

Clean Water Council
Budget and Outcomes Committee (BOC) Meeting Agenda
Friday, November 7, 2025, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Hybrid

2025 BOC Members: Steve Besser (BOC Chair), Dick Brainerd (BOC Vice-Chair), Steve Christensen, Warren Formo, Brad Gausman, Holly Hatlewick, Annie Knight, Fran Miron

9:30 Regular Business

- Introductions
- Approve agenda & September meeting minutes
- Chair and Staff update

9:45 Public Comment

Any member of the public wishing to address the Council regarding something not on the agenda is invited to do so as a part of this agenda item.

10:00 (INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY) Feedback on KPI Dashboard examples

Last month, we kicked off the topic of developing a KPI dashboard for the Clean Water Council. This month, we will review a few potential measures that could be used for the dashboard for each of the Strategic Plan Goals. This portion of the agenda will give Council members a chance to review each grouping of possible measures to share what they like, what could be improved, and what's missing. To prepare, please review the Strategic Plan and consider for yourself the outputs and outcomes that you would want to keep track of as a part of a dashboard, keeping in mind that we will not have all 92 measures from the Strategic Plan as part of the dashboard.

11:00 Break

11:15 (DISCUSSION ITEM) KPI Dashboard report out and next steps

Council members will report out on the feedback given for each grouping of possible measures and discuss next steps for developing the KPI dashboard.

12:00 Adjourn

Budget and Outcomes Committee Meeting Summary

Clean Water Council (Council)

September 5, 2025, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Committee Members present: Steve Besser (Committee Chair), Dick Brainerd (Committee Vice Chair), Steve Christenson, Warren Formo, Brad Gausman, Holly Hatlewick, and Fran Miron.

Members absent: Annie Knight.

To watch the Webex video recording of this meeting, please go to <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/clean-water-council/policy-ad-hoc-committee>, or contact [Brianna Frisch](#).

Regular Business

- Introductions
- Approve agenda
- Approval of the August 1st and July 11th meeting minutes, motion to approve both by Dick Brainerd, seconded by Fran Miron. Motion carries unanimously.
- Chair and staff update
 - We are close to the full details of the Council's field tour coming out, just a few speakers to confirm (9/15/25-9/16/25).
 - The Council's newsletter includes a link to the survey. This will be sent out through a trackable tool, so we know the response rates. We hope to have the survey results back for further discussion at the November full Council meeting. Council members should invite others to take the survey (takes about ten minutes). Jen Kader will send some language out to members to include when sharing.
 - The large-volume water users' policy is being worked on now, and hopefully will be ready at the next full Council meeting for discussion and approval. They are also looking at funding for private well implementation, as well as approaching sustainable aviation fuel (SAF).

Public Comment (Webex 00:18:00)

Any member of the public wishing to address the Council regarding something not on the agenda:

- Lori Cox provided a letter to the Council (see meeting packet). She wants to make sure the Council looks at the Clean Water Funds (CWFs), to make sure they are producing measurable outcomes, and that the outcomes are being measured. The printed letter will be handed around the room, it will be forwarded to members online. She was unable to make the meeting today.
 - *Response from Steve Besser:* She connected with me as well. She is passionate about agriculture and has an organic farm. The letter is strongly worded, but it reflects her passion for clean water.

Rubric (Webex 00:21:15)

Members will review changes to the draft rubric based on the beta test in August.

- This looks a lot like the last revision. Only a few changes have been made since the last discussion. The only significant change was in the Outreach and Communications criteria at the bottom of the first page. This is for folks who are new applicants or a new program, creating space to talk about what their plan is for communicating. There is both communication on the program, but also about how the CWFs are providing support (emphasis in the value the CWFs have played).

Discussion/Questions/Comments:

- Fran Miron: On the tour I was on yesterday, there was clear signage from US Fish and Wildlife was participating, along with other groups. I did not see any related to our work. When other organizations are putting up signs and demonstrating their commitment, it would be nice if we had something too. I do not know how that comes about or how that funding would be. There are opportunities out there. It would be nice for the public to be more aware of how the funds are impacting.
 - *Steve Besser:* I recently saw a sign that had our logo on it before going on the lake. I was proud to see it. That should be part of this, and have it demonstrated, on how to raise awareness. The agencies are included the logo more. We need to push a little harder for it.

- *Margaret Wagner, Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA)*: From the agency's perspective, I think we do a good job electronically. I think the Parks and Trails does a good job; I see it at the start of a lot of parks and trails, so that is another thing to consider – check how they fund that signage. Perhaps there is a way to add it on.
- *Holly Hatlewick*: Part of it is that many of the watershed implementation funds are on private lands. They are off the highway, out of visibility. Often, we don't put up signs if it is in the middle of a section because nobody is going to get there. Recently, we have been doing drainage watershed management project off highway 71, and people are doing more signage, but it might be off the beaten path. There is a concerted effort on Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) to do more. It is out there, on the website, it is in the plans.
- *Fran Miron*: It is zero to five points on the rubric, but I think it does draw that attention to the need to communicate. Especially, as we are talking about outcomes, signage is a good way for people to become more aware of it. Including it here make the proponents think about that piece, and I think it is important within this rubric.
- *Steve Besser*: I think we should investigate whether the CWFs could have license plates.
- *Fran Miron*: It is a voter approved initiative, that type of effort might do us good in the future. I like it.
- *Jen Kader*: This has come up a few times, talking about swag, things that we could produce. We are talking about different communications materials that could be checked out: banners or floor signs, for things like planning efforts and initiatives. To help connect the value that the CWFs have played. We will investigate this area more. The committee may want to have this conversation with the full Council as well. We will keep track of the ideas.
- Dick Brainerd: Something that was raised before was if the rubric is biased against boots-on-the ground work. Is this okay to move forward as is, or should we note it?
 - *Steve Christenson*: I raised this question, and I think it is okay as is. I intend to continue to support funding for planning, measuring, research programs (like drinking water planning with the beta testing of the rubric), but in the testing I gave it a low score. The balance I would strike is 80/20 (eighty towards implementation and twenty towards research, measuring, monitoring). I think this rubric enables us to make those choices. It is just a tool, that assists us in making our decisions, so I feel okay about it.
 - *Tannie Eshenaur, Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)*: When you look at the planning effort, does the planning support measures and outcomes. In the drinking water action plan, they worked hard to include measurable outcomes because it is an important focus of the framework. We need all those parts to be successful.
- Fran Miron: Looking at the forms and the letter received from Lori Cox, we may want to include the reference to the statute in the preamble, along with the rubric, and application forms, so she can see what is being collected. That may resolve her concerns.

Application Form (Webex 00:39:30)

The application form used for FY26-27 has been updated based on input over the last couple of years and, specifically, the development of the rubric. Members will have an opportunity to react to the draft form—what they like, are unsure of or uncomfortable with, and what might be missing.

Discussion/Questions/Comments:

- Steve Besser: As Annie Knight previously noted, the application forms and the rubric need to line up. So, we want to make sure we reach that goal.
- Steve Besser: Regarding the abstract, I think it is a quick and dirty executive summary.
 - *Margaret Wagner, MDA*: It may be difficult to summarize a program in a hundred words or less, especially with the second part “...its intended water quality impacts, and who it serves.”
 - *Tannie Eshenaur, MDH*: I think it is a good exercise.
 - *Heather Johnson, MPCA*: People will approach this in different ways, and think about the volume of material you want to sift through. If you don't put parameters, you may get a lot, especially any new people. Make it as much of a template to each other as possible, so word numbers are set. I don't know what the word numbers should be but make it so that people have enough to explain, but not so much that there is excess.
 - *Dick Brainerd*: I think we should limit it to 200-300 words. So, take the paragraph out.

- *Holly Hatlewick*: There should be a number limit. However, I think it should be brief, and concise. Maybe no more than 100.
 - *Steve Besser*: Perhaps, not to exceed more than 250 words.
 - *Tannie Eshenaur, MDH*: When we started this process we were limited to two pages, and they all went together in a notebook. The last cycle, some were two pages where others were six. That is one side of the issue. The other side is if you are asking for \$500,000 dollars there is one level of explanation, versus \$90,000,000 there is another level of explanation needed. I think there should be some flexibility.
 - *Holly Hatlewick*: I spoke with Jen previously on these presentations. I don't think it should be equal billing in front of the Council, I think it should be based off of how much funding you get. So, that is the same thought process. I don't know how we do it. Perhaps, tier it based on the request, and allow more pages to go with it. I'm not sure.
 - *Steve Besser*: The amount to the program does not detract away from it either, there could be a small program that is critical, and impactful.
- Margaret Wagner, MDA: Regarding the water quality impact, it seems like we want to emphasize the water management framework to give space that all of those are eligible, because they are all important and connected. Water quality is most important because it is at the top, but maybe bringing up the interconnections, or ask how it fits in the framework.
 - *Dick Brainerd*: I heard "proposal" multiple times, where these are programs.
 - *Jen Kader*: The CWFs has historically funded programs over projects, and proposal acknowledges it is a competitive process. Instead of proposal, we can put "proposed program."
 - *Steve Christenson*: The application is for a proposal but keep programs.
 - *Steve Besser*: I think we can move the interconnection up in the form as well.
 - *Steve Christenson*: I would still want to keep water quality impact first and interconnection second.
 - *Steve Besser*: Well, interconnection impacts the funding a lot.
 - *Jen Kader*: We can play with the order and see what comes forward as a best fit. We can also take the water management framework out of the interconnection piece and move it up, as a way to contain things.
- Fran Miron: Perhaps for the outcomes, should they be reversed? The current year first, then the prior years. It is more approachable for new applicants. *Steve Besser*: Yes, it reads better that way.
- Heather Johnson, MPCA: This feels daunting. It would be good to get some more parameters. Thinking about WRAPS, each one of them has a ton of outcomes. I could give you fifty pages about it, because I would want to bring my A game. That means I must show you with the materials what we have done with the funds received and what we plan to do. I can bring that A game with two pages. If you don't have parameters, you are going to get a lot of pages. You don't have to decide right now but think about what you want.
 - *Steve Besser*: Yes. We have to think about these guidelines. These folks are scientists, and they want to show the work, but also understand the content.
 - *Jen Kader*: It comes off as a report, but also a proposal. So, there is some tension there, so it is something to continue the conversation on.
 - *Steve Besser*: Perhaps, it is the wording, such as "what progress has been made".
 - *Holly Hatlewick*: We can have limits here with the proposal material, but perhaps they can have more time on the presentation. The abstract, with a three-page limit. Depending on the ask, there is a scale of time for the presentation.
 - *Steve Besser*: I like that idea; it gives flexibility and opportunities to ask questions.
 - *Dick Brainerd*: If an individual rates the program low, the presentation can change that.
- Brad Gausman: This is a backwards and forwards looking document. It gets to the measurables desire for more. Are we receiving reports of the program we funded at the end? Do we have followed up documents that bookends the work that has been done? It feels like it is a rolling application.
 - *Jen Kader*: In the past this has been the space where folks could talk about progress made historically for these programs. There is the Clean Water Council Performance Report (every two years), looking at the outcomes of all the work that has been happening (not on programs).
 - *Tannie Eshenaur, MDH*: CWFs are reported in three ways. The Performance Report every two years. Our website. The LCC also has requirements, they have a strict form to fill out that also has measurable outcomes.

- *Steve Besser*: We are an advisory board. We want to see the CWFs produce measurable outcomes. We don't have the authority to impose any further reporting requirements. We can ask about progress.
- *Brad Gausman*: I would like to review those outcome documents again. I am thinking in those documents are there specific, measurable, outcomes? Usually when funds are given, there is a reporting process at the end of the fiscal period. I want to see those outcomes clearly defined. It sounds like those outcome documents may include them, so I want to follow up on it.
- *Margaret Wagner, MDA*: Yes, from the state agency perspective the performance report is where we have historically put a lot of that info. We can also meet up to talk more on that whether at a small group or in the full Council. The LCC does have requirements. A few of the MDA's programs have gone through an audit, and they can reveal the results as well (dug into the financial side a lot). We may need to tie those together more clearly for others. We have a lot but need to package it better.
- *Holly Hatlewick*: It comes back to the performance report. Every dollar is tracked, and that is a daunting process. That adds a lot of extra time of reporting, and if you add more, it may not be possible. The performance report takes that amount of time. I don't think it is feasible to create faster. It may impact implementation at that point, and we don't want to do that. I don't know how to make it one system, for better reporting either. The dashboards for 1W1P have been helpful.
- *Jen Kader*: We could keep talking about this item for the rest of the meeting. We only have until the end of the October committee meeting to finalize these pieces. Historically, the request was two measures looking back and two looking forward that could be included. That provides parameters. Perhaps what makes sense is putting together a mockup of what it could look like, without an additional effort of reporting. The staff that they would be utilizing, would also be working on the current performance report, so we want to keep that in mind.
- *John Barten*: In some of the programs we could get information, some synthesizing required, when the proposals are due. Others, it would be hard to collect this information for them. It does seem like a bit of a black hole sending CWFs out into the world. Parsing some of it would be good.
- Steve Christenson: To simplify items, for page 3, we have community value and outreach and communication. Change it to match the rubric. Keep environmental justice and equity, but lump it under one of those two brackets, so it matches the rubric better.
- Holly Hatlewick: For funding recipients, we may need to define "reach" (versus pass-through).
 - *Jen Kader*: We can drop that second line. What if we have pass-through to a non-state agency entity.
 - *Margaret Wagner, MDA*: That can work.

Draft process and calendar (Webex 01:47:30)

Now that Council members have seen both the draft rubric and application; this final agenda segment will look at how those will be incorporated into an overall process. The first page provides a more detailed look at the process itself, with the remaining pages outlining the flow and back-and-forth between November 2025 and December 2026.

- Applications would be submitted by January 16, 2026. There would be four meetings for presentations to take place.
- Scores and questions are submitted in advance. It may be good to help the state agencies and other applicants by doing a cursory score ahead of time. The presentations could be that additional layer of explanation to address questions. That underscores the need to spend time with it in advance.
- After the presentations are done (the fourth meeting). This is a time for review of the fourth meeting, as well as all the programs in aggregate. Also, having public input at the fourth meeting, helps to review the programs and suggest the funds. In July we'd draft a funding suggestion (steady, increase, decrease). The full Council would review these at the July meeting. The goal would be to have the memo from the Interagency Coordination Team (ICT) that includes the dollar amounts, following the July meeting.
- All applicants would have two weeks to submit draft dollar amounts by the week prior to the August BOC meeting. Then, setting those preliminary recommendations at the September full Council meeting. The last budget cycle went to October, so we want to keep it in September.

Discussion/Questions/Comments:

- Steve Christenson: The packet arrives Wednesday, Thursday is review, and the meeting on Friday.
 - *Jen Kader*: We would be getting the meeting materials out a week in advance during the budget cycle.

- *Steve Christenson*: Then I am indifferent. I would like to hear the presentation before completing my scoring.
- *Jen Kader*: It would be a preliminary scoring, and may not need to share it, but share the questions from the forms, and then members would be able to complete their scores 48 hours post the presentations. So, there is time to update and finalize the scores. The questions in advance would help those presenters.
- *Holly Hatlewick*: I think that will be complicated for presenters if it is all or nothing. The presenter will have a hard time being prepared for it. I am indifferent if it is ahead of time, more about everyone must complete it or nothing. You can make it fair for the presenters.
- *Steve Besser*: I would be crossing items out and updating the score. We will need Council members ready ahead of time to know the rubric and the proposal, to be ready for the presentations.
- *Jen Kader*: We will need to be clear about expectations for Council members to be ready. The full Council has always been a part of the process, with further deliberation from the BOC. The change here is that people will need to actively participate with scores (within 48 hours). Copies will be sent back to Council members, so they know how they scored them. The information is consolidated and sent to applicants. Applicants would have seven business days to respond in writing, the questions the Council members may have. These answers would be provided to the BOC members on the Monday before, so you can review the questions, and if you have further questions before the BOC meeting. You can ask more questions at the BOC meeting too.
- Steve Besser: Due to this feedback from the full Council members, this should help us make decisions on where to adjust. Jen Kader: We have dates for reviewing the forecast and providing final proposals on the calendar too (December BOC meeting).
- Jen Kader will update these documents for the October meeting.

