

High Island Creek & Rush River
Watershed Implementation Projects
112 5th Street, P.O. Box 161
Gaylord MN 55334

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Low-interest loans available for upgrading Non-Compliant Septic Systems

Owners of a Subsurface Sewage Treatment System (SSTS) are eligible for low-interest loans to upgrade their non-conforming septic system. Furthermore, those in the High Island Creek Watershed are eligible for an additional \$500 incentive from the High Island Creek Watershed District. Check with your county contact for further details.

To be eligible:

Applicant must be a property owner of a non-conforming septic system:

- Discharge to the surface
- Tiled to drainage or road ditch
- Discharge to cesspool, seepage pits or dry wells
- Less than a 2-foot separation to seasonally saturated soil
- Lack of a system
- Does not meet setbacks to existing well.

Not eligible:

- Refinancing a previously installed system
- Septic for new homes
- Non-residential property
- Project started before design and loan approval
- Under court order to repair system.

Contact Us

Sibley County

Ron Otto
Sibley SWCD
(507) 702-7077

Nicollet County

Mandy Landkamer
Environmental Services
(507) 934-0250

McLeod County

Jake McLain
Environmental Services
(320) 484-4343

Renville County

Diane Mitchell
Government Services
(320) 523-3760

RIVER WATCHER



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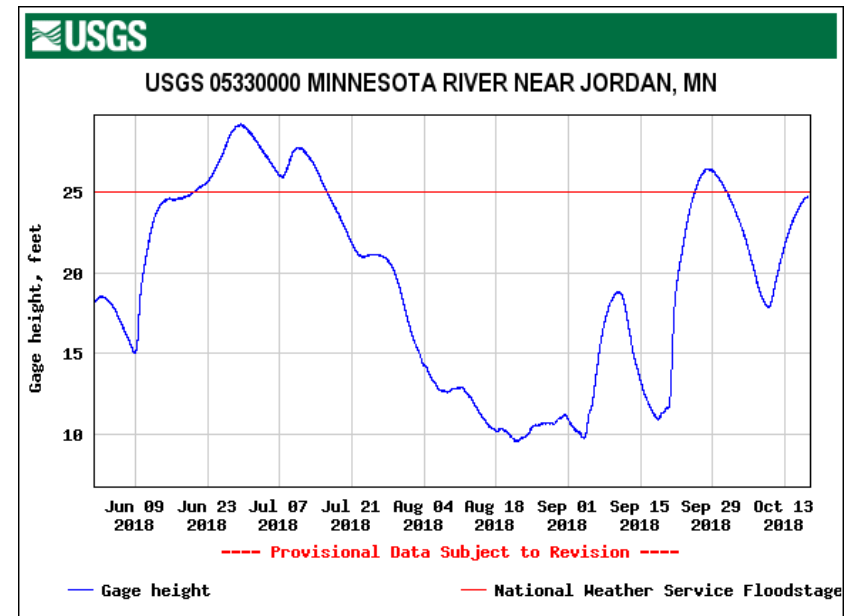
Fall 2018

Vol. 15 Issue 3

High Island Creek & Rush River Watershed 319 TMDL Project—Newsletter

Fall 2018

Ups and Downs of the Minnesota River - A Crazy Year of Water Levels



Precipitation was above average for most of the growing season in southern Minnesota and water levels on the Minnesota River reflected that by remaining high for long stretches of the summer. Talk to any farmer and they will tell you that the rain fell at less than ideal times, many had to delay planting and some are still dealing with wet fields as harvest continues. The community of Henderson and others living in the Minnesota River Valley will also tell you that river levels resulting from major precipitation events proved to be problematic as well. Many of the roads people rely upon saw closures at busy times of the year. Water levels remain high on the Minnesota River this fall, and it will be interesting to see if this trend continues.

Follow these links to explore more hydrologic data:

<https://waterdata.usgs.gov/mn/nwis/rt>

<https://water.weather.gov/ahps/>

Submit photos for watershed photo contest

The High Island Creek/Rush River Watershed Dissolved Oxygen TMDL will hold its annual photo contest this fall. The winning photo will be awarded a \$50 prize! Previous winning photos have included pictures of crops, nature, and outdoor recreation. Individuals may mail in their photo entries, stop by the office, or email them to: Jack.Bushman@sibleyswcd.org

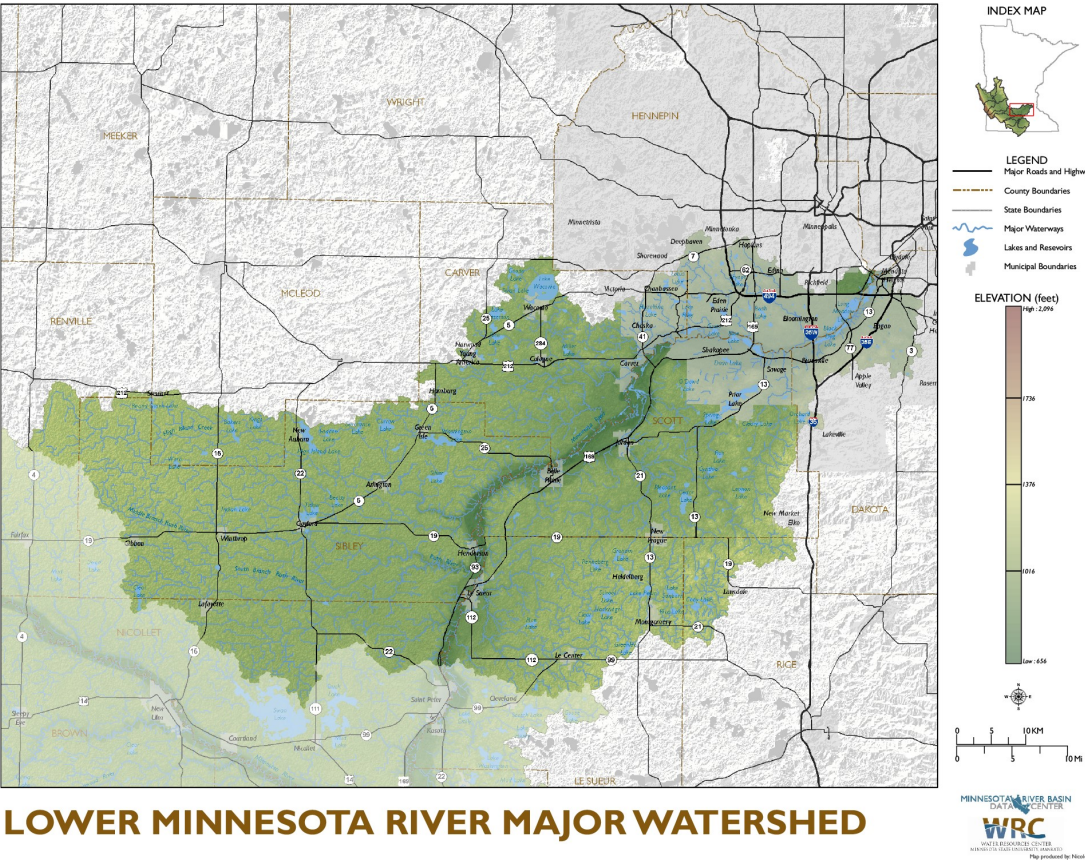
The deadline for submitting a photo is December 15th!

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- WRAPS
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