

Isanti County Water Plan

Update from the Water Plan Task Force

Wayne Anderson
Isanti County Water Planner / Environmental Technician

What is the Isanti County Water Plan Task Force?
“A group of local citizens along with government agencies meeting regularly to learn and teach the merits of water quality in Isanti County.”

-What is the Water Plan? The purpose of the Local Water Management Plan is to identify existing and potential problems and opportunities for protection, management and development of water resources and related land resources in Isanti County.

-There are three Water Plan Priorities with Objectives in each category. The three Priorities are:

1. Cumulative Effects of Development on Surface Waters.

Goal: Develop regulations, education, and incentives to ensure orderly development with minimal impacts to sensitive areas to preserve Isanti County's natural resources.

2. Protection and restoration of Natural Habitat and impaired waters in Isanti and bordering Counties.

Goal: Preserve and improve quality and quantity of habitat areas and quality of lakes and wetlands in Isanti County.

3. Groundwater Quality and Quantity.

Goal: Protect groundwater quality and quantity through education and enforcement of existing regulations.

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Isanti County Parks

“Water quality is considered high priority during the development stages at three of Isanti County’s newest parks.”

Barry Wendorf
Isanti County Parks Director

The Wild and Scenic Rum River provides food, water, and shelter for numerous wildlife species and will be a key attraction for recreation opportunities at Becklin Homestead County Park / WMA. Management practices to preserve water quality include a rain garden controlling run off from the newly constructed log picnic shelter as well as swale stabilization and check dams along the road which provides access for small boats and canoes to the river. Educational panels will be placed around three wetland enhancement projects providing habitat and buffer from surface water run off before entering the rum River.

Vegsund Family County Park protects a half mile of shoreline on Lake Seventeen. Native prairie plantings act as a buffer for surface water runoff before entering the lake.

The park development plans provide for a picnic shelter, play field, and handicapped accessible trails allowing access to a fishing pier offering visitors and wonderful family fishing opportunity on Lake Seventeen.

The county's newest acquisition, Irving & John Anderson County Park, protects a half mile of shoreline on Horseleg and Horseshoe Lakes. Management practices include installing a rain garden to control run off from a group picnic shelter, three boardwalks allowing low impact opportunities for visitors to access large wetland areas, and an erosion free access point to Horseleg Lake for canoeing. A partnership with Isanti County Soil & Water Conservation District is also benefiting the park and its water resources by seeding of 60 acres of open fields into native prairie grasses and forbs. All park locations can be found by going online to <http://www.co.isanti.mn.us/parksrehome.htm> or by calling the parks office at 763 689-8220.



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-What stage of the Water Plan are we in?

We are in year three of a 10 year plan. The Water Plan Task Force will begin updating the Action items within each Objective. These minor changes must be reviewed and approved by the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) by December 2011. If major changes need to be made then public hearings must be held to receive input.

-What have we done?

Priority 1

Provide information to County Board, Cities, and Townships.

Provide education material for local decision makers.

Revive 6th grade Conservation Day.

Support and give input on the County Comp Plan update.

Priority 2

Healthy Lakes Program, PICKM Rain Garden & Shoreline Restoration Tour.

Impaired waters monitoring on the North Branch of the Sunrise River; Francis, Fannie, and Skogman lakes.

Surface Water Assessment Grant monitoring on the Rum River.

Actively participating with the PICKM Water Quality Team.

Priority 3

Promote sealing abandoned wells, teach at Isanti County Safety Camp about drinking water safety, introduced MN Geological Survey for a Geologic Atlas, Septic system homeowner manuals, low interest loans, ITPH inventory North Branch Twp. Shoreland district.

-What will we be doing next?

Follow up with Rum River Monitoring. Hold a Rum River get together for the community in 2010. Continue the 6th Grade Conservation Day. Encourage Lake groups to keep working towards cleaner, healthier Lakes. Position Isanti County to take advantage of Clean Water Legacy Grant funds, MN Constitutional Amendment funds, and EPA 319 funds to maintain and improve water quality in Isanti County. Cooperate with MN Geological Survey and the DNR to create a Geologic Atlas for Isanti County.

Maintain a good working relationship between the Water Plan Task Force and the County Board, Cities, Townships, Lake Associations, Lake Improvement Districts, River groups, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, MN Pollution Control Agency, MN Dept. of Natural Resources, MN Board of Water and Soil Resources, MN Dept. of Ag, NRCS, Onanagozie RC&D, US Fish and Wildlife, US Army Corps of Engineers, and the PICKM Water Quality Team.

