

Major Watershed Project

The Mississippi River (St. Cloud) Watershed consists of 1080 square miles in the south-central part of the Basin. The watershed includes all or parts of Benton, Meeker, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Sherburne, Stearns, and Wright Counties. Communities located in the watershed include Sauk Rapids, Elk River, Big Lake, Monticello, and parts of the city of St. Cloud. All of the watershed is within the North Central Hardwood Forest Ecoregion and includes conifer and hardwood forest types as associated with this ecoregion (Fandrei et al., 1988). The Mississippi River (St. Cloud) Watershed has 907 total river miles, of which, 496 are considered perennial. The major rivers in the watershed include Clearwater Creek, Elk River, Mayhew Creek, Rice Creek, and the St. Francis River. Major lakes in the watershed include Clearwater Lake, Elk Lake, Mink Lake, Maple Lake, Cedar Lake, the Briggs Lake Chain and Lake Marla. The watershed contains 374 lakes with a total acreage of 23,728 (Upper Mississippi River Basin Water Quality Plan – MPCA 2004). The 10 year watershed cycle for Intensive Watershed Monitoring (IWM) Phase I began in the spring of 2009 for the Mississippi River St. Cloud (8 digit HUC) watershed under a separate contract. Monitoring and field data collected during the Phase I assessment is in the process of being compiled. In 2010, work will begin to conduct a watershed wide assessment and monitoring effort that will result in the final deliverable of an implementation plan that will prescribe restoration and protection strategies for the surface water resources within the Mississippi River (St. Cloud) watershed. Ongoing Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) projects within the watershed (e.g. Elk River Watershed Association TMDL and the Upper Mississippi River Bacteria TMDL) will continue in accordance with their existing specific project work plan.

Landscape Restoration Program

The LRP is a program that provides education and technical assistance to eleven county metro area government units and residents in the areas of erosion control, water quality buffers, urban runoff reduction, backyard conservation, invasive species control and wildlife habitat development. The LRP grew out of an opportunity presented by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), wherein NRCS offered to provide funding to help the MCD implement conservation in the seven county metro area, which in 2008 changed to the eleven county metro area. In response to this offer, MCD developed a program that provides site assessment, design and installation assistance for water quality, water quantity, and wildlife habitat management projects through shared employees. As part of legislative efforts in 2009, a proposal was put forth by the Anoka Conservation District to expand the LRP utilizing Clean Water Legacy funding to accelerate water quality improvement efforts by focusing efforts in high priority subwatersheds. . Legislature approved \$400,000 the first year and \$600,000 the second year to Anoka Conservation District for the Metro Landscape Restoration Program. The LRP currently has two primary components that determine the nature and distribution of services provided. The first involves obligations to BWSR to access the funds allocated by the state for this program. The second obligation is to the participating member districts to provide the minimum number of hours contracted by each district. Each participating district is responsible to manage the workload in their respective county to address local high priority conservation needs.