Response to Lori Cox Public Input Email, by Brad Jordahl-Redlin, MDA (Webex 02:16:30)

- I would like to respond to this letter. I am concerned about how this is received. In the third paragraph, there is a reference to the practices implemented to the certification program and the outcomes achieved, the NRCS standard, etc. The Council should understand that every practice they implement in the [Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program \(MAWQCP\)](#), and the outcomes they generate (estimates or otherwise) are exactly the same as everything else the CWFs fund. The hundreds of millions of dollars funded in the implementation grants, and the practices implemented on the ground. They are the same practices. Certification does not invent practices to implement. Certification is a risk assessment process, where they find a problem on the farm and use the applicable practices that have been established and engineered to treat those impairment-causing instances. These are the cover crops, the grass waterways, water sediment control basins, they are all those practices that are there to enhance and protect water and prevent impairment of water quality. That is how it has been done, and only how it has ever been done. The concepts within this letter are shocking to me. We do reports, the same way the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) elink reports their outcomes. We have reduced 166,200 tons of soil per year with the existing 7,819 practices that certification has installed. It is exactly how BWSR would report.
- In this letter, she states “*...if practices utilized within this program do not and cannot affirm a specific result just by implementing them, then how can this program comply with CWF statutes?*” and that is a statement that can be made about every agricultural investment the CWFs have ever provided since its beginning. There is nothing different about certification. The practices are selected to meet and treat the risks that are involved.
- Please understand when BWSR funds, through and SWCD, a practice implementation, it is the exact same implementation for the exact same purposes, to achieve the exact same outcomes, that MAWQCP does. I want to make sure people understand that.
- Regarding estimations of outcomes, we all are using estimations of outcomes. We are no different, it is the same in how that reporting is done. We have monitoring on certified fields, like tile monitors that show a reduction in nitrate in the tile water, in a certified field versus a non-certified field.
- A different thing about certification is that they risk assess everything on the farm. Every parcel and every crop grown, for every input provided. No one else does that work, not anywhere in America. No one else has attempted to do this. We require all of nitrogen applications to be reduced to the University of Minnesota (UMN) best management practices (BMPs), and not a program in the state does that except this program.

They GIS map and track and map every acre they have. If you want a report on something that isn't tracked, let them know because they have the data. It is the most invasive thing farmers have experienced. There is nothing at this level. Minnesota farmers are doing this, and standing up, and going through this process voluntarily (1,684 farms in the state currently).

- *Steve Besser:* We appreciate your efforts and passion in this program. Thank you for speaking today. It gives a lot of clarity.
- *Jen Kader:* The comment regarding measurable outcomes is something we have heard from multiple stakeholders regarding everything the CWFs are funding. That is why it is included on the application; the measurable component and how it is measured and tracked. This letter singles out one program, but others have asked about all the work we do. As we move forward with discussions on outcomes, what are the things we can point to, to say with certainty that we are seeing those changes and fulfilling the statutory requirement to look at outcomes.
- *Holly Hatlewick:* The BMPs and resulting outcomes are based on USDA standard because it is based on decades of data. That data is based on federal and state research. It is based on science and implementation practicality. Things we can measure.
- *Fran Miron:* As a certified farm, going through the process was extremely helpful. I would say it was very educational. We were able to identify practices that benefited the environment. It exemplifies the justification of the projects implemented. I wish more farmers would look at it. The MDA's efforts are out there. As people share their stories, it will echo.
- *Jen Kader:* The Council's field tour includes a certified farmer stop, if you have additional questions. Brad is happy to answer questions if you reach out to him as well.

Adjournment (Webex 02:34:05)

Budget and Outcomes Committee Meeting Summary

Clean Water Council (Council)

October 3, 2025, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Committee Members present: Steve Besser (Committee Chair), Dick Brainerd (Committee Vice Chair), Steve Christenson, Warren Formo, Brad Gausman, Holly Hatlewick, Fran Miron, and Annie Knight.

No members absent.

To watch the Webex video recording of this meeting, please go to <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/clean-water-council/policy-ad-hoc-committee>, or contact [Brianna Frisch](#).

Regular Business

- Introductions
- Approval of the October 3rd meeting agenda, motion to approve by Dick Brainerd, seconded by Steve Christenson. Motion carries unanimously.
- The September 5th meeting minutes provided but not finalized. They will be in the next meeting packet for review and approval.
- Chair and Staff update
 - Steve Besser: The Council should investigate a Minnesota license plates for the Legacy Amendment plate with the logo on it. If the group approves, I would like to share that idea with the full Council. We will need more research on it, but it is something to pursue.
 - Brad Gausman: I think we should reach out to the Legislative members on the Council to see how they view that idea.
 - Jen Kader:
 - The Newsletter has a link to the Council's survey. There are currently over sixty responses. With the qualitative nature of some of the questions analysis will take a little longer. The survey is open until October 31, 2025. Please share this survey link with those you represent and other relevant parties. Staff will work to get it on our webpage as well.
 - The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Drinking Water Action Plan will be launched next Thursday. City of New Brighton's Drinkng Water Plant will have an event for it. Council members are welcome to attend, connect with Tannie Eshenaur (MDH) for parking and location details.

Public Comment (Webex 00:26:15)

Any member of the public wishing to address the Council regarding something not on the agenda is invited to do so as a part of this agenda item.

- Trevor Russell (Friends of the Mississippi River): Clean Water Council, thank you for all you do.

Finalize application form, process (Webex 00:27:30)

Last month, we finalized the rubric, but some discussion regarding process needed to hold finalizing of the application form and process until this month. We will review the draft form and process and then advance the full package along to the full council for consideration later this month.

- Rubric:
 - This now has the statute reference included and linked to the webpage.
 - Extended the description of the "water quality impact", to include the other approaches that could be considered a part of water quality impact beyond implementation (i.e., monitoring, assessment, research development) if there was a clear tie to the water quality.
 - Consensus tool (fist to five) approval by committee members to move it forward.
- Proposal Form:
 - Review the length of responses (limiting word count). Example word counts provided in a sample document for 50, 100, and 200.
 - In measurable outcomes, it could Include an optional bullet "C" to identify measures currently included in the performance report this program supports directly or indirectly. Some are clear and others are

challenging. It could be complicated but could show in the application form on how it ties to this area. Perhaps, it can satisfy the Council in supporting outcomes.

- Environmental justice and equity question moved under community value, based on the feedback of having it match the rubric.
- Dropped the question regarding entities and amounts of past funding for recipients. This may want to be seen in a different format at some future time. A table for leveraged funds is now provided.
- Fist to five reveals the BOC members would like to move this forward.

Discussion/Questions/Comments:

- Annie Knight: In the proposal form, we should add a clarification that each subpoint is 50-100 words.
- Steve Christenson: Match the words used from the proposal form to the rubric used. That will make scoring easier and more cohesive.
- Holly Hatlewick: For the proposal form in measurable outcomes, it may be getting too far into the weeds if we try to include that bullet point C. It also does not make it as streamline.
- Annie Knight: How often is the Clean Water Council Performance Report released?
 - Response from Jen Kader: Historically, it had been produced before the Council was into the full budget discussions. This year it will be provided in April. That is still during the Council's budget process, but not at the start of our presentations.
 - Annie Knight: I wanted to suggest an option "C" be that they list the page numbers where it can be found supported in the report. It may not need to be the most recent report, the last report is still relevant. For the agencies, would it be too heavy of a lift to have an option "C" for that to list the page numbers if members want to reference it?
 - Glenn Skuta, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA): That is not too hard for agencies to do. They know where stuff is and can drop in those numbers without a bunch of verbiage.
 - Annie Knight: I would like to be able to flip through the report while reviewing the proposals.
 - Jen Kader: Perhaps we can have a cover sheet for the Council members, that would tie programs to page numbers when the Performance Report comes out. Then, Council members could have it for the budget review process. Then, it would not need to be in the application form.
 - Glenn Skuta, MPCA: Graphics can be in the presentations, so you can see the updated information from the upcoming Performance Report.

Draft Budget Process (Webex 01:01:00)

- Application phase (November 2025 to January 2026), which includes providing the application and rubric on the webpage. Applications need to be submitted sometime in mid-January.
- Review and scoring phase (January to June 2026). This is for all Council members to review ahead of time and submit scores in advance (two weeks before the Full Council meetings). Presenters will receive any questions the week before the meeting. Council members can adjust their scores at the meeting and submit final scores and any additional questions at the end of the day Wednesday the week of the presentations. Applicants can take seven business days to respond to questions in writing. At the BOC meeting, members can ask any additional questions as needed. The BOC will deliberate and set a preliminary suggestion for which of the applications to increase, hold steady, or decrease. At the next Full Council meeting, the BOC questions and answers are included in the meeting packet, along with the preliminary BOC suggestions. The BOC presents the suggestions for initial response by the full Council.
- *There is a calendar document included in the meeting packet as well.*
- Draft budget development phase (June to September 2026).
- Final budget development phase (September to December 2026).

Discussion/Questions/Comments:

- Steve Christenson: I thought the process looked good. I am ready to approve it as is. Are all the application would be available January 29th? Jen Kader: You only need to have the ones done for their first set of presentations. If you really wanted to submit all of them, you could sit down and complete them all at one time.
- Steve Besser: How will we be filling out the rubric forms for these presentations? Jen Kader: The beta-testing worked well, and that is how the forms would be submitted. You can still have a physical copy to write on, but then you would need to submit the electronic version of the form end of business day on Wednesday after the presentation. You also need to put in notes, so you can remember why you scored the way you did.

- Dick Brainerd: Can we do a tutorial so people can know exactly how to do these actions? Jen Kader: Yes.
- Glenn Skuta, MPCA: It might be good to include that the presentations will take place over 4-5 meetings.
- Annie Knight: Are the scores posted publicly? Jen Kader: We had talked about having the questions included in the meeting packet (by program). For the scores being public, I would suggest one set of scores. I plan to provide the average (box-and-whisker-plot), with the segments.
- Holly Hatlewick: Regarding scores, we can always grow and change over time. Wait to make it public by individual score after they are all scored, as the final score. Sometimes less is more.
- Warren: I agree with Holly. Make it available after they are all scored is the best way to present it. When we do these initially, are we re-doing them after the presentation? *Answer: Yes, if you want to change them, members have an opportunity; there is a window to make updates (48 hours) for each voting member to review and make changes.*
- Steve Besser: The average of the scores (box-and-whisker plots) should be shared, but we keep the actual sheets we use.
- Steve Christenson: I think keep it simple.
- Annie Knight: I am comfortable where the group is at. I think synopsis of the questions and the scores, will add to the transparency of it. I would love to look back and be able to clearly show how the conclusions were made (with flexibility built in). I think this process will reveal that, and it is a good thing to have this structured process.
- Warren Formo: We have that flexibility still, right. It needs to be clear that this is an advisory tool.
- *Motion by Dick Brainerd to pass the rubric, application form, and budget process forward for review and approval at the full Council meeting, seconded by Steve Christenson. Motion carries unanimously.*

Clean Water Fund (CWF) Performance Report, Kim Lang and Shaina Keseley (MPCA) (Webex 01:31:30)

MPCA staff engaged in the development of the CWF Performance Report are interested in receiving feedback about its next version, to be printed in spring 2026.

- This involves the six state agencies (BWSR, MDA, DNR, MDH, MPCA, MCES), and Metropolitan Council, working together. Clean Water Fund investments are an important part of water resource management in Minnesota, but they also rely on the dedication and partnership of citizens, communities, and businesses to implement strategies that improve water quality.
- Their goal is to clarify the connections between CWFs investments, actions taken, and outcomes achieved in Minnesota's water resources.
- Timeline updates: All final measures uploaded by end of the day on November 30, 2025. Introduction ready by December 20, 2025. Report draft to the sub-team on December 31, 2025. The sub-team review complete by January 15, 2026. Presentation to the Interagency Coordination Team (ICT) in late February 2026. Presentation to the Council early March 2026. Deadline for completion by April 7, 2026. Along with the metadata complete by April 30, 2026.
- They would like to make some changes. Currently there is a lot of text in the performance report, but they are proposing more graphics included. The information is still consistent, but the graphics are more captivating. They are looking for that change, to make the information clearer for the readers. They are looking for feedback on this item from the Council members.

Questions/Comments/Feedback:

- Steve Besser: The science nerds will like either option, digging more into the words. I think the changes suggested allowing it to be more open for all kinds of readers, not just the science folks.
- Holly Hatlewick: Although you are moving to more graphics, the photos are also ones that people can relate to. So, don't move completely away from those. If someone is taking a sample from a lake, an actual picture may make more sense because people can see themselves doing that action, versus a graphic depicting it broadly. There is value in seeing humans.
- Jen Kader: Regarding the arrows in the trend box, it has come up before improving versus getting worse as being easier to follow. This needs to be consistent for the reader to understand.
- Annie Knight: This new version is great. It is nice to see the status and trend data up on top. Consistent information would be helpful while reading through the full report.

- Margaret Wagner, Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA): I agree with Holly's comment about the photos. I also like the idea of pictures of clean water included. It is an integrated effort and well-organized work by the state agencies.
- Brad Gausman: I enjoy the simpleness of the trend data. However, I like numbers for the measurements, so I can understand the trend better. So, a measurable number to justify the trend in the upper box as well would be helpful. Having the goal helps to understand the measurement. I would like to see more numerical data justifying the trend, whether it is in the description or simplified in the upper box.
- Jen Kader: Would you want to have this presentation at the BOC or full Council? Which group would you like to receive feedback from? *Answer:* In the past two reports we started off with feedback from the BOC, and then they recommended the full Council. We would propose going to the full Council directly.
- Brad Gausman: It would be helpful within the overall Performance Report to include a CWFs program directory? When I am looking at it as a Council member, I love the overall feel of the report. I like to look at it at a program level. I do control-find to search for items throughout the PDF. It would be good to be able to look at the programs within the larger document. *Answer:* Sure.

KPI Dashboard Examples (Webex 02:03:00)

Working with Steve Christenson, MPCA staff have developed a sample of what the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Dashboard for the CWC could look like. This was to provide initial feedback as the Council continues to explore this as a tool for CWC discussions, including how to prioritize which measures to focus on as we can't look at all 92 in the strategic plan.

- The purpose of the dashboard is to help us measure and report on the CWFs outcomes on a more frequent basis. The goal would be to have a dashboard that helps us drive focus on our CWF priorities. In turn, that will drive outcomes! If the Council is updated on a regular basis, on certain items, it will drive work towards achieving outcomes towards those items. Additionally, it is about communication. This dashboard is short and concise and includes relevant graphics. It is something that can be used when talking with constituents.
- This should align with the Performance Report every two years. This is something we have been working on. They went from 92 measurements, down to about a dozen to focus on. They are mostly based off the measures that are in the Council's Strategic Plan. It is organized around the four pillars in the Strategic Plan.
- Focus on Outcomes versus Outputs:
 - A pollutant trend information equals an outcome.
 - This does not necessarily come from the Council's Strategic Plan (about 7 outcomes out of the 92 measures)
 - Long term, not necessarily able to be updated more than one- to two-times per year interval, and in some cases a five-year interval.
 - Many are within the CWF Performance Report or the Minnesota Environment and Energy Report Card, or other specific topic reports.
 - Maybe a mix of outputs and outcomes, since need output to get outcomes, yet may not be limited to outputs we are measuring?
- Are we selecting the correct KPIs? Are there suggestions on how to make it useful to the full Council before it moves forward to them? These are examples and may not reflect the current outcomes (this is an example for review from the BOC). Additionally, some graphics are missing and need more graphical assistance to make it easier to interpret. What is your reaction to it? There is also an outcome versus output. Hopefully the output would respond to the outcomes. We want to know if this is the correct information to be reviewing (less about the presentation of it):

Questions/Comments/Concerns:

- Steve Besser: Some of the water graphics are great, and some are not as clear.
- Steve Christenson: I would scrape the nitrate items, but it is in the news a lot so we may want to talk about it more.
- Glenn Skuta, MPCA: I have not been a part of this selection. When I look at the blue water graphs, the nitrate violations are over twenty years, there are only a few and it is steady over time. That looks positive to me. The nitrate violations reflects it is coming down over time, which is also positive. If things change, and something else comes up later, you can have a new indicator that becomes key. I see you are doing planning-oriented items, versus the outcome of the water, etc.