<http://www.co.isanti.mn.us/>

<http://www.co.isanti.mn.us/complocalwater.htm>



Rum River Surface Water Assessment Grant

Lynn Carter

Mille Lacs County Soil and Water Conservation District

Isanti County in cooperation with the Mille Lacs Soil and Water Conservation District, has received a Surface Water Assessment Grant (SWAG) through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to assess the water quality of the Rum River.

The Rum River connects Mille Lacs Lake with the Mississippi River and flows through the communities of Onamia, Milaca, Princeton, Cambridge and Isanti and ends in Anoka where the Rum meets the Mississippi. The Rum River has been designated a Wild and Scenic river and it has been assumed that the water quality in the Rum River is good. This monitoring project will provide data to prove that assumption, or, to help guide solutions to any water quality problems that are encountered.

PCA has been monitoring a few sites on the Rum; this study will fill in the gaps and give us a comprehensive picture of the rivers health.

Sixteen physical and chemical water quality parameters will be collected over a two year period at five sites. Two sites are in Isanti County and three are in Mille Lacs County. Data from this project will be submitted to the PCA STORET website and will be available to various agencies and organizations as well as to the public. Parameters being tested for include; alkalinity, chloride, chlorophyll a, color, E-coli, ammonia nitrogen, nitrate & nitrite, nitrogen TKN, phosphorus, sulfate and total suspended solids. Testing is being done by taking grab samples and by using the YSI 566 multi- meter to gain on-site readings of temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen and specific conductivity. Transparency tube readings are also being done.

Volunteers are an essential part of the Rum River SWAG. Volunteers will support monitoring data by making observations on the condition of the Rum River and by contributing to all aspects of water quality monitoring. There is much to do and many different talents are being utilized.

This project has been a joint venture between many agencies and individual volunteers. The Onanagozie Resource Conservation & Development Council has been instrumental in bringing together all the partners required to accomplish the goals of the grant. Local agencies, water quality groups and community volunteers are using the Rum River Surface Water Assessment Grant to monitor and maintain the health of this important river eco-system.



Paul's Lake and Elin's Lake

Kevin Hartnett

Volunteer Projects This Year

The Middle School conducted water tests for the seventh grade science class. I have not received the reports but will forward any information for my daughter was involved in the testing of the water to Paul's Lake.

With the help of Doug Moyer and his daughter Taylor, Kallan and I planned [50 Blue Spruce trees](#) to replace the ones lost by snowmobiles to the Northwest corner of Paul's Lake to try and develop a sound barrier from the Highway 65 bypass. This was the third year of donating trees from the Soil and Water Conservation District tree program. We hope to preserve the nesting cove to Paul's Lake that we appear to have lost from the increased traffic.

My son Ben, Russell Troiden and myself started to develop a [wood duck habitat](#) to the island, Northeast Side of Paul's Lake and also the channel between the lakes. We set up 5 new wood duck houses in preparation to the County road 43 (313th Ave N. E.) road expansion projects. We are trying to get the wood ducks to establish a new place of habitat.

Roadside clean up for litter was done to County Road 43 (313th Ave N. E.) and Paul's Lake road just past the access. London Drive was also done by the Roger Peterson Family as usual.



Lake Francis lake improvement update

Don Quaintance
Lake Francis Improvement Association

For the past 12 years residents of Lake Francis have been involved in the Clean Water Program, the Lake Francis Improvement Association have had diagnostic studies done, have been involved in testing and monitoring of our lake water. We had a severe blue green algae problem that would come in mid May and not clear up until September. With a lot of education, planting of buffer zones, and trees, shrubs and grasses along the south shore of Lake Francis next to Isanti County Road 5, water conditions have started improving. Clarity and water conditions started to improve last year, and this year greater improvement. We are not sure if it is because of the cool temperatures and not a lot of rain this summer, or if in fact we are finally making a difference. Our Secchi Disk readings in past years were reading 4-6 inches of clarity, in 2008 clarity had improved to 8-12", and the summer of 2009 18-20". Fishing has been much better the past couple of years. The blue heron and bald eagles are back, and some native plants have sprung up along part of the shoreline.

