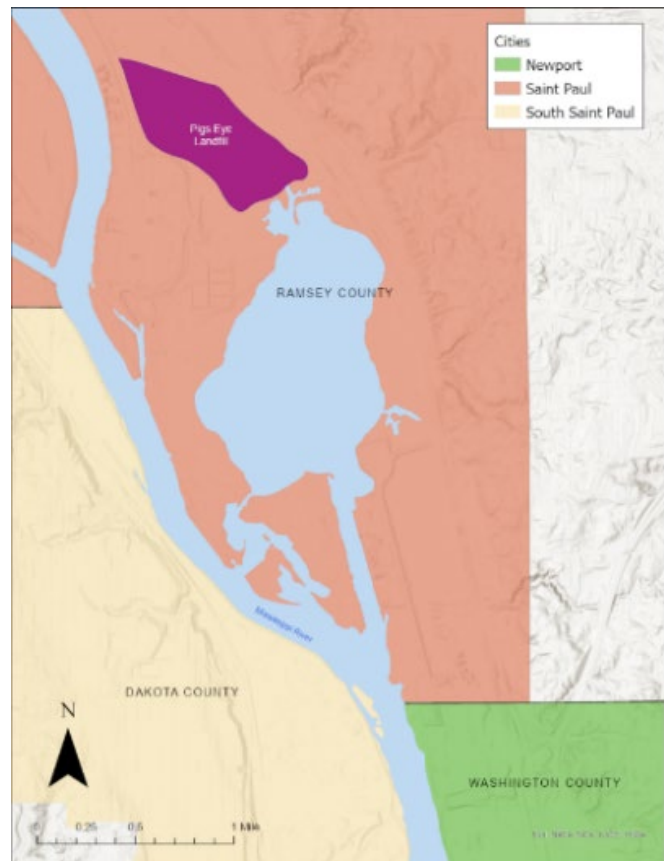
During the 2022 Legislative Session, the Minnesota Legislature passed a law that directs the MPCA to establish a task force to coordinate efforts to remediate and restore Pig’s Eye Dump and address PFAS contamination of Battle Creek, Pig’s Eye Lake, and nearby groundwater. The Legislature appropriated \$800,000 to the MPCA using the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF).

The Task Force must be made of at least the following:

- The Commissioner of the Pollution Control Agency
- The Commissioner of Natural Resources
- The Commissioner of Health
- A representative from the Metropolitan Council
- A representative from the City of St. Paul
- A representative from the City of South St. Paul
- A representative from the City of Newport
- A representative from Ramsey County
- A representative from Dakota County
- A representative from Washington County
- Representatives from relevant federal agencies

The Task Force must also submit an annual report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees and divisions with jurisdiction over the environment and natural resources on the status of the Task Force’s work. A final report is due February 15, 2026, and the Task Force expires on June 30, 2026.

Figure 2: Pig’s Eye Dump with city and county boundaries



# Pig's Eye Dump Task Force work plan

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## Work plan development and approval

In order for the funds to be appropriated, the MPCA developed a work plan for the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR), the commission that makes funding recommendations to the Minnesota State Legislature for special environment and natural resource projects primarily from the ENRTF.

The MPCA submitted its Pig's Eye Task Force work plan on August 12, 2022, and presented it to the LCCMR on August 16, 2022. The LCCMR approved the work plan the same day.

## Task Force work progress scorecard

The MPCA's Pig's Eye Task Force work plan consists of three main activities with the following milestones:

### 1. Hire the Pig's Eye Task Force coordinator (Activity budget: \$1)

The activity budget is \$1 because a greater-than-zero value was necessary to submit the work plan into the LCCMR system. This is a foundational activity for the subsequent activities in the work plan, and the MPCA intends to perform this activity as an in-kind service.

Milestones	Planned completion date	Actual completion date
Publish job posting to the State of Minnesota careers website	October 31, 2022	October 29, 2022
Conduct interviews	November 30, 2022	January 27, 2023
Hire finalist	December 31, 2022	March 15, 2023
Train and onboard incumbent	January 31, 2023	March 31, 2023
Initiate task force activities	January 31, 2023	March 31, 2023

### 2. Establish the Pig's Eye Task Force and convene regular meetings (Activity budget: \$406,999)

The activity budget covers the FTE cost and any contracting services needed to prepare for task force meetings.

Milestones	Planned completion date	Actual completion date
Contact federal, state, and local entities	February 28, 2023	February 15, 2023
Federal, state, and local entities select task force representatives	February 28, 2023	March 13, 2023
Hold task force kick-off meeting to establish goals, deliverables, timelines, roles, etc.	March 31, 2023	September 25, 2023
Submit FY2023 annual report to the legislature	March 31, 2023	March 31, 2023
Submit FY2024 annual report to the legislature	March 31, 2024	
Submit FY2024 annual report to the legislature	March 31, 2025	
Schedule, prepare, and hold FY2023, FY2024, FY2025, and FY2026 task force meetings	June 30, 2026	

### 3. Task Force final report to the legislature (Activity budget: \$393,000)

The activity budget covers contracting services required to prepare the report, as well as any work contributed by the task force coordinator FTE.