- Jen Kader: We want to have a snapshot of items, because we can access the other items through the Performance Report or following through with emails to specific staff for updates. We need to figure out what is valuable to include in addition to (or instead of) the nitrate contents revealed.
- Holly Hatlewick: Violations throws up a red flag, perhaps it is the word I am struggling with, because a lot of moving parts can strike up a violation.
- Warren Formo: When I look at the nitrate violations, I would like to know more about the violations because it does not take a lot to have a violation (versus a major violation issue). For the average user, I'm not sure how helpful it is. Additionally, homes may have treatment systems to manage their nitrates, and we don't know about that either.
- Jen Kader: This conversation is letting us begin this conversation. Homework would be look at these and prepare for that next discussion. Please review the slides before the next meeting. Thinking about: What do you like? What do you dislike? What is missing? What questions do you have? What would be helpful to have as Council members as you make decisions moving forward?
- Dick Brainerd: It would be good to include how often it is updated at the top/initially so the viewer understands how often each item is being measured and presented.

Adjournment (Webex 02:23:44)

For further information go:
CWF Performance Report
Legislative Commissions

Drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota.

Measure: All 900+ DWSPPs complete for groundwater public water systems.

Measure: All source water assessments for 23 surface water systems complete.

Measure: Source water protection plans complete for non-community public water systems.

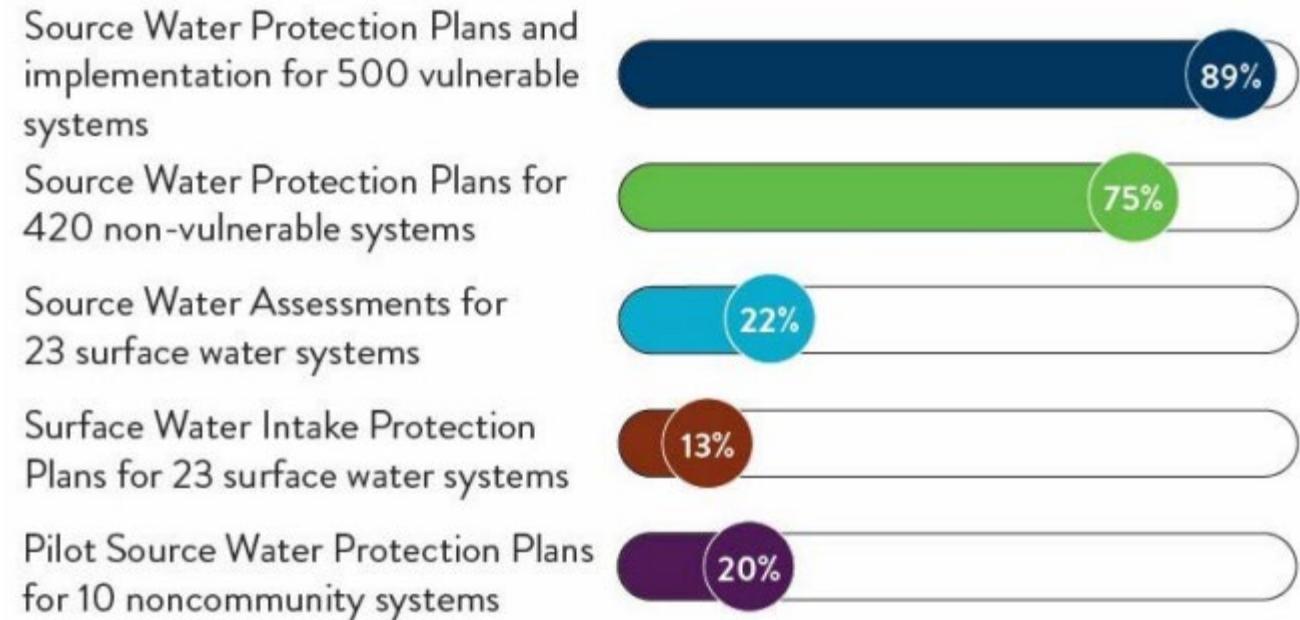
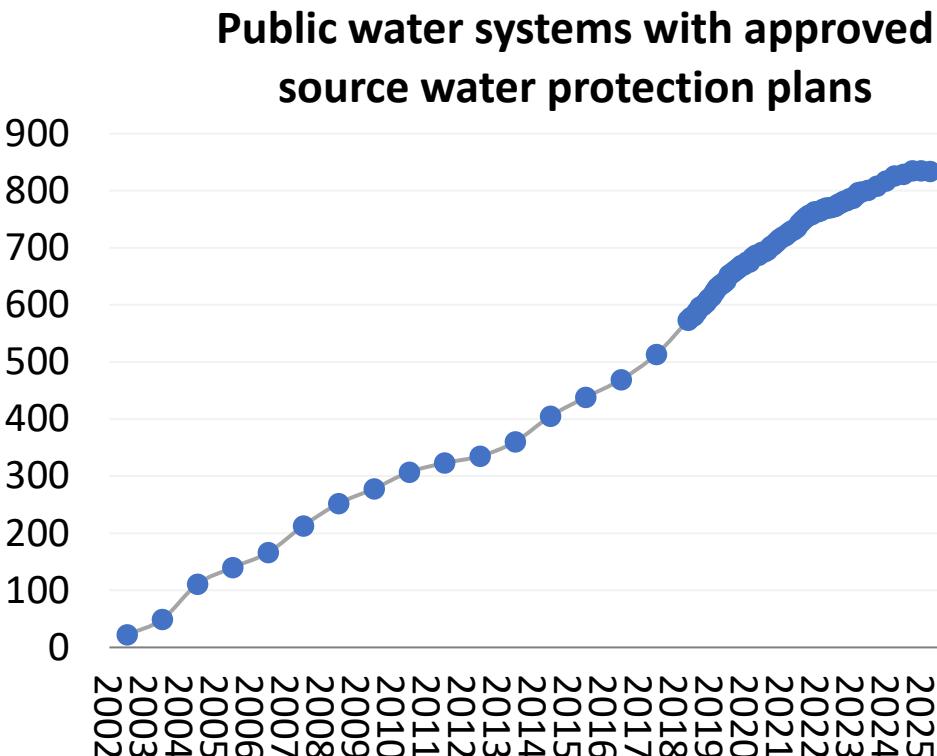
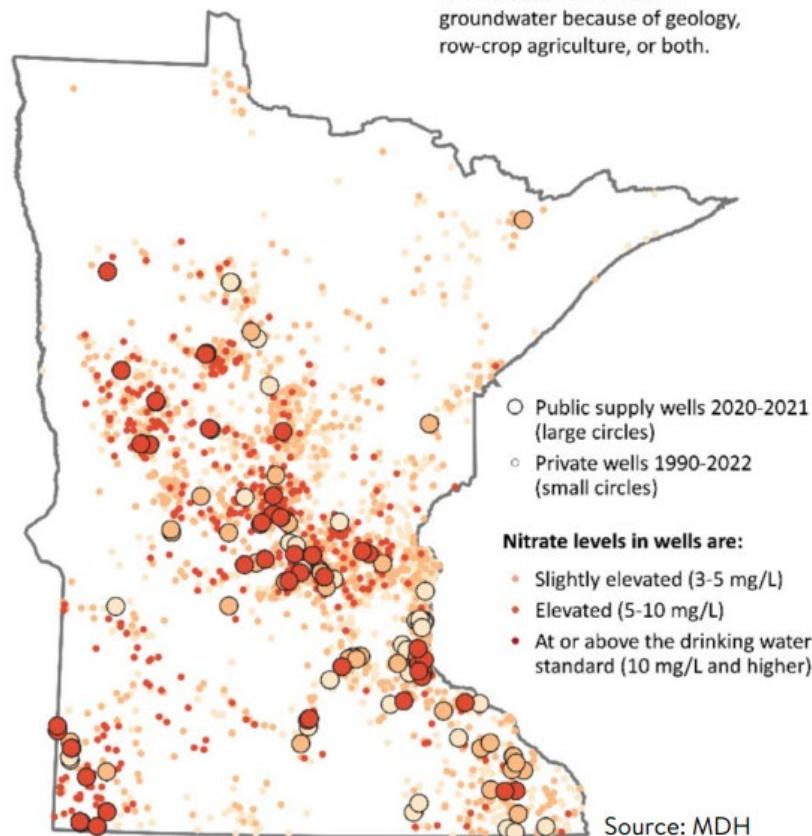


Figure 29. Progress on source water protection planning goals.

Drinking water is safe for everyone,

Nitrate detected in drinking water wells

(Prior to treatment)



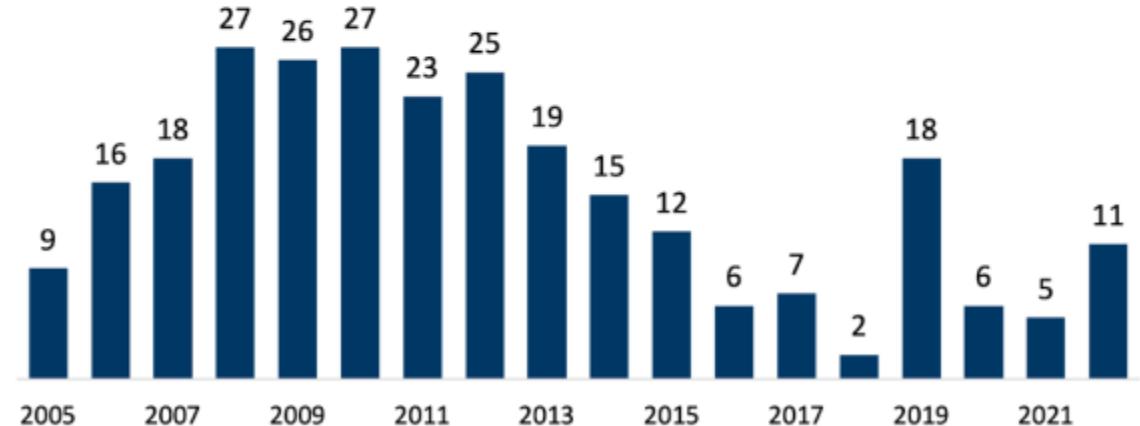
Elevated nitrate levels are a concern across the state, and some areas - the areas with many dots - are more vulnerable to nitrate contamination in groundwater because of geology, row-crop agriculture, or both.

Nitrate violations, community water systems



Community water systems provide water to the public in their primary living space –where people live and sleep.

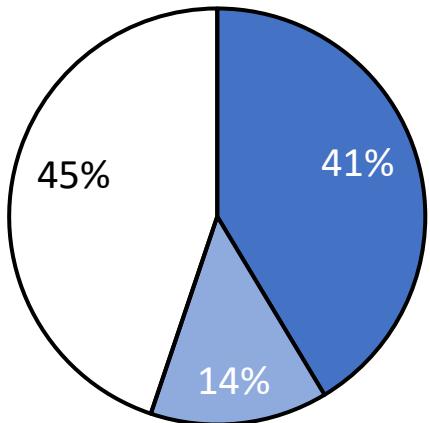
Nitrate violations, non-community water systems



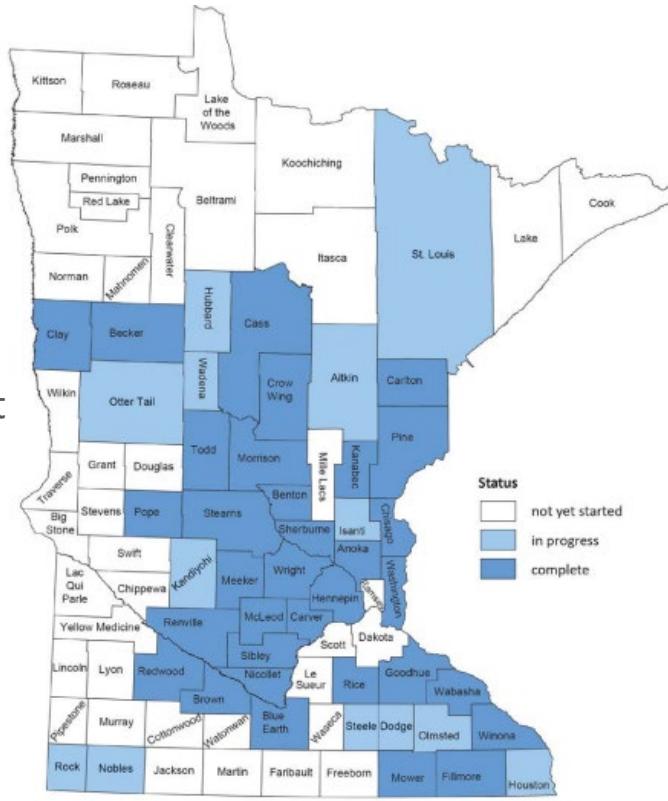
Non-community water systems provide water to the public in places other than their homes, where people work, gather and play.

Groundwater is clean and available to all in Minnesota.

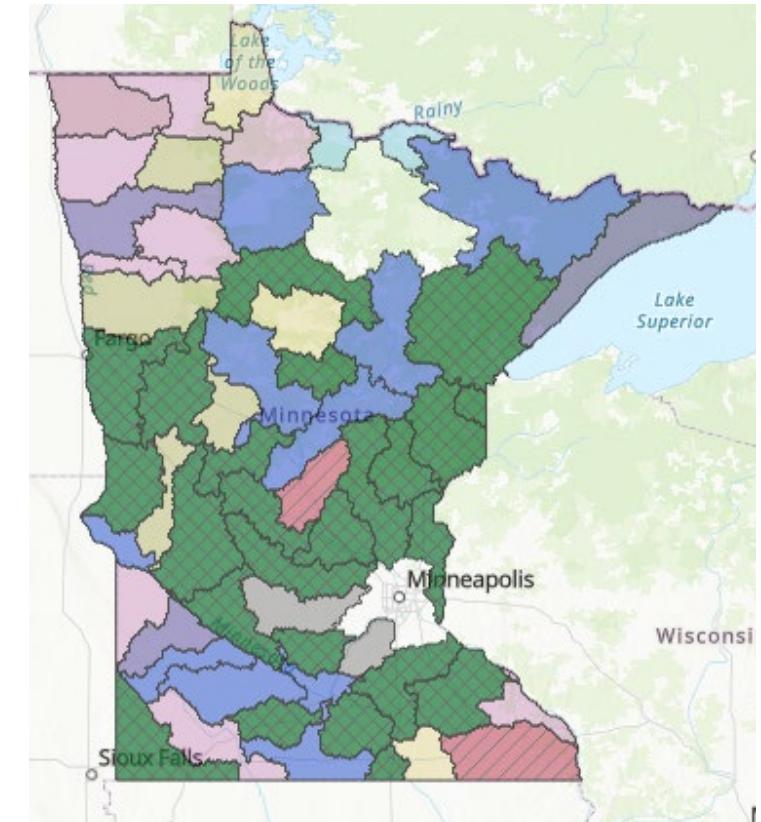
Measure: All Part B atlases completed by 2038.