Last year 2008, Lake Francis Improvement Association received a cost/share grant from Isanti County and we with the help of Nick Solomon from IMPACK 6 did a restoration project at the public boat landing. We planted 2000 plugs of wildflowers and native grasses, shrubs, and had coco logs anchored along the shoreline with native plants. This was done to prevent water run-off, soil erosion, and help improve water clarity. This year those plants have taken off and with care will become a beautiful landscaped area. This was done as an example of what homeowners can do with their own property to help restore the lake to healthy clean water. We need to take responsibility and be good stewards of the lake and land for future generations. We need to protect this beautiful and irreplaceable natural asset. The time for the future is now!



Spectacle Lake, Natural Lake Shore Development Grant Program

Jim Shomenta

The Spectacle Lake Landowners Improvement Association applied for and received a \$5000.00 grant from the Healthy Lakes and Rivers Partnership Program. The grant also included an additional \$2400.00 to help prioritize the needs of our lake and to apply for the grant.

The grant is for a 50/50 shared cost program for lake landowners to plant selected vegetation in or near the lake shore. The purpose of the plantings is three fold: Help clean water run-off into the lake of chemicals and other matter that may affect the quality of lake water, improve the beauty of the lake shore, and provide additional areas for wild life habitat.

A letter was mailed to all lake shore owners in the beginning of May with program information. To date twelve landowners out of a projected limit of 16 to 18 have applied for the program.

Site visits were done by Nick Solomon, Impack 6 Vegetation Restoration Specialist, Dana Raines, Onanegozie RC & D Coordinator, and the Spectacle Lake Grant Committee members. After discussion with the landowner a site plan with vegetation recommendations is being drawn by Nick Solomon for each property. After final agreement of the plan, vegetation will be bought in bulk and the landowner will be responsible for the planting and maintenance of the planted area for a least three years.

We have been very pleased with landowners' enthusiasm for the program and the initial twelve applications are significantly greater than our projections for this 2 year program.



Helpful Electronic Links

Isanti County <http://www.co.isanti.mn.us/>
Isanti County Water Plan <http://www.co.isanti.mn.us/complocalwater.htm>
Long Lake Improvement District <http://www.llid.org/>
Isanti County Parks <http://www.co.isanti.mn.us/parksrehome.htm>
Board of Water and Soil Resources <http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/index.html>
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources www.mndnr.gov
St. Croix Basin <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/basins/stcroix/index.html#info>
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/index.html>
City of Isanti <http://www.cityofisanti.us/>
City of Braham <http://www.braham.com/>
City of Cambridge <http://www.ci.cambridge.mn.us/>
University of MN Extension <http://www.extension.umn.edu/>



Looking for information about a lake, check out Lake Finder.

Marshall Deters

Staff Hydrologist, MN DNR – Division of Waters. Ph. (763)689-7245

The Lake Finder section of the MN Department of Natural Resources website is one of the most popular uses of the DNR site. <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/lakefind/index.html>

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Find a lake

Lake Name/ID:

AND/OR

County:

The Lake Finder contains data for more than 4,500 lakes and rivers throughout Minnesota, including: [lake surveys](#), lake depth maps, [lake water quality data](#) and [lake water clarity data](#) (from the [Pollution Control Agency](#)), [satellite-based water clarity information](#) (from the University of Minnesota), lake notes, and [fish consumption advice](#) (from the [Department of Health](#)).

Check the [list of lakes infested with invasive species](#)  and see [selected infestation maps](#).

By typing in the name of the lake, you can access up to nine pages of information (below) about that lake. Or you can search for lakes within a particular county.

lake information

lake maps



fish consumption advisory MDH



lake water clarity



recreation compass

topographic maps

On the Lake Information page, you can find out the size and depth of a lake and whether there is a public access. The most recent fish surveys and any fish stocking information are also available on the Lake Information page. The Lake Maps page displays hydrographic maps of the lake that can be printed.

On the Lake Water Levels page, you can find out if there is a water level gauge on the lake and you can view recent and historical lake levels. If enough information is available, a hydrograph (a graph showing lake level changes over time) is displayed. Many lakes in East Central Minnesota are currently at relatively low levels due to a continuing drought. This hydrograph can help put current levels into an historical perspective. The ordinary high water level (OHW) of the lake is also listed. This elevation is used to determine the jurisdictional boundary of the lake and any required setbacks for buildings and septic systems.



For more information about the Isanti County Water Plan please visit <http://www.co.isanti.mn.us/complocalwater.htm>

To view this document and use embedded links visit Zoning at <http://www.co.isanti.mn.us/depart.htm>