



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

May 2025 Administrator report
From: Linda Loomis, Transition Support
To: LMRWD Board of Managers

In addition to items on the meeting agenda, the following District projects and issues were addressed during the month:

Other Work

Gauging stations

Historically, the LMRWD partnered with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to monitor sediment concentrations in the water column and bedload transport in the Minnesota River. However, in 2019, the monitoring pier housing monitoring equipment was destroyed by flooding. Due to the high cost of replacement, the monitoring program was discontinued.

Recently, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reached out to the LMRWD and other stakeholders (Met Council, US Army Corps of Engineers, USGS and others) to explore opportunities for reestablishing gauging and forecasting services along the Minnesota River. An initial meeting was held on May 9 to discuss potential options for resuming monitoring activities. While no decisions were made, the group plans to reconvene in June to continue the discussion.

Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance

Norman Senjem, who testified at the LMRWD Listening Session, contacted the LMRWD to talk about encouraging projects with the potential to reduce sediments in the Minnesota River. The LMRWD put Mr. Senjem in touch with Holly Bushman and Mike Schultz, from LeSueur County. LeSueur County is part of the Lower Minnesota River East One Watershed One Plan and is working to begin implementation of it Plan.

On Friday, May 16, 2025, Will Lytle and I met with Norm, Holly and Mike. We discussed work that is being done in LeSueur County, they are conducting an inventory of ravines and gullies, and future partnerships. Holly and Mike explained that one of the biggest issues they have is convincing policy makers of the need to implement and pay for projects. We agreed to keep lines of communications open and to support Lesueur County's efforts to find grants for projects.

LMRWD Site Visits

On Wednesday, May 7, 2025, Will and I visited with Cost Share applicant Paul Erdmann at his home. We then traveled to the LMRWD dredge material placement site, where we were able to see the Vernon Avenue construction project firsthand. We then met up with Carver County Commissioner Lisa Anderson at the Carver County Government Center, where we were able to

view LMRWD cost share project done with the County. We then visited East Chaska Creek to inspect the project the LMRWD did in 2021. We then traveled to Carver, where we met Manager Salvato. We inspected the Spring Creek project and the Morgan Jacob's Cost Share Project. Mr. Jacob's collects stormwater and then uses the water in water features in his front yard. Lastly, we visited the Merriam Junction Trail Minnesota River crossing.

Cost Share Partners

At the March 19, 2025, Board of Managers meeting, President Barisonzi raised the idea of pursuing partnerships for grants under the LMRWD Cost Share Program. The LMRWD currently collaborates with both the Dakota and Scott Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) to offer cost share grants. While the SWCDs do not contribute direct funding, they offer valuable technical expertise and assistance to residents implementing eligible projects.

Cities within the LMRWD generally do not provide direct financial support to homeowners for such initiatives. Some may offer technical guidance, but more often they refer residents to watershed districts (such as [Bloomington's referral to the LMRWD](#)) or to organizations like Metro Blooms, the University of Minnesota Extension, or Blue Thumb.

To streamline access, the Scott SWCD has consolidated all of its Cost Share programs into a [single, comprehensive document](#) for residents. Hennepin County offers a variety of grant programs through its website. Some of the grants from cities and counties can be combined with other funding sources, while others must be used independently.

Given the number of counties and municipalities within the LMRWD, it remains a challenge to stay current with each local program and its offerings.

Continuous Nitrate Monitoring Network

On April 25, 2025, the MPCA presented information about establishing a Continuous Nitrate Sensor Network. A short version of this is that the MPCA will be setting up continuous monitoring for Nitrates in locations where flow data is being collected. Continuous monitoring will allow for the range of nitrates in the water column to be monitored as opposed to grab samples which only reflect a moment in time.

The presentation was recorded and can be viewed using this [link](#). In 2025, monitors will be placed in the following locations in the MN River basin:

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/750ceb6beffb497eaafe9ba9c8459272>

- Cottonwood River near New Ulm
- East Branch Blue Earth River at Blue Earth
- LeSueur River near Rapidan
- Minnesota River near Jordan
- Redwood River near Redwood Falls
- Seven Mile Creek near St. Peter
- South Fork Watonwan River near Madelia

In 2026 monitors will be placed in the following location in the MN River basin:

- Blue Earth near Rapidan
- Hawk Creek near Granite Falls

- High Island Creek near Henderson
- Yellow Medicine near Hanley Falls,
- Maple River near Sterling Center
- Plum Creek near Walnut Grove
- Little Beauford Ditch near Beauford

FY 2022 Financial Audit

The FY 2022 audit is still in progress. When Will and I met with LMRWD's accountant, Chris Knopik, we discussed the status of the district's audits. One reason the 2022 audit has taken so long to complete is the transition of accounting and bookkeeping services from Carver County to CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA). Carver County managed the books through April 2022, after which CLA assumed responsibility in May 2022. We were advised that once the FY 2022 audit is completed, the audits for FY 2023 and FY 2024 should proceed much more quickly.