- Complete
- In progress
- Future start



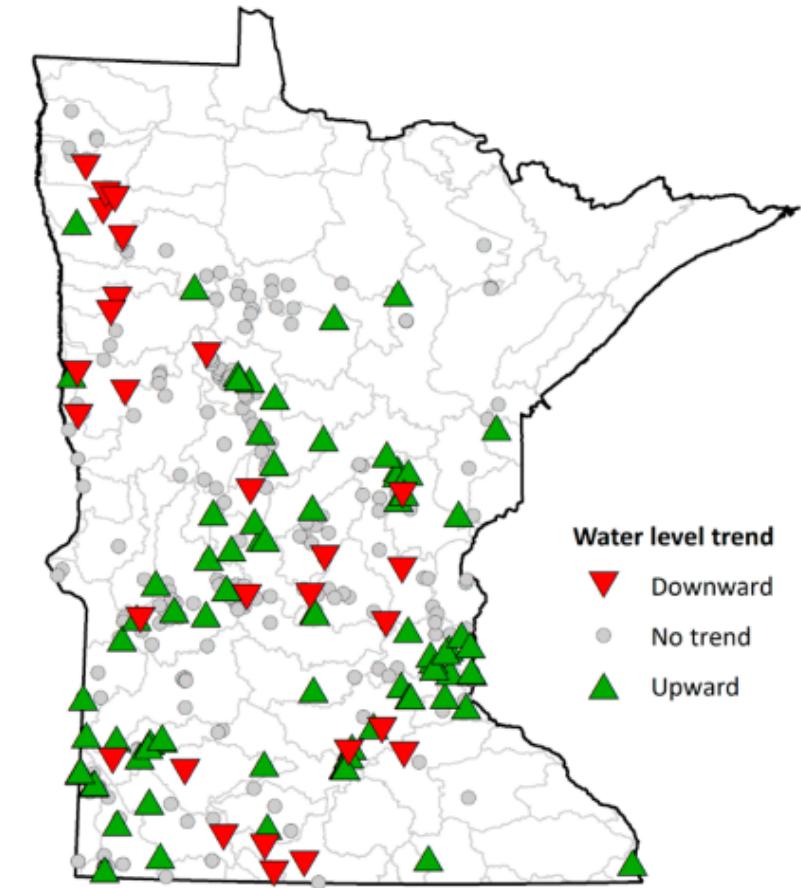
Measure: Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies (GRAPS) completed for all 60 One Watershed One Plan boundaries.



Groundwater is clean and available to all in Minnesota.

Measure: 80 percent compliance rate maintained for subsurface septic treatment (SSTS) systems with a stretch goal of 90 percent.

SSTS inspection compliance goal	80%
SSTS inspection compliance rate (actual 2023)	82%

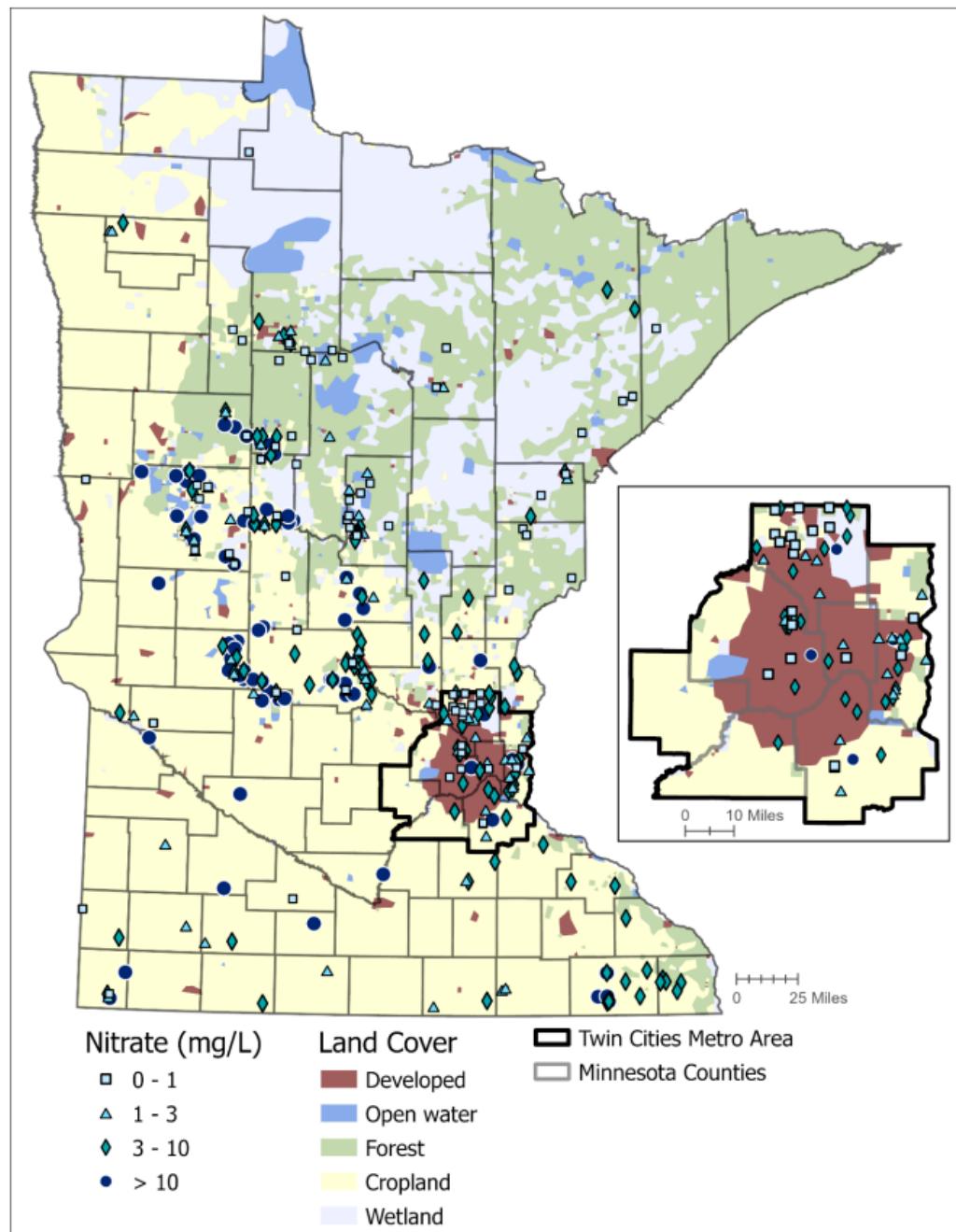


Groundwater level trends

Measure: Monitoring wells have upward trend or no change in all six groundwater provinces.
- present in bar graph? By GW Provinces

Groundwater is clean and available to all in Minnesota.

Figure 4. Nitrate concentrations in the surficial sand and gravel aquifers, 2018-2023 [concentrations are expressed as nitrogen].



Groundwater is clean and available to all in Minnesota.

Figure 12. CEC detections in ambient groundwater monitoring network wells, 2018-2023 [Plot shows the most recent detection in the sampled wells].

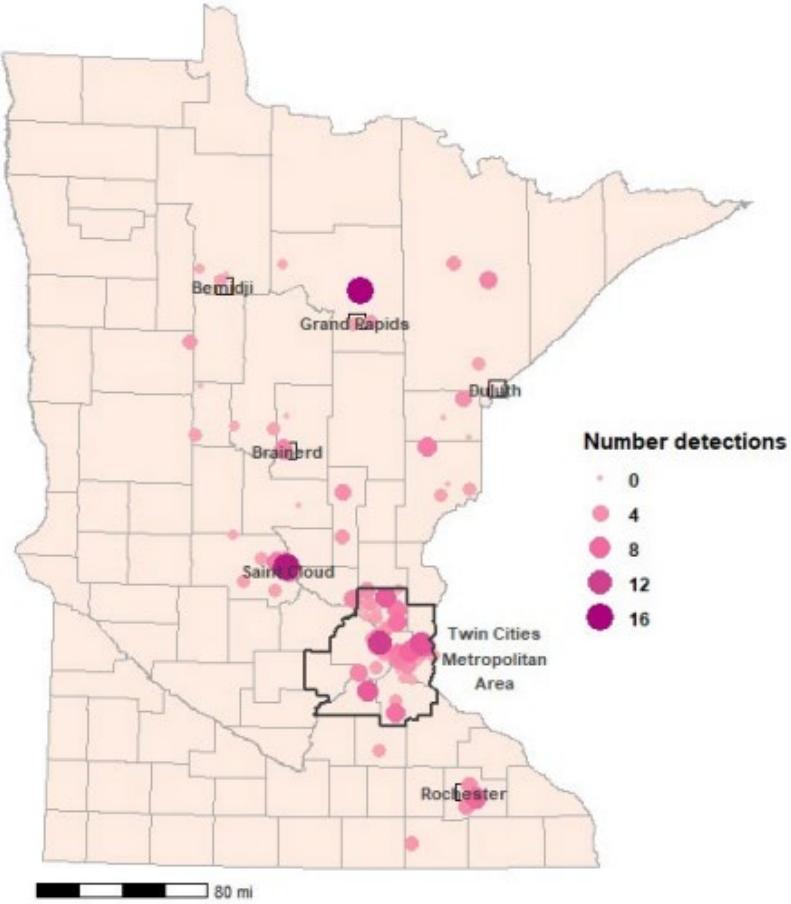
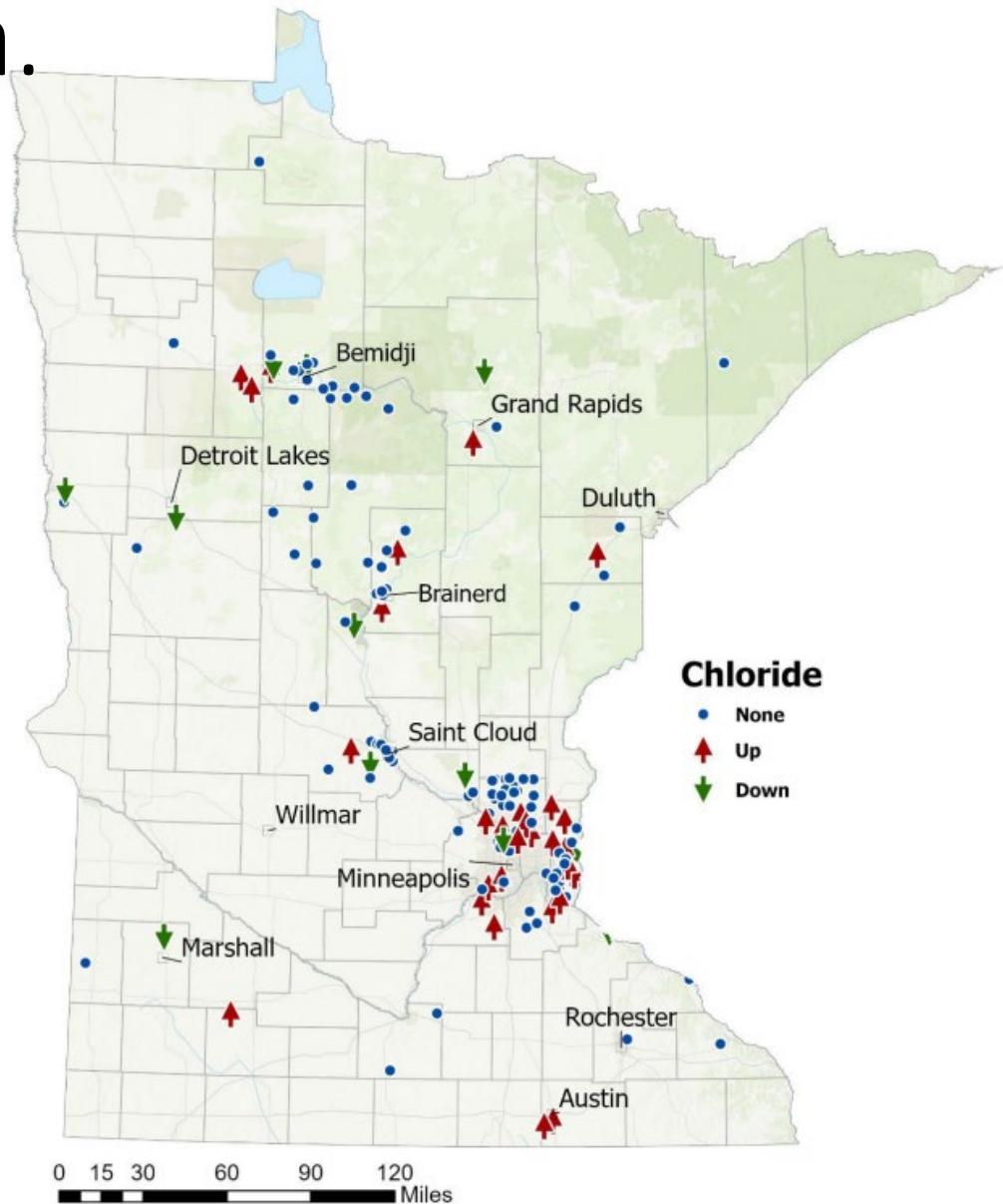
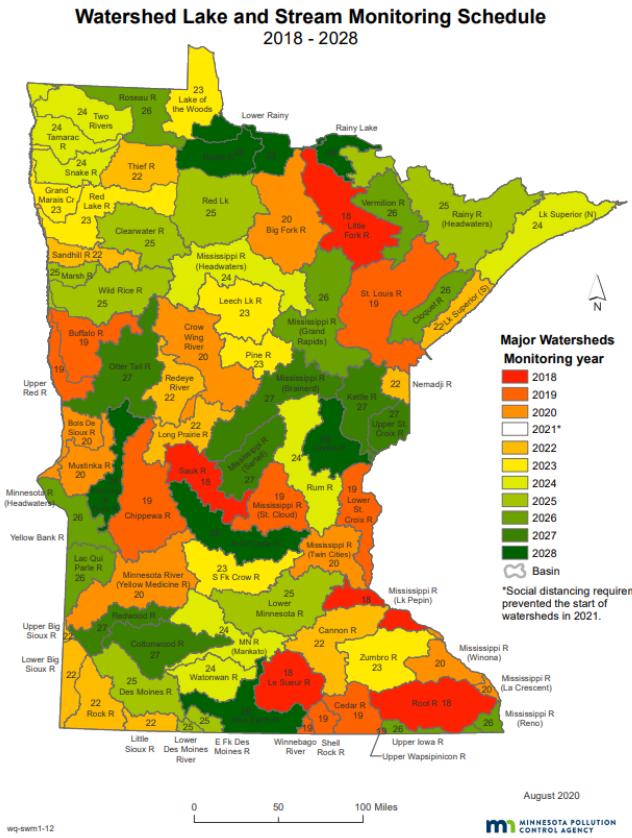


Figure 9. Chloride trends in Minnesota's groundwater, 2013-2023 [Data from the MPCA ambient groundwater monitoring network].

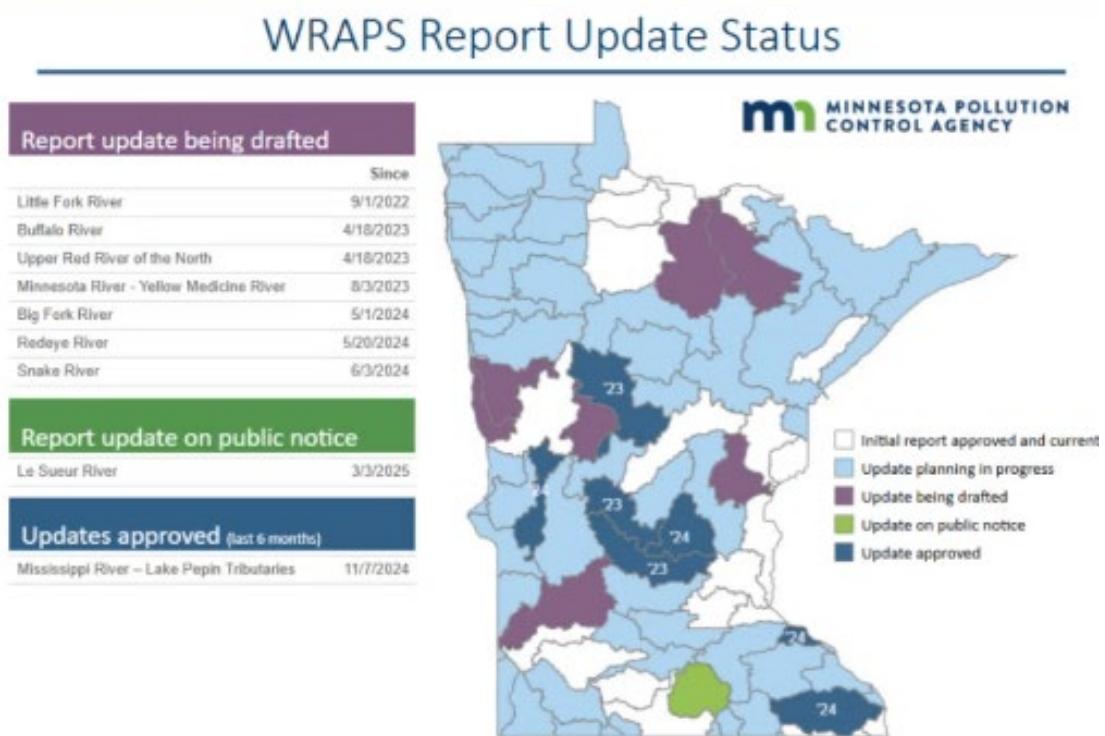


Minnesotans will have fishable and swimmable waters throughout the state - Lakes.