Milestones	Planned completion date	Actual completion date
Compile history of the Pig's Eye Dump site	September 30, 2023	January 12, 2024
Outline remedial action options	October 31, 2025	
Itemize restoration activities or projects to be considered	October 31, 2025	
Identify infrastructure needs and potential funding sources	October 31, 2025	
Recommend necessary legislative actions	October 31, 2025	
Task force reviews and approves final report	January 31, 2026	
Submit final report to the legislature	February 28, 2026	

## Work plan status report

At the time of this report, the MPCA has initiated several of the tasks outlined in its Pig's Eye Task Force work plan. Some of the tasks have been initiated, with a few having been completed already. However, due to challenges with the hiring process, many of the tasks to establish the Task Force have been delayed.

### Hire the Pig's Eye Task Force coordinator

This activity was delayed due to challenges with the hiring process. The MPCA initially posted the Pig's Eye Task Force coordinator vacancy on October 29, 2022, which closed on November 14, 2022. The MPCA received few candidates that met minimum qualifications for the position, so the MPCA re-posted the vacancy on December 3, 2022, and the job posting closed on December 27, 2022. Interviews were conducted the week of January 17, 2023, and concluded the week of January 23, 2023. The Pig's Eye Task Force coordinator began employment at the MPCA on March 15, 2023, and completed training and onboarding on March 31, 2023.

### Establish the Pig's Eye Task Force and convene regular meetings

Due to the hiring delays above, existing MPCA staff initiated the Pig's Eye Task Force activities in February 2023. On February 15, 2023, MPCA contacted, via email, all the governmental entities that are required members of the Task Force. All government entities have identified their respective representatives for the Task Force, and the current representatives for each organization are listed below.

State Agency, Local Unit of Government, or Federal Agency	Representative
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	Kirk Koudelka (Assistant Commissioner)
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Dan Scollan (Hydrologist)
Minnesota Department of Health	Dave Bell (Research Scientist)
Metropolitan Council	Sam Paske (Assistant General Manager)
City of St. Paul	Melanie McMahan (Executive Project Lead)
City of South St. Paul	Jimmy Francis (Mayor)
City of Newport	Bill Sumner (Councilmember)
Ramsey County	Victoria Reinhardt (County Commissioner)
Dakota County	Dave Magnuson (Supervisor)
Washington County	Caleb Johnson (Senior Manager)
United States Army Corps of Engineers	Nathan Wallerstedt (Chief)



The MPCA drafted a charter for the task force that detailed when the task force meetings would occur, what content would be covered at each of the meetings, how the meetings would guide the creation of the final report, decision-making processes, and the responsibilities and expectations of the task force, its members, and the MPCA. Meetings were scheduled to be held roughly every-other month and would be hosted by the MPCA in its St. Paul office.

The first Task Force meeting was held on September 25, 2023. During this meeting, the MPCA introduced the Task Force members, the purpose of the Task Force, the history of Pig's Eye Dump and the surrounding area, and the draft charter for the Task Force to review. The task force members were also given time beyond the meeting to review and comment on the history of Pig's Eye Dump and the charter, though no revisions or comments to either document were received.

## Stakeholder Engagement

The MPCA maintains a project website for the Task Force (<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/local-sites-and-projects/st-paul-pigs-eye-dump-task-force>), which includes the Site history, the background of the Task Force, and information on the Task Force meetings. All Task Force meetings are open to the public and recorded, and all meeting materials (agenda, recording, and notes) are posted to the project website. A project-specific email address ([Pig's.Eye.Dump.Task.Force.Mailbox.MPCA@state.mn.us](mailto:Pig's.Eye.Dump.Task.Force.Mailbox.MPCA@state.mn.us)) was also created to ensure a consistent repository for public questions was available.

During the first meeting, the Task Force members were solicited for ideas and feedback on how to incorporate public input beyond public attendance of meetings and online posting of the meeting materials. Members suggested that engagement with local community groups could be a possible avenue, and the MPCA incorporated these ideas into a communications plan that was drafted for the project. The communications plan outlines specific goals and actions for more direct lines of engagement, such as presenting on the Task Force to local interest groups, creating more public-facing meetings outside of normal business hours, and using more wide-reaching communication techniques like mailings and social media advertisements.

One example of stakeholder engagement is a presentation by the Task Force Coordinator at the 2023 East Side River District Convening held by the Great River Passage Conservancy. A variety of interest groups and other stakeholders (e.g., Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi, Urban Roots, St. Paul Parks, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Friends of the Mississippi River) were present, and a noticeable increase in public attendance for the next Pig's Eye Task Force was observed.

## Development of Remedial Strategy

On January 12, 2024, the MPCA held the second Task Force meeting to present the current environmental data for the Pig's Eye area, including areas of contamination and the risks to human health and the environment. The goal of the meeting was to provide a basic understanding of the current site conditions to help Task Force members develop informed opinions on the remedial strategies that would be presented at future meetings.

The third meeting of the Pig's Eye Task Force was held on March 8, 2024. The range of remedial options to address the contamination at Pig's Eye Dump were presented, and both Task Force members and members of the public in attendance were given time to ask questions and provide preliminary feedback.

The next Task Force meeting will be held in May 2024 and will further refine the recommended remedial strategy from the Task Force.

## **Task Force final report to the Legislature**

The Task Force final report to the Legislature is due on February 25, 2026. The MPCA has compiled the history of the Pig's Eye Dump Site and continues to gather information on the adjacent sites of concern to support development of remedial strategies and restoration plans by the Task Force. The MPCA also continues to refine the potential remedial strategies at Pig's Eye Dump with feedback and input from the Task Force members.