TH 13 Update

The presentation from the March 18th meeting has been posted to the MnDOT project site. To view the March 18th presentation and for more information, you can visit the project website using this link:

<https://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/hwy13savageburnsville/index.html>

Peterson Wetland Bank

A site visit to the Peterson Farms Land Bank has been scheduled for May 28, 2025, in anticipation that the applicant will ask for a hydrology credit in 2025. This visit is dependent on river conditions.

2025 Minnesota River Tour

LMRWD staff and consultants are planning to meet virtually Wednesday, March 21st at 1:00 pm to plan the program for the River Tour.

Annual Report

The 2024 LMRWD Annual Report was sent to BWSR (Executive Director and Board Conservationist), the Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources, and the Director of the Division of Ecological and Water Resources of the Department of Natural Resources.

MPCA Fish Advisory

On April 17, 2025, the MN Department of Health issued an updated Fish Consumption Advisory:

"Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is updating fish consumption guidelines due to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) found in fish from some waterbodies in the Twin Cities metro area as well as in Douglas, Martin, McLeod, and St. Louis counties. The updated guidelines primarily focus on PFAS data but are also protective for mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

- **If you plan to fish at a lake in one of these counties**, and if you plan to eat the fish you catch, check [LakeFinder on the Department of Natural Resources \(DNR\)](#) website to see if there is a fish consumption guideline in effect for that lake. LakeFinder includes fish consumption guidance for all Minnesota lakes.
- **If you plan to eat fish from a river in one of these counties**, review the updated list of *Waterbody-Specific Guidelines* for rivers at the [Fish Consumption Guidance website](#).

It may take years of regularly eating fish to accumulate levels of PFAS in your body before it becomes a health concern. MDH has used fish contaminant data and updated methods to better inform fish consumers about where PFAS fish contamination is and how you can lower your exposures. For certain waterbodies, MDH recommends some fish should be eaten in limited amounts or not be consumed at all.

Eating fish is just one way people are exposed to PFAS. PFAS are present in many consumer products, environments, workplaces, and homes. Minnesota has been taking action to eliminate PFAS for many years. As we learn more about PFAS in fish, MDH will update fish consumption guidance as needed.”

Work in Public Waters Permits

The Minnesota DNR contacted the LMRWD regarding Work in Public Waters permit applications and issued a request for comments. These applications pertain to dredging activities at the barge terminal in Savage. The permit applicants are:

Savage Riverport – routine dredging maintenance of barge terminal

CHS – routine dredging maintenance of barge terminal 6300 CY estimate

It is likely that materials dredged will be placed on the LMRWD dredge material placement site.

Sacred Water Shared Future

At the April 2025 Board meeting, I reported about a new project from the Metropolitan Council. Additional details about this project are provided below:

“The Mississippi River in the Twin Cities metropolitan area is nothing like it was 100 years ago – and that is a good thing. In 1926, the Minnesota and Wisconsin Boards of Health pronounced the river “unfit”, “a potential danger”, and declared fish “practically exterminated.” In response, the cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul worked together to collect and treat sewage, leading to tremendous improvements to water quality, habitat, and biodiversity over the following decades. In 2026, the *Sacred Water, Shared Future* campaign will celebrate the Mississippi River, promoting the story of its amazing recovery and engaging regional commitment to ensure it continues to be a productive, functioning ecosystem and a popular recreation area.

Sacred Water, Shared Future is a collaborative planning effort among nearly 20 Twin Cities organizations that focus on the Mississippi River. This effort honors the Mississippi River’s deep history – its sacred significance, its strength, and the harm it has endured, from pollution to the displacement of Indigenous peoples. While decades of restoration have helped heal its waters, the journey of care and protection continues.

This campaign celebrates the power of community, storytelling, education, and conservation. Through collaboration and shared action, *Sacred Water, Shared Future* renews our collective commitment to a healthy river. The campaign is currently looking for organizations to plan, host, or fund themed events during 2026. If you would like to get involved, contact **Cassie Champion** at casandra.champion@metc.state.mn.us to request more information.”

Local Implementers Group

The Board of Water and Soil Resources holds monthly meetings to present information about the work being done by Watershed Organizations and Soil & Water Conservation District. One of the recent presentations featured a project being constructed in the Bois de Sioux

Watershed. The presentation can be accessed using this [link](#). Although this project is in the Red River basin, it shows how complex water storage projects can be.

Watershed Plan Projects

Much of this information will be provided in the First quarter progress report.