Measure: Completion of second monitoring and assessment cycle.

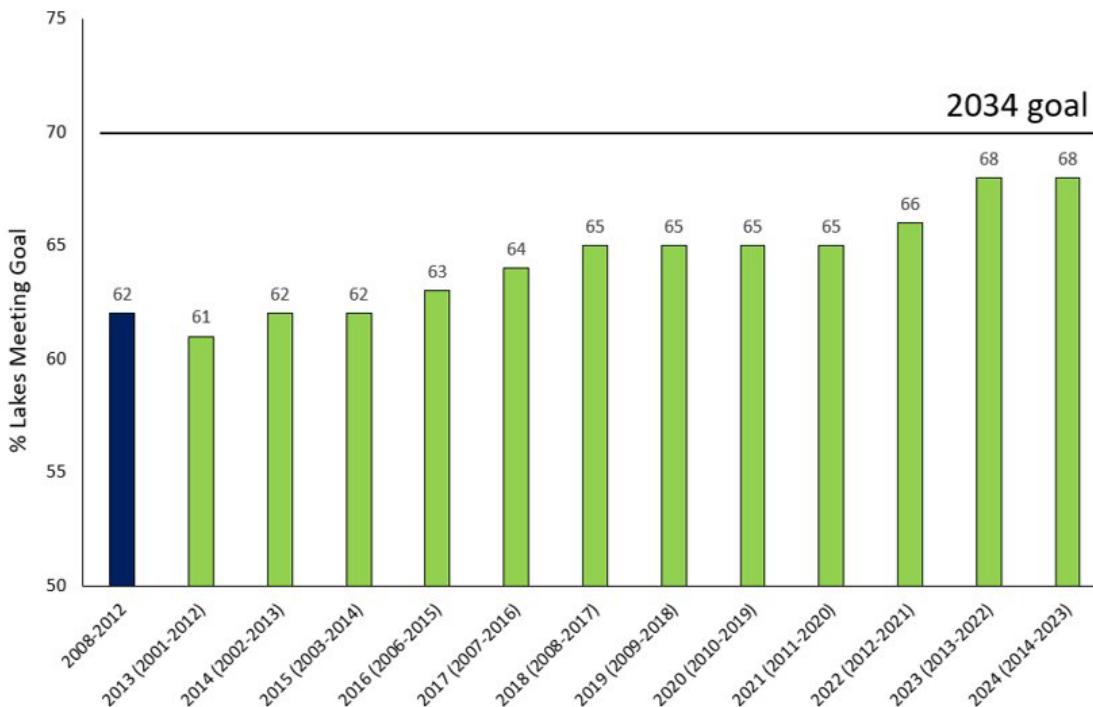


Measure: Completion of second generation of WRAPS.

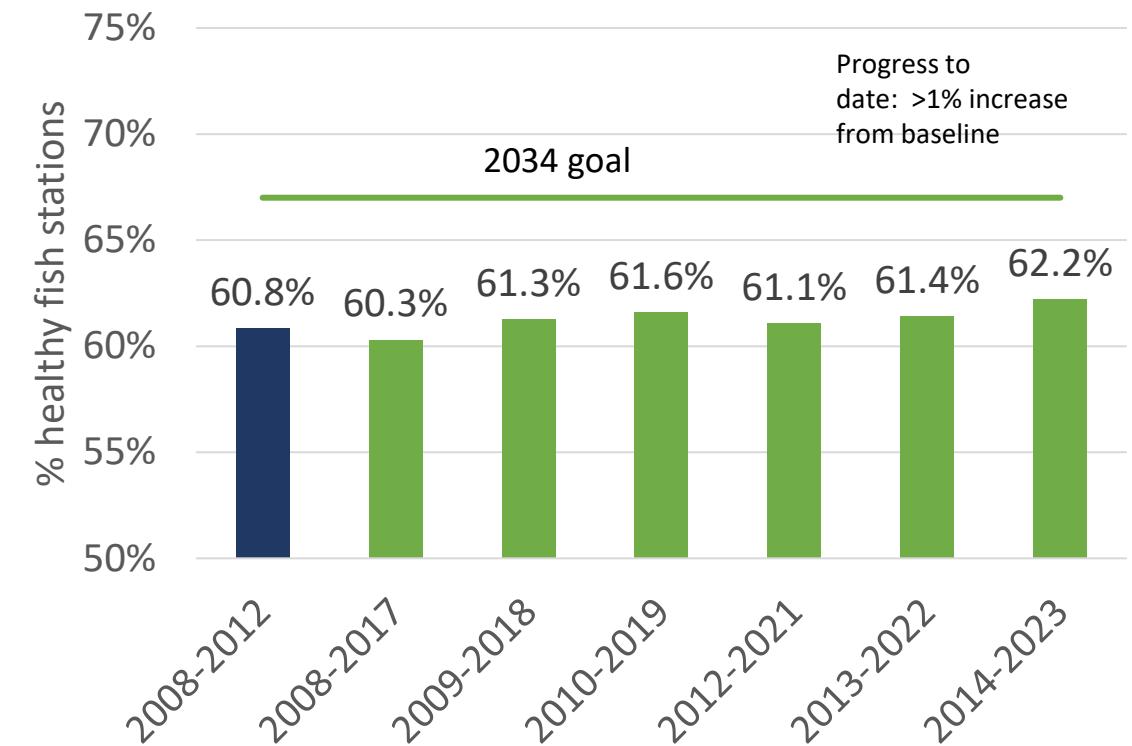


Minnesotans will have fishable and swimmable waters throughout the state.

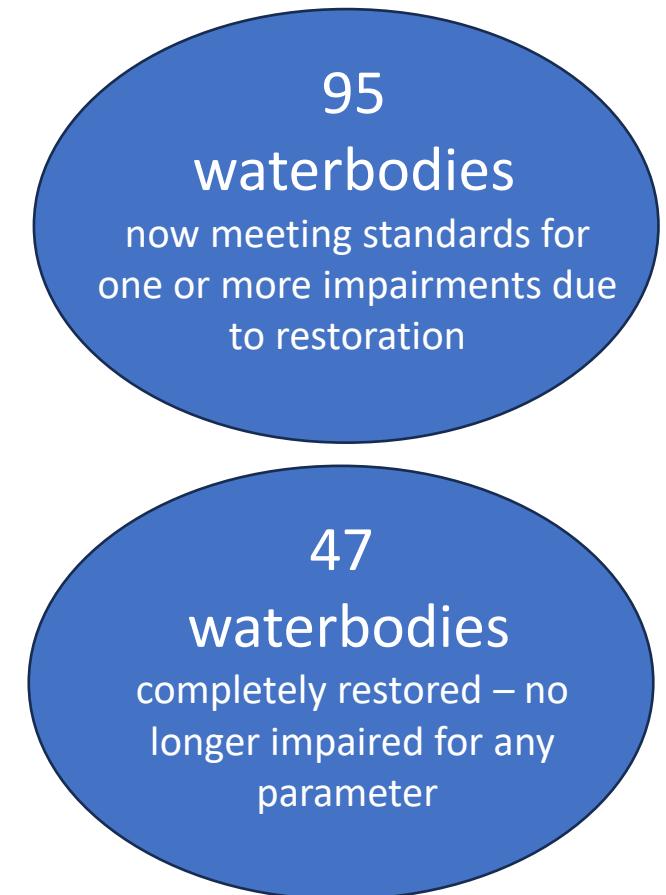
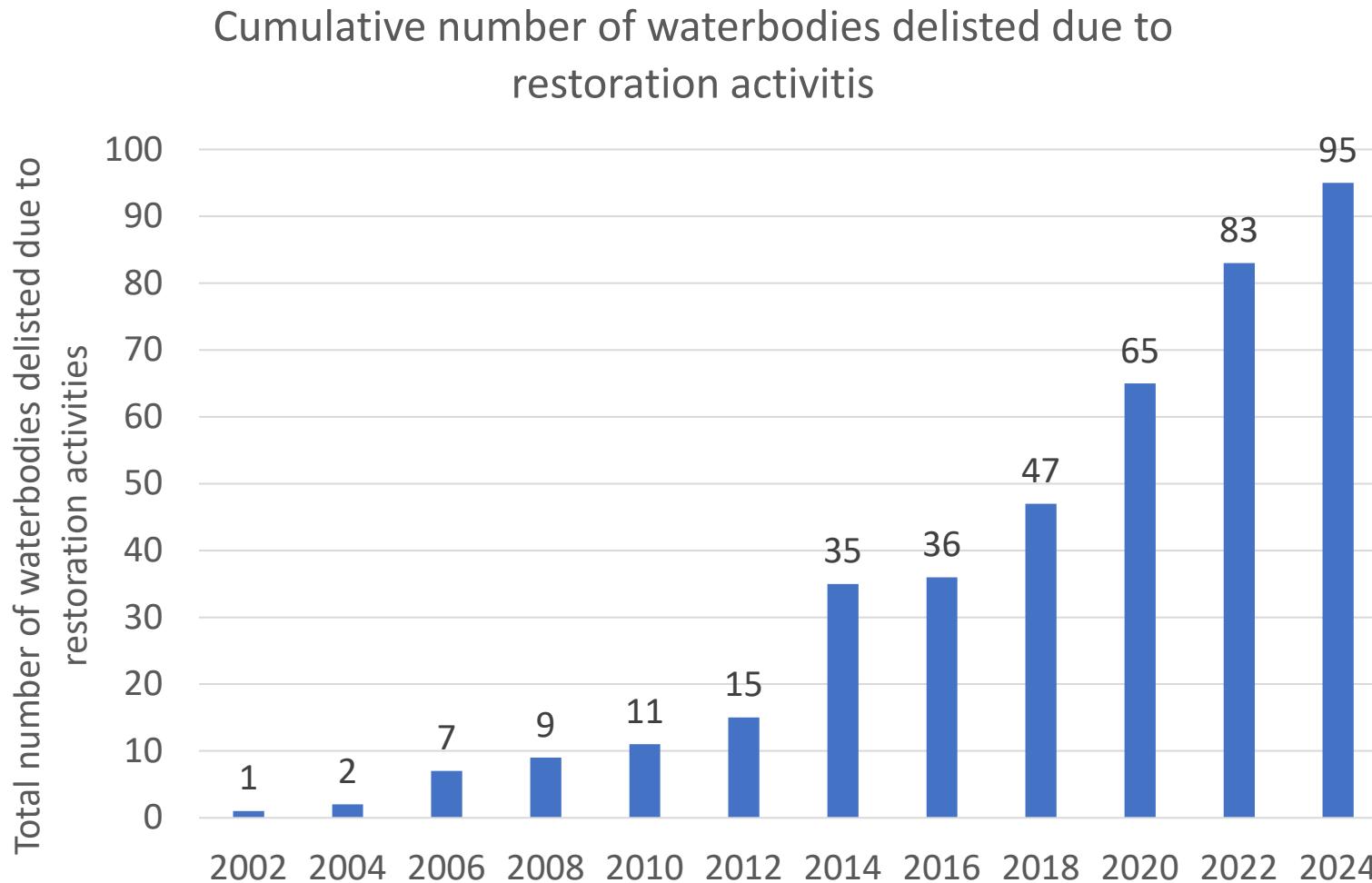
Measure: Percentage of lakes meeting goal for recreation activities reaches 70 percent by 2034.



Measure: Percentage of rivers and streams meeting healthy fish community values reach 67 percent by 2034.



Progress delisting impaired waters



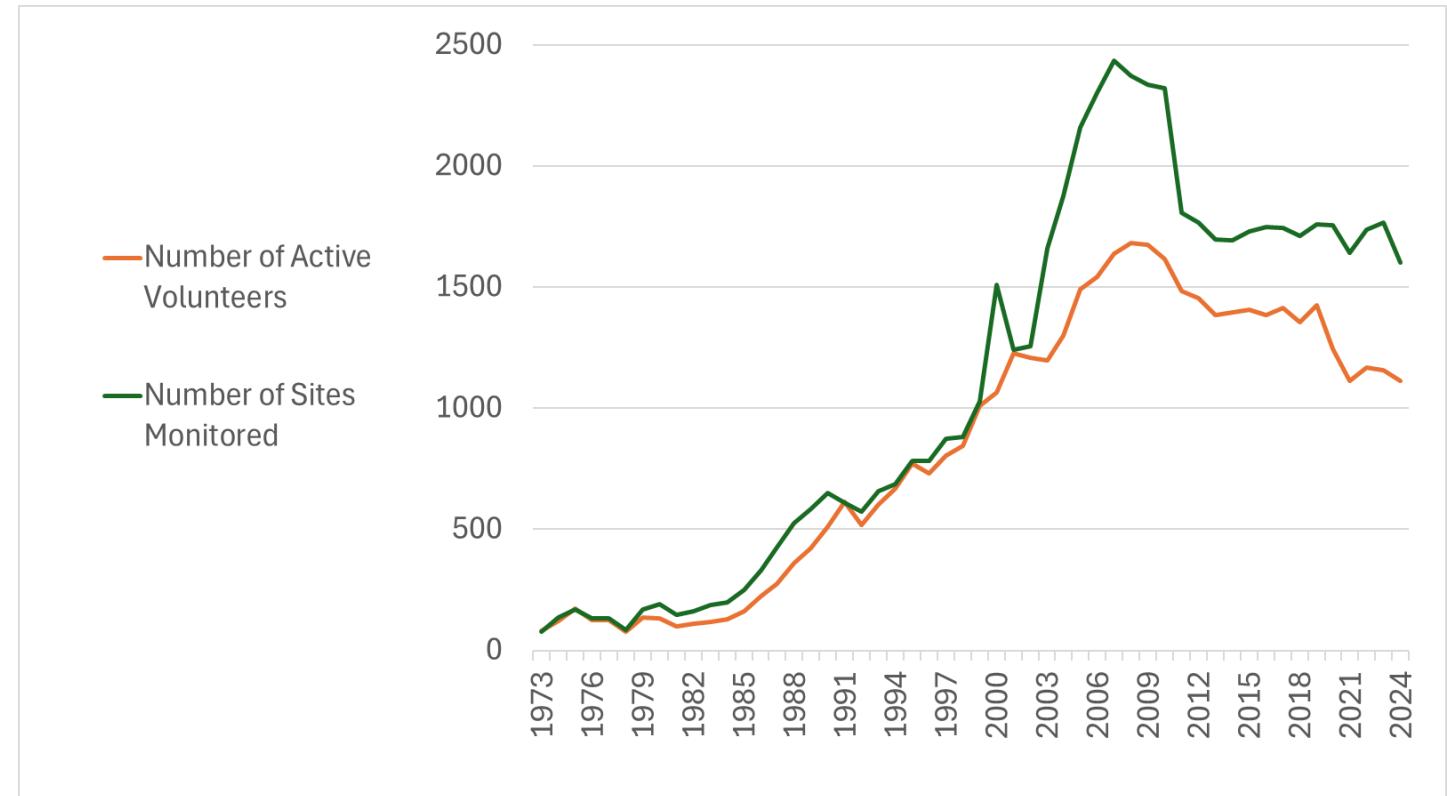
All Minnesotans value water and take actions to sustain and protect it.

Measure: Evaluation of We Are Water exhibit and its outreach.

We Are Water MN Survey Results

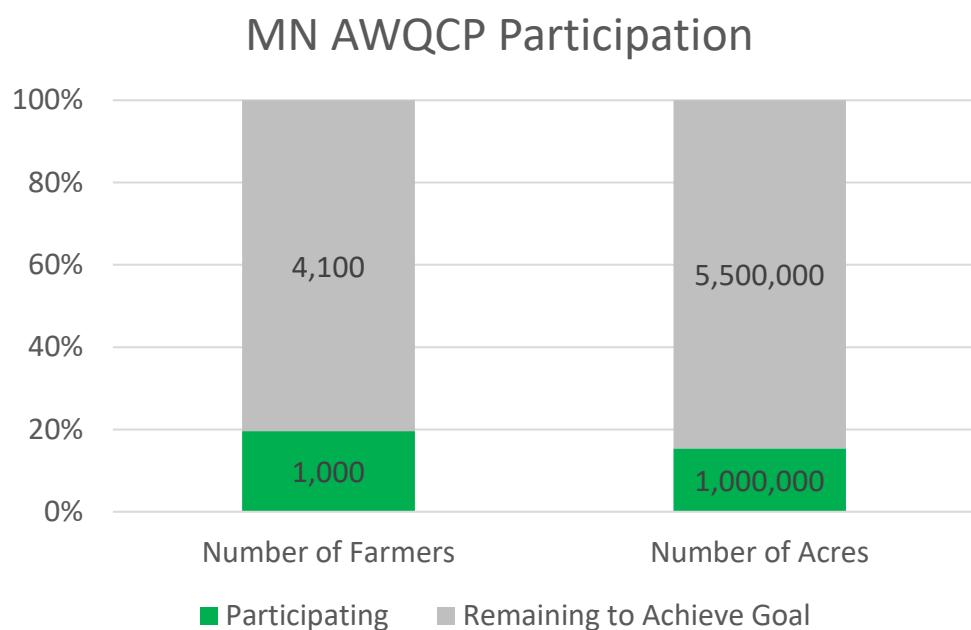
Awareness of water issues response options	% of respondents
I learned something new about our water resources	78%
I increased awareness regarding threats to our water resources	88%
I was exposed to a perspective different from my own regarding water resources	85%
Willingness to adopt pro-environmental behaviors	% of respondents
I will change how I personally use water	80%
I will share what I learned with others	77%
I will get involved with local organizations working to protect water resources	47%

MPCA Volunteer water monitoring program participation (Secchi tube/disk)

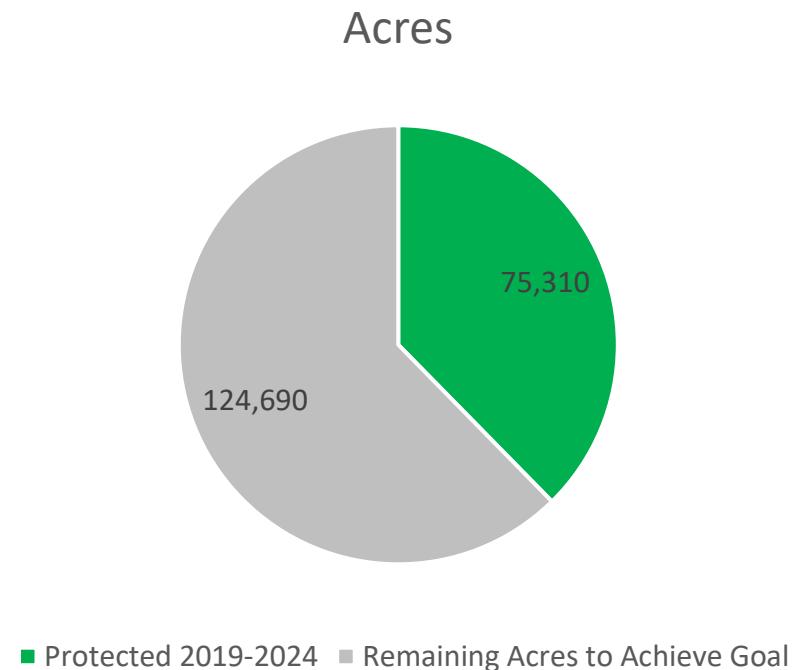


All Minnesotans value water and take actions to sustain and protect it

Measure: Number of farmers and acres enrolled in Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program, with a target of 5,100 farms and 6.5 million acres by 2030



Measure: Protection and restoration of 200,000 acres in the Upper Mississippi River headwaters basin during 2019-2034 – Mitch Brinks (Wetland services)
*Add in 2008-2018 data. 12+Million acres



Focus on Outcomes vs. Outputs...

- Pollutant trend information = outcome
- Does not necessarily come from CWC Strategic Plan (~7 outcomes out of 92 measures)
- Long term, not necessarily able to be updated more than 1-2 year interval and in some cases a 5 year interval.
- Many are within the Clean Water Fund Performance Report or Minnesota Environment and Energy Report Card or other specific topic reports
- Maybe a mix of outputs and outcomes, since need output to get outcomes, yet may not be limited to outputs we are measuring?

FINAL Clean Water Council Strategic Plan for 2024-2028

Adopted 26 February 2024

The Clean Water Council is a state advisory council created as part of the Clean Water Legacy Act¹ (CWLA) in 2006. The Council's purpose is to advise on the implementation of the CWLA, and to foster coordination and cooperation among state agencies and other stakeholders and partners. In addition, in 2009, the Council was assigned the task of recommending how to use the Clean Water Fund, which is one-third of the dedicated sales tax revenue generated from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment.

This strategic plan is not a comprehensive plan for all water activities in Minnesota. It focuses on activities within the Council's statutorily defined roles for the Clean Water Legacy Act and the Clean Water Fund. Purposefully left out of the plan are most point source activities that are governed by permits or other requirements or are supported by other major funding sources (landfills, large feedlots, manure management plans, leaking storage tanks, PFAS work funded by 3M settlement, etc.) Therefore, the strategies and actions listed under each goal in the plan below will not be the only activities in Minnesota to meet the goals.

Several previous efforts provide the foundation for this plan, including Minnesota's [Nutrient Reduction Strategy](#) (NRS), the [2014 Clean Water Road Map](#), the [2011 Minnesota Water Management Framework](#), and the [Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan](#) produced by the Board of Water and Soil Resources, and others.

Much of the plan focuses on priorities for using the Clean Water Fund (CWF). In January of odd-numbered years, the Council must submit recommendations for the use of the CWF to the Legislature.

Statutory guidance and planning since 2008 have outlined several criteria for prioritizing the use of the CWF. Primary among them is constitutional language that the CWF must *supplement* existing funding and not *supplant* it.

The Clean Water Council also requests that all agencies incorporate their stated principles for diversity, equity, inclusion, and/or environmental justice into Clean Water Fund-supported programs. In addition, the Council also requests that these programs indicate any interaction between Clean Water Fund-supported programs and the state's Climate Action Framework.

Groundwater Vision: Groundwater is clean and available to all in Minnesota.

Goal 1: Protect groundwater from degradation and support effective measures to restore degraded groundwater.

- Strategy: Develop baseline data on Minnesota's groundwater quality, including areas of high pollution sensitivity.
 - *Action: Complete groundwater atlases for all Minnesota counties.*
 - *Measure: All Part B atlases completed by 2038.*
 - *Action: Monitor ambient groundwater quality throughout the state.*
 - *Measure: Updates from MPCA Groundwater Monitoring Program.*
 - *Action: Characterize nitrate and pesticide contamination in vulnerable aquifers.*
 - *Measure: Vulnerable aquifers mapped via Township Testing Program, Central Sands Private Well Network, and Southeast Minnesota Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network.*
 - *Action: Characterize natural and synthetic contaminants in groundwater.*
 - *Measure: Locations with high concentrations of natural contaminants mapped.*
 - *Measure: Groundwater monitoring performed as appropriate for contaminants of emerging concern.*
- Strategy: Develop and carry out strategies that will protect and restore groundwater statewide.
 - *Action: Complete plans and fund activities for protection and restoration of groundwater statewide using a major watershed scale*
 - *Measure: Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategies (GRAPS) completed for all 60 One Watershed One Plan boundaries.*
 - *Action: Reduce risk of bacteria in groundwater.*
 - *Measure: 80 percent compliance rate maintained for subsurface septic treatment (SSTS) systems with a stretch goal of 90 percent, as recorded in MPCA's annual SSTS report.*
 - *Measure: Financial assistance provided for low-income households to replace and repair individual SSTSs.*
 - *Measure: Demand met for under-sewered or unsewered small communities for long term solutions using Small Community Wastewater Treatment Program's intended use plan.*

- *Action: Reduce nitrate contamination of groundwater.*
 - Measure: Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan implemented in priority townships with vulnerable groundwater by assessing agricultural practices, forming local advisory teams, and publishing recommended practices that are adopted on 80% of row crop acres excluding soybean by year 2030, and implemented in all remaining townships by year 2034.
 - Measure: Alternative land management activities supported that protect groundwater such as easements, perennials, and market-based continuous living cover.
 - Measure: Guidelines regularly updated to understand impacts of nitrogen application.
 - Measure: Support provided for irrigation management outreach, update to state irrigation BMPs, and irrigation water management endorsement from Minnesota Agricultural Certification Program (MAWQCP).
 - Measure: No additional wells exceed maximum concentration levels.
 - Measure: Nitrate levels declining in private well testing by 2034.
 - Measure: Nitrate levels declining in 100% of public water wells by 2030.
- *Action: Reduce risk of pesticide contamination in groundwater.*
 - Measure: Ambient groundwater quality wells maintained through MDA pesticide monitoring program.
 - Measure: Outreach, demonstration sites, and technical assistance provided for recommended pesticide BMPs.
- *Action: Reduce risk of stormwater contaminants entering groundwater.*
 - Measure: Stormwater research that is protective of groundwater supported, with findings scaled to meet state needs.
 - Measure: Assistance provided to NPDES/MS4 permittees to enhance compliance.
 - Measure: Priority unused groundwater wells that present a risk to drinking water aquifers are sealed.

Goal 2: Ensure groundwater use is sustainable and avoid adverse impacts to surface water features due to groundwater use.

- Strategy: Support ongoing monitoring of groundwater quantity.
 - *Action: Maintain network of long-term groundwater monitoring wells and add wells as needed.*
 - Measure: 50 monitoring wells installed annually.
 - *Action: Identify groundwater-dependent lakes; streams; calcareous fens, and wetland complexes.*
 - Measure: Data provided to water planners for development of WRAPS, GRAPS, and comprehensive watershed management plans.

- Strategy: Develop a cumulative impact assessment and support planning efforts to achieve a sustainability standard for groundwater.
 - *Action: Prioritize areas of high water use intensity.*
 - Measure: Groundwater Management Areas (GWMA), highly sensitive areas, and areas of high water use intensity from agricultural irrigation are designated.
- Strategy: Develop and carry out strategies that promote sustainability of groundwater use
 - *Action: Implement water efficiency BMPs, water use reduction, and irrigation water management in areas of high water use intensity by agricultural irrigators, highly sensitive areas, Groundwater Management Areas (GWMA), and highly vulnerable Drinking Water Source Management Areas (DWSMAs).*
 - Measure: DNR has tools needed to address conflicts on use of groundwater for economic and ecological purposes.
 - Measure: Monitoring wells have upward trend or no change in all six groundwater provinces.
- Strategy: Identify options that will accelerate progress to achieving a sustainable groundwater standard in line with circular water economy principles.
 - *Action: Clean Water Council Policy Committee biennial policy recommendations.*
 - *Action: Research and foster support for circular water economy practices.*

Drinking Water Source Protection Vision: Drinking water is safe for everyone, everywhere in Minnesota.

Goal 1: Public Water Systems--Ensure that users of public water systems have safe, sufficient, and equitable drinking water.

- Strategy: Identify and reduce risks to drinking water sources by investing in technical training, planning, coordination, and source water protection grants.
 - *Action: Assist public water suppliers in completing Drinking Water Source Protection Plans (DWSPPs) and support implementation projects listed in the plans.*
 - Measure: All 900+ DWSPPs complete for groundwater public water systems.

- Measure: All source water assessments for 23 surface water systems complete.
 - Measure: Source water protection plans complete for non-community public water systems.
 - Measure: Funding available for half of budget requests in DWSPPs.
- *Action: Provide goals for drinking water protection.*
 - Measure: Statewide drinking water plan complete.
- Strategy: Support the Ground Water Protection Rule (GPR).
 - *Action: Support implementation funding and technical assistance to reduce nitrate in DWSMAs that are Level 1 and Level 2 under the GPR.*
 - Measure: Public water suppliers at Level 1 or Level 2 under the GPR do not exceed the drinking water standard for nitrate by 2034.
- Strategy: Support prevention efforts to protect groundwater in DWSMAs.
 - *Action: Fund protective actions that assist public water suppliers in meeting safe drinking water levels.*
 - Measure: Approximately 400,000 acres of vulnerable land surrounding drinking water wellhead areas statewide are protected by 2034.
 - Measure: Landowner adoption of practices that protect drinking water through technical assistance, conservation equipment support, financial assistance, easements, drinking water protection/restoration grants, targeted wellhead protection grants, market-based living cover, soil health grants, etc.
- Strategy: Support prevention and management of newly identified contaminant risks.
 - *Action: Fund Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CEC) program.*
 - Measure: At least 20 chemicals are screened each biennium.
 - *Action: Fund adequate monitoring and assessment activities to examine emerging risks.*
 - Measure: River and lake monitoring assessment, ambient groundwater and drinking water monitoring supported, with enough contingency for rapid response.
- Strategy: Identify policy options that will accelerate progress to achieving federal safe drinking water standards.
 - *Action: Clean Water Council Policy Committee will make annual policy recommendations.*

Goal 2: Private Water Supply Wells—Ensure that private well users have safe, sufficient, and equitable access to drinking water.

- Strategy: Identify risks to and fund testing of private well water.
 - *Action: Support a ten-year effort to give every private well user the opportunity to test for five major contaminants, with an initial focus on areas most vulnerable to contamination.*
 - Measure: Private well testing offered for 10 percent of private well users each year for 10 years.
- Strategy: Support selected mitigation activities for private well users.
 - *Action: Assist all well users with information on how to achieve safe drinking water.*
 - Measure: All private well users offered education on mitigation options as needed.
 - *Action: Assist qualifying low-income households and households with vulnerable populations to mitigate contaminants, such as well replacement, water treatment systems, etc.*
 - Measure: Grant program reports from MDH.
 - *Action: Provide favorable financing to qualified households to mitigate contaminants.*
 - Measure: Loan program report from Agricultural Best Management Practices Loan Program from MDA.
- Strategy: Identify policy options that will accelerate the reduction in the number of unsafe private wells.
 - *Action: Clean Water Council Policy Committee will make annual policy recommendations.*

Surface Water Protection and Restoration Vision: Minnesotans will have fishable and swimmable waters throughout the state.

Goal 1: Monitor, assess, and characterize Minnesota's surface waters.

- Strategy: Maintain consistent funding for a statewide monitoring system.
 - *Action: Continue to monitor and assess on 10-year cycle and for emerging contaminants.*
 - Measure: Completion of second monitoring and assessment cycle.
 - Measure: Reports on contaminants of emerging concern as needed or requested.
 - *Action: Complete Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) reports as needed.*
 - Measure: Publication of TMDL reports by the MPCA.

Goal 2: Protect and restore surface waters to achieve 70% swimmable and 67% fishable waters by 2034ⁱⁱ via by prioritizing and targeting resources by major watershed.

- Strategy: Identify and refine strategies required to meet water quality standards in each HUC-8 watershed.
 - *Action: Review and revise previously completed Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS)*
 - Measure: Completion of second generation of WRAPS.
 - Action: Quantify water storage needs and opportunities within each HUC 8 watershed.
 - Measure: Acre feet storage goals are set for each watershed by 2026.
 - Measure: Storage opportunities and hydrograph estimates are complete by 2028.
- Strategy: Prioritize waters for protection and restoration using comprehensive watershed management plans (One Watershed One Plan or other approved plans)ⁱⁱⁱ updated every ten years.
 - *Action: Support local efforts to support those impaired waters that are closest to meeting state water quality standards.*
 - Measure: Lists of “barely impaired” waters shared with local watersheds as they prepare comprehensive watershed management plans or other approved plans.
 - Measure: List of “barely impaired” waters that show improving trends on an annual basis.
 - Measure: Percentage of lakes meeting goal for recreation activities reaches 70 percent by 2034.
 - Measure: Percentage of rivers and streams meeting healthy fish community values reach 67 percent by 2034.
 - *Action: Use the Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) model to fund protection and restoration in watersheds that have an approved comprehensive watershed management plan or other approved plan.*
 - Measure: Annual BWSR WBIF grant cycle.
 - Measure: Occasional review of allocation formula.
 - *Action: Support efforts to protect those high-quality unimpaired waters at greatest risk of becoming impaired.*
 - Measure: Comparison of “nearly impaired” waters from across the state identified by WRAPS.
 - Measure: Comparison of “nearly impaired” waters list with prioritized waters in comprehensive watershed management plans or other approved plans.
 - Measure: List of “nearly impaired waters” as well as healthy waters that see no change or no degradation on an annual basis.
 - *Action: Restore and protect water resources for public use and public health, including drinking water.*
 - Measure: List of waters with high public use that show improving trends or no degradation over time.
 - Measure: List of projects that show connection to Drinking Water Supply Management Areas (DWSMAs).