LMRWD Water Resource Restoration Fund: At the April 2025 Board meeting, two projects were awarded funding under this program; Eden Prairie's low-salt redesign of its City Hall parking lot and the Northwest Shakopee Stormwater BMP Retrofit project. The Richard T. Anderson West Bluff Overlook Stabilization Project

Eagle Creek Bank Restoration at Town & Country RV Facility: No new information to report on this project since the last update.

Fen Private Land Acquisition Study: No new information to report on this since the March 19, 2025 meeting.

Spring Creek: The subcontractor for plantings plans to complete the plant installs soon. With recent and upcoming rains, there is some unpredictability in their schedule. They are anticipating 2 working days within the window of 5/22 – 5/30. The plant installations are the final item to complete the project. Landowners will be notified and asked to share any concerns, which will be shared with the project managers before final inspection for project closeout.

Project website: <https://lowermnriverwd.org/projects/spring-creek>

Gully Inventory and Assessment: The LMRWD has introductory held meetings with MnDOT and the Cities of Eagan and Burnsville regarding priority gullies and ravines.

Project website: <https://lowermnriverwd.org/projects/mn-river-corridor-management-project>

Minnesota River Study Area #3: An update on this project is on the May 21, 2025, agenda.

Project website: <https://lowermnriverwd.org/projects/study-area-3-eden-prairie>

Minnesota River Floodplain Modeling: The model is complete and is under review by LMRWD partners; the MN DNR and US Army Corps of Engineers. This item may be included on the June 18, 2025 Board agenda.

Vernon Avenue Dredge Material Management: A report on this project is included in the May 21, 2025 Board agenda.

Geomorphic Assessments (Trout Streams): There is no new information to report since the last update.

The following projects are projects that are planned by LMRWD partners. LMRWD partners are leading these projects, the LMRWD has agreed to contribute to the projects:

Seminary Fen Ravine Restoration Area C2: There is no new information to report on this project since the last update in December. Here is a link to the [feasibility report](#) Area C-2.

Project website: <https://www.legacy.mn.gov/projects/seminary-fen-ravine-c-2-restoration>

Shakopee Riverbank Stabilization: There is no new information to report since the last update.

Project website: <https://www.shakopeemn.gov/living-here/street-infrastructure-projects/minnesota-riverbank-stabilization>

Carver Levee: There is no new information to report since the last update.

Project website: <https://clients.bolton-menk.com/carverlevee/>

RTA Overlook Trail Stabilization: The LMRWD was notified by the City of Eden Prairie that work on this project is nearing completion. An inspection of the project will be conducted before reimbursing the City for the cost of the project. This project is funded under the 2024 LMRWD Watershed Restoration Program.

Project website: <https://www.edenprairie.org/city-government/departments/parks-and-recreation/parks-and-natural-resources/park-projects>

Upcoming meetings/events

Managers are invited to attend any of these meetings. Most are free of charge and if not the LMRWD will reimburse registration fees. Please contact LMRWD administrator if you have any questions.

- [2025 Agricultural Drainage + Future of Water Quality Field Tour](#) – Thursday, May 29, 2025, Field Tour 11:00 AM to 3:30 PM and Social Hour 3:30 to 5:00 PM, Tour Bus pick-up, Drop-off and Social at [Dudley's Garage Restaurant and Bowling](#), Lakefield, MN
- LMRWD CAC meeting – Tuesday, June 3, 2025, 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM – City of Carver Cost Share projects, meet in-person at Carver City Hall, 316 Broadway St, Carver, MN
- LMRWD Finance Committee meeting – Wednesday, June 4, 2025, 7:00 PM, location to be announced
- LMRWD Personnel Committee meeting – Wednesday, June 11, 2025, 7:00 PM, County Board Room, Carver County Government Center, 602 East 4th Street, Chaska, MN
- Minnesota Stormwater Seminar Series – [Managing Stormwater Ponds for Optimal Function: Characterizing Phosphorus and HAB Export, Plus a New Tool for Prioritizing Maintenance Needs](#), Thursday, June 12, 2025, 10:00 AM to 12:00 noon, in-person at the St. Anthony Falls Lab, 2 SE 3rd Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55414 and virtual on zoom
- [MN Watersheds Summer Tour](#) – June 24-26, 2025, hosted by the Roseau River Watershed District, MN Watersheds is chartering a bus from the Twin Cities
- [2025 Salt Symposium](#) – Tuesday, August 5, 2025, [Live stream registration](#)
- LMRWD River Boat tour – Thursday August 14, 2025, 3:00 PM departure
- [MN Water Resources Conference](#) – Tuesday, October 14, 2025, and Wednesday October 15, 2025, St. Paul RiverCentre, 175 Kellogg Blvd, St Paul, MN 55102