- *Action: Track completion of activities for priorities in each comprehensive watershed management plan*
 - Measure: Pilot tracker tool developed to show implementation progress against goals, followed by regional and then statewide deployment.

Goal 3: Protect and restore surface waters to achieve 70% swimmable and 67% fishable waters by 2034 via through statewide, regional, or issue-specific programs that help meet water quality goals but are not necessarily prioritized and targeted according to geography.

- Strategy: Enhance compliance for regulatory programs to accelerate progress
 - *Action: Maintain compliance rates for subsurface sewage treatment systems (SSTS) at 80 percent with a stretch goal of 90 percent.*
 - Measure: MPCA Annual SSTS Report.
 - *Action: Reduce risk of stormwater contaminants entering surface water.*
 - Measure: Point source discharge permits incorporate gains from stormwater pollutant reductions.
 - Measure: Minnesota Stormwater Manual updated regularly.
 - *Action: Support small unsewered or under-sewered communities for long-term wastewater solutions.*
 - Measure: Small or no backlog for Small Community Wastewater Treatment.
 - *Action: Support wastewater treatment plants and stormwater projects seeking to meet tighter Total Maximum Daily Load requirements.*
 - Measure: Adequate support of Point Source Implementation Grant (PSIG) program.
 - Action: Ensure adequate monitoring of NPDES permits.
- Strategy: Support competitive grants for protection and restoration activities.
 - *Action: Provide opportunities for competitive grants that meet statewide priorities.*
 - Measure: Annual grant funding round by BWSR for competitive grants to address statewide priorities.
- Strategy: Identify policy options that will accelerate the protection and restoration of surface waters.
 - *Action: Clean Water Council Policy Committee will make annual policy recommendations.*
 - Measure: Biennial policy recommendations.

Vision: All Minnesotans value water and take actions to sustain and protect it.

Goal 1: Build capacity of local communities to protect and sustain water resources.

Goal 2:

- Strategy: Maintain and increase capacity of Minnesotans to improve water quality.
 - *Action: Support local efforts to engage farmers in water quality efforts.*
 - Measure: Number of farmers and acres enrolled in Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program, with a target of 5,100 farms and 6.5 million acres by 2030.
 - Measure: Number of acres with continuous living cover, with a target of five million acres by 2034.
 - Measure: Targets for nutrients in the state's Nutrient Reduction Strategy.
 - Measure: Number of acres enrolled in permanent easements.
 - Measure: Increasing number of renters and non-operating landowners participating in water quality efforts.
 - Measure: Net increase in number of structural conservation practices.
 - Action: Engage private well users to test their wells for five major contaminants.
 - Measure: Higher percentage of private well users choose to test their wells and mitigate any issues.
 - *Action: Engage non-traditional audiences with water planning and implementation.*
 - Measure: Collaborations with state agencies and their equity efforts.
 - Measure: Evaluation of We Are Water exhibit and its outreach.
 - Measure: Non-state or local government interested parties participating in local water management planning and watershed implementation funding requests.
 - *Action: Support local efforts to engage lakeshore property owners and private landowners.*
 - Measure: Number of property owners enrolled in Lake Steward program.
 - Measure: We Are Water annual report.
 - Measure: Additional in-lake treatment and restoration projects proposed and funded for competitive grants.
 - Measure: Protection of 100,000 acres and restoration of 100,000 acres in the Upper Mississippi River headwaters basin by 2034.
 - Measure: Council recommends shoreline protection policy.

- *Action: Engage chloride users.*
 - Measure: Number of snow removal contractors and public works departments who are Smart Salting certified and make measurable reductions in chloride use.
 - Measure: Number of communities educating their residents about inefficient water softeners increases.
 - Measure: No increase in chloride concentration in metro rivers and streams over time.
- *Action: Engage water managers statewide.*
 - Measure: SWCDs, WDs, WMOs, drainage authorities, highway departments, municipalities, and counties have the skills necessary to carry out programs to meet water quality goals.
- *Action: Support innovative efforts that accelerate progress toward clean water goals.*
 - Measure: Acres of income-generating continuous living cover planted.
 - Measure: Stormwater research identifies scalable solutions for pollutant reduction to assist MS4 permittees.
- *Action: Plan for funding resilience after expiration of Legacy Amendment in 2034.*
 - Measure: New funding sources (e.g., fees, bonding, general fund) identified that would be required to maintain support of critical programs.

ⁱ Minn. Stat. 114D.30.

ⁱⁱ The 2014 Clean Water Road Map is the source of these targets. This report uses the Trophic State Index as a proxy for “swimmable” waters. According to the Road Map, “The Trophic State Index (TSI) summarizes a lake’s overall water quality. TSI is made up of three individual measures: nutrients, algae, and water clarity. TSI allows for any combination of the three measures to be used, so that incomplete data can still provide an estimate of a lake’s condition. Lakes with lower TSI values are clearer and are better for swimming and other recreational uses.” This report also uses the Index of Biotic Integrity (IBI) as a proxy for “fishable” waters. “An Index of Biotic Integrity (IBI) identifies water pollution problems based on the type and number of species found in a given location. Stressors such as low dissolved oxygen, excess sedimentation, nutrients, or toxics (pesticides, metals) result in more pollutiontolerant (and fewer sensitive) species. This makes IBI a good indicator of stream health.” In addition, the MPCA’s Impaired Waters List includes useful water quality standards for aquatic recreation and aquatic consumption that are good indicators.

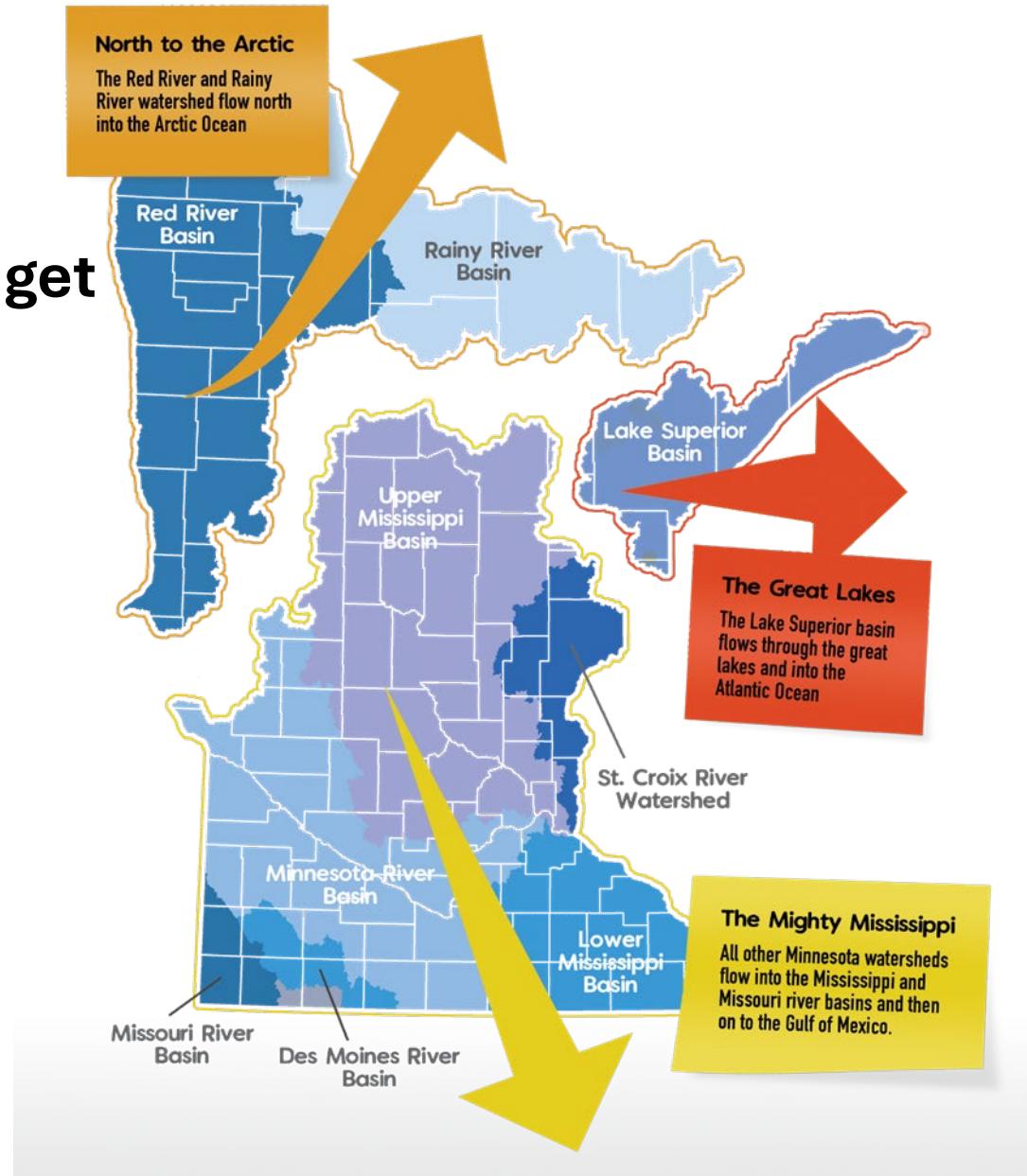
ⁱⁱⁱ While most watersheds in the state now use One Watershed One Plan, there are also approved plans used under previous statutes, especially in the metro area. “Comprehensive local water management plan,” “comprehensive water plan,” “local water plan,” and “local water management plan” mean the plan adopted by a county under sections 103B.311 and 103B.315. “Watershed management plan” is defined in sections 103D.401.

Upper Mississippi River Headwaters Basin Strat Plan Metric

Report Out from Clean Water Council Budget & Outcomes Committee

4 April 2025

- Strat Plan Background & Measurement Challenges
- Geographic Scope
- Timing
- Funding Source(s)
- Protection vs. Restoration
- BOC Recommendation



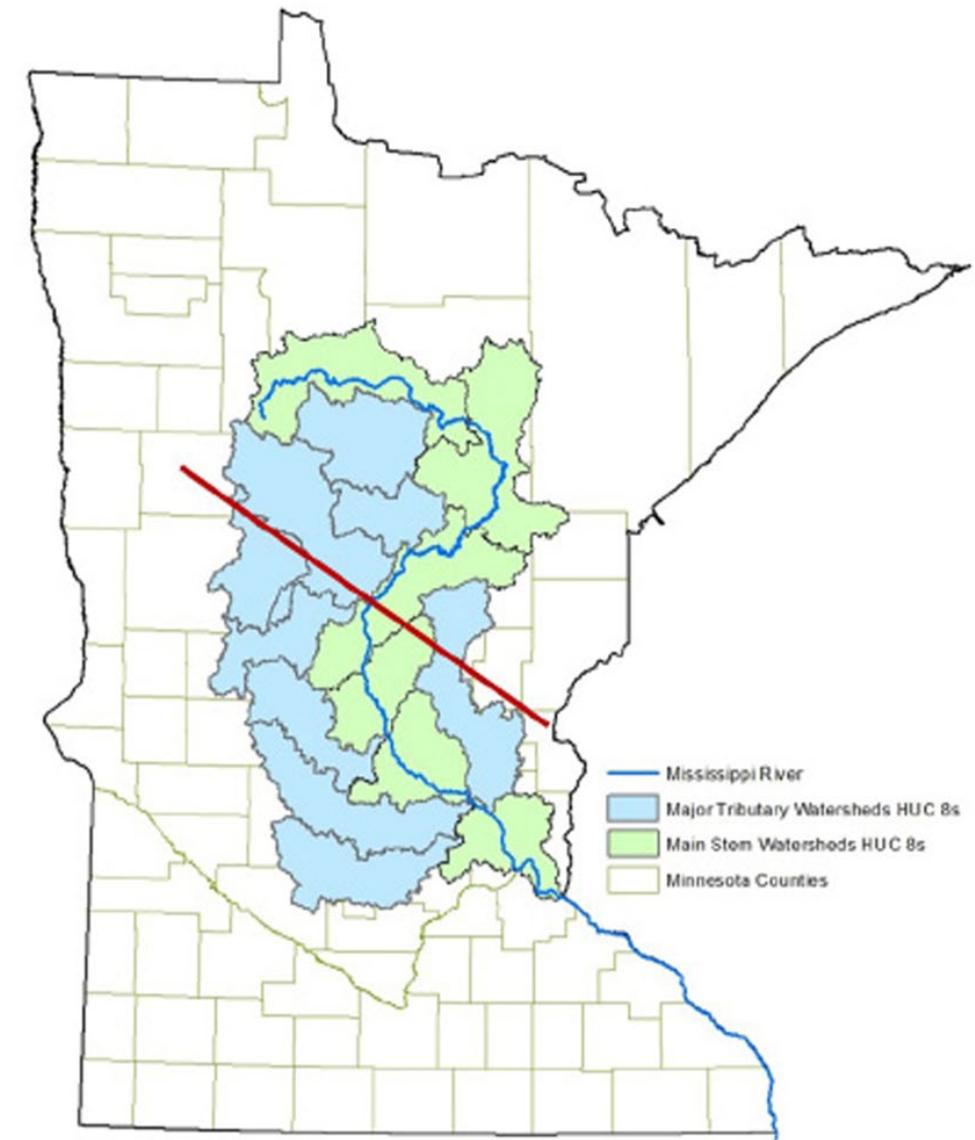
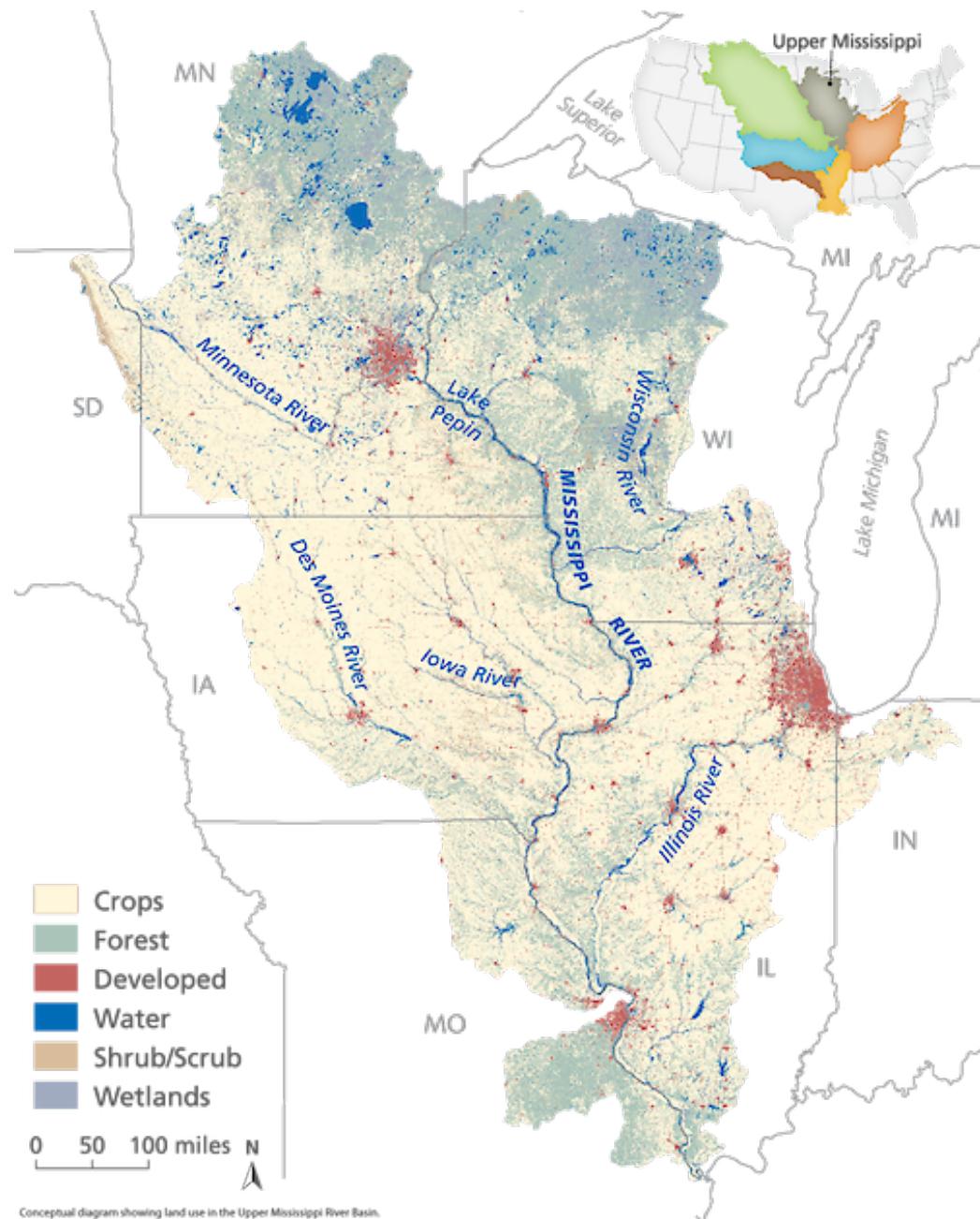
CWC Strat Plan – as updated in 2024

Relevant CWC Strat Plan text:

- Vision: All Minnesotans value water and take actions to sustain and protect it.
- Goal 1: Build capacity of local communities to protect and sustain water resources.
- Action: Support local efforts to engage lakeshore property owners and private landowners
- Measure: Protection of 100,000 acres and restoration of 100,000 acres in the Upper Mississippi River headwaters basin by 2034.

MEASUREMENT CHALLENGES – AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- What is the geographic scope of the Upper Mississippi River headwaters basin? **HUC# 0701**
- When to begin measuring protection/restoration? **2018 as Baseline Year, building on progress during 2008-2018**
- Do we measure acres protected/restored by financial sources other than CWF? **YES**
- Do we measure protection & restoration separately? **NO** Can we combine these goals? **YES**
- **Metric: In addition to 290,151 acres protected during 2008-2018, with partners, protect and restore 200,000 acres in the Upper Mississippi River headwaters basin during 2019-2034.**

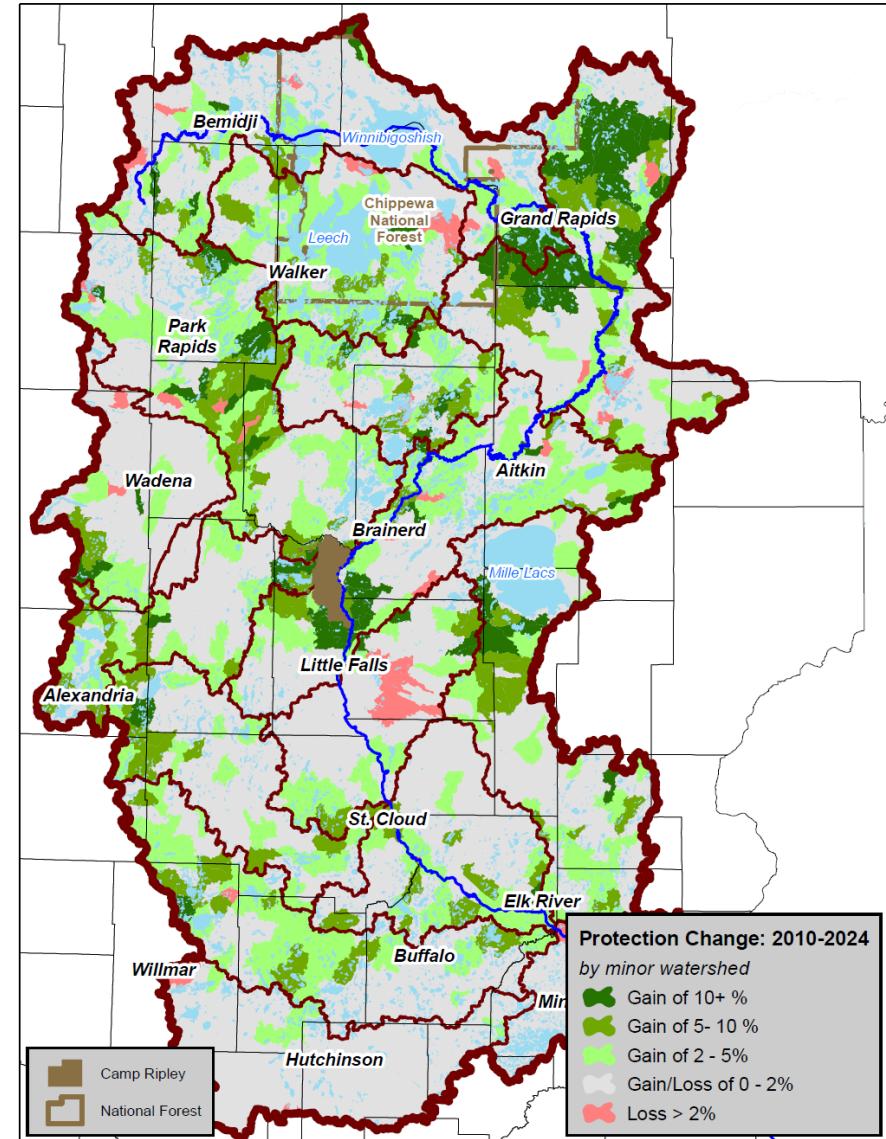
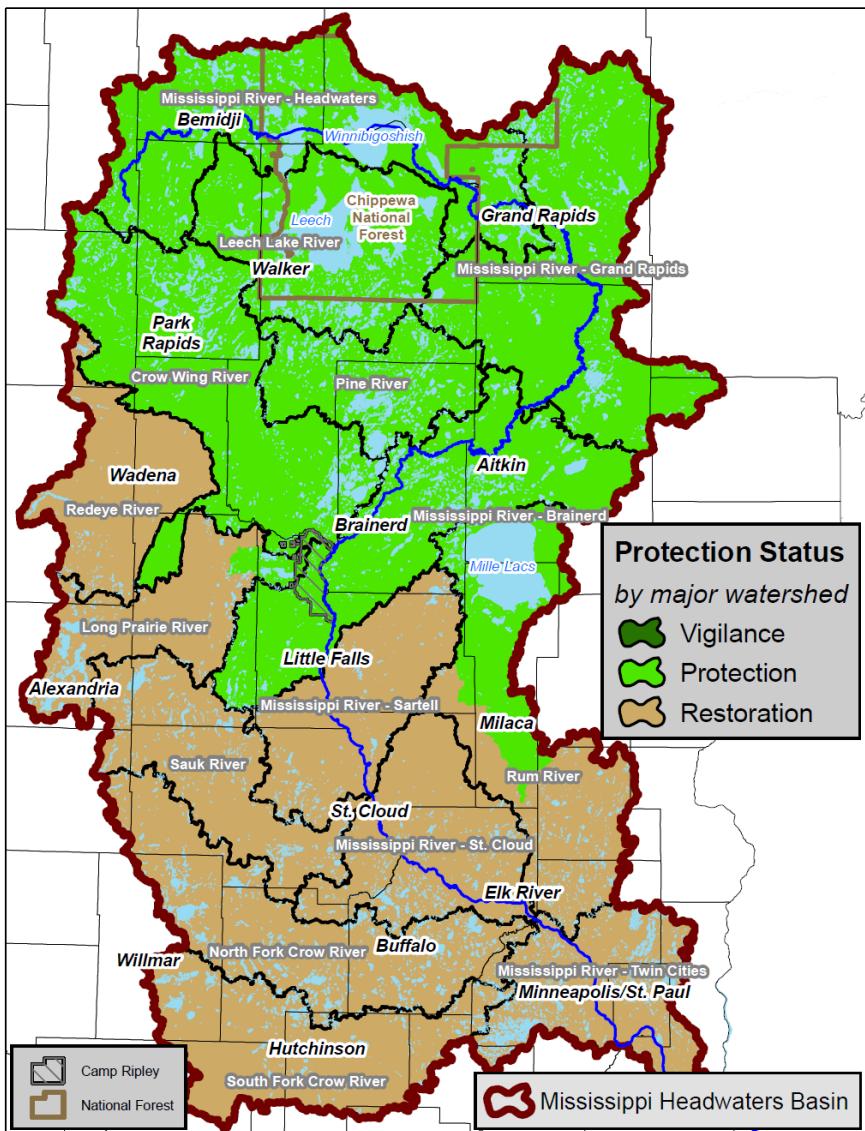


Upper Mississippi River Basin (HUC 4)

HUC# 0701

<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/wq-ws4-38b.pdf>

Upper Mississippi River Headwaters Basin HUC# 0701



Upper Miss River Headwaters Basin HUC# 0701 Acres Protected – Overview

Years	Acres Protected &/or Restored	Average Acres Per Year Protected &/or Restored
2008-2018	290,151	29,015
2019-2024	75,310	7,531
Proposed Measure Timeframe Utilizes 2018 as Baseline Year	Protection and restoration of 200,000 acres in the Upper Mississippi River headwaters basin during 2019-2034	$12,500 \times 16 \text{ years} = 200,000 \text{ acres}$

Upper Miss River Headwaters Basin HUC# 0701 Acres Protected – 2008-2018

Major Watershed	Acres	Protection 2008 (ac)	Protection 2018 (ac)	Protection Gain 2008-2018 (ac)
Leech Lake River	857,971	659,923	675,560	15,636
Mississippi River - Grand Rapids	1,332,798	908,738	996,893	88,155
Mississippi River - Headwaters	1,228,889	860,367	886,395	26,028
Pine River	500,887	314,110	323,125	9,015
Mississippi River - Brainerd	1,076,300	527,356	549,091	21,735
Crow Wing River	1,268,959	547,861	573,441	25,580
Rum River	1,013,794	438,030	461,142	23,112
Long Prairie River	565,078	172,766	185,031	12,266
Redeye River	572,069	169,548	177,609	8,061
North Fork Crow River	944,858	226,186	247,035	20,849
Mississippi River - St. Cloud	717,376	176,429	191,033	14,604
Mississippi River - Sartell	656,115	166,730	170,732	4,002
Mississippi River - Twin Cities	644,323	164,969	164,969	0
Sauk River	666,750	128,985	142,005	13,020
South Fork Crow River	818,103	110,051	118,139	8,088
<i>Totals</i>	12,864,272	5,572,049	5,862,200	290,151

Upper Miss River Headwaters Basin HUC# 0701

Acres Protected – 2019-2024

major wshd	acres	Protected_2018ac	Protected2024_ac	Increase_2018_2024ac
Mississippi River - Grand Rapids	1,332,798.4	996,893.4	1,002,257.8	5,364.4
Mississippi River - Headwaters	1,228,889.4	886,394.7	890,829.2	4,434.5
Leech Lake River	857,971.5	675,559.8	681,178.4	5,618.6
Crow Wing River	1,268,959.2	573,440.9	591,442.6	18,001.8
Mississippi River - Brainerd	1,076,299.8	549,091.2	562,407.9	13,316.7
Rum River	1,013,794.2	461,141.9	465,884.3	4,742.3
Pine River	500,887.1	323,125.5	328,699.1	5,573.7
North Fork Crow River	944,858.2	247,034.6	252,446.1	5,411.5
Long Prairie River	565,078.1	185,031.3	191,604.1	6,572.7
Mississippi River - St. Cloud	717,376.5	191,032.7	190,956.5	-76.2
Redeye River	572,068.9	177,609.0	179,037.3	1,428.4
Mississippi River - Sartell	656,115.2	170,732.0	174,062.8	3,330.8
Mississippi River - Twin Cities	644,322.9	169,677.3	164,968.8	-4,708.5
Sauk River	666,749.9	142,005.2	145,455.7	3,450.5
South Fork Crow River	818,102.8	118,138.7	120,987.9	2,849.2
<i>Totals</i>	12,864,271.9	5,866,908.2	5,942,218.5	75,310.3

Do we measure acres protected &/or restored by financial sources other than CWF? **YES**

Table 9. Protection Projects in North-central Minnesota by Year and Funding Amount

Project	# of Phases	Primary Geography	Protection Type	Project Start Year	Funding Source(s)	Total Funding Amount
Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape ACUB Habitat Protection Program	12	Camp Ripley & vicinity	Easements	2010	OHF	\$23.2 Million
Camp Ripley ACUB Protection	2 cooperative agreements	Camp Ripley & vicinity	Easements	2006	DOD/NGB	\$47 Million
Wild Rice	8	10+ counties	Easements	2012	OHF	\$10.5 Million
Mississippi Headwaters Habitat Corridor Project	7	First 400 miles of Miss. R. (incl. headwaters lakes & tributaries)	Easements, Acquisition	2016	OHF, CWF	\$25.7 Million
Clean Water Critical Habitat (<i>Northern Waters Land Trust, MLT</i>)	10	Cass, Hubbard, Crow Wing, Aitkin	Easements, Acquisition	2014	OHF	\$27.8 Million
Lakes of Biological Significance (<i>Northern Waters Land Trust, MLT</i>)	3	Crow Wing, Cass, Hubbard, Wadena, Aitkin, Carlton, Itasca, Beltrami, Koochiching, St. Louis, Lake, Cook	Easements	2021	OHF	\$8.4 Million
RIM Critical Shorelands (<i>multiple rivers</i>)	4	Pine R, Crow Wing R, Rum R.	Easements	2016	CWF, TNC	\$11 Million
Protecting North-Central Minnesota Lakes	1	Camp Ripley, Aitkin & Crow Wing Co.	Easements, BMPs	2017	ENRTF	\$0.75 Million
Targeted RIM Easement & Acquisition to the Parcel	3	Pine R. & Leech Lake R. Watersheds	Easements, Acquisition	2020	OHF	\$6.6 Million

ACUB = Army Compatible Use Buffer, BMPs = Best Management Practices, CWF = Clean Water Fund (part of 2008 Legacy Amendment), DOD/NGB = United States Department of Defense/National Guard Bureau, ENRTF = Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, MHB = Mississippi Headwaters Board, MLT = Minnesota Land Trust, NRCS = United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service OHF = Outdoor Heritage Fund (part of 2008 Legacy Amendment), RIM = Reinvest in Minnesota, TNC = The Nature Conservancy

Do we measure protection & restoration separately? **NO**
 Can we combine these protection & restoration metrics to simplify measurement? **YES**

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CWC Strat Plan KPI Dashboard Metric

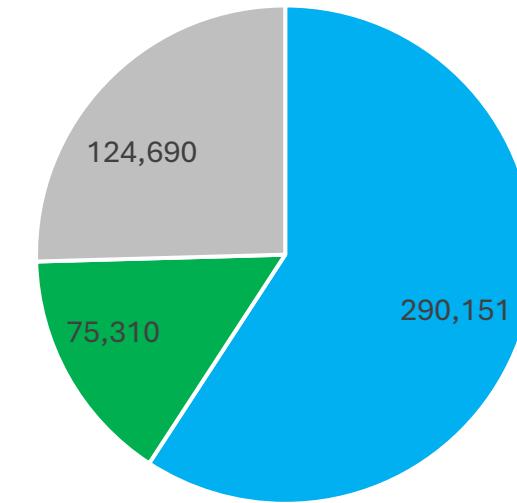
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Goal 1: Build capacity of local communities to protect and sustain water resources.

Action: Support local efforts to engage lakeshore property owners and private landowners

Metric: **In addition to 290,151 acres protected during 2008-2018, with partners, protect and restore 200,000 acres in the Upper Mississippi River headwaters basin during 2019-2034.**

Protected Acres



■ Protected 2008-2018

■ Protected 2019-2024

■ Remaining Acres to Achieve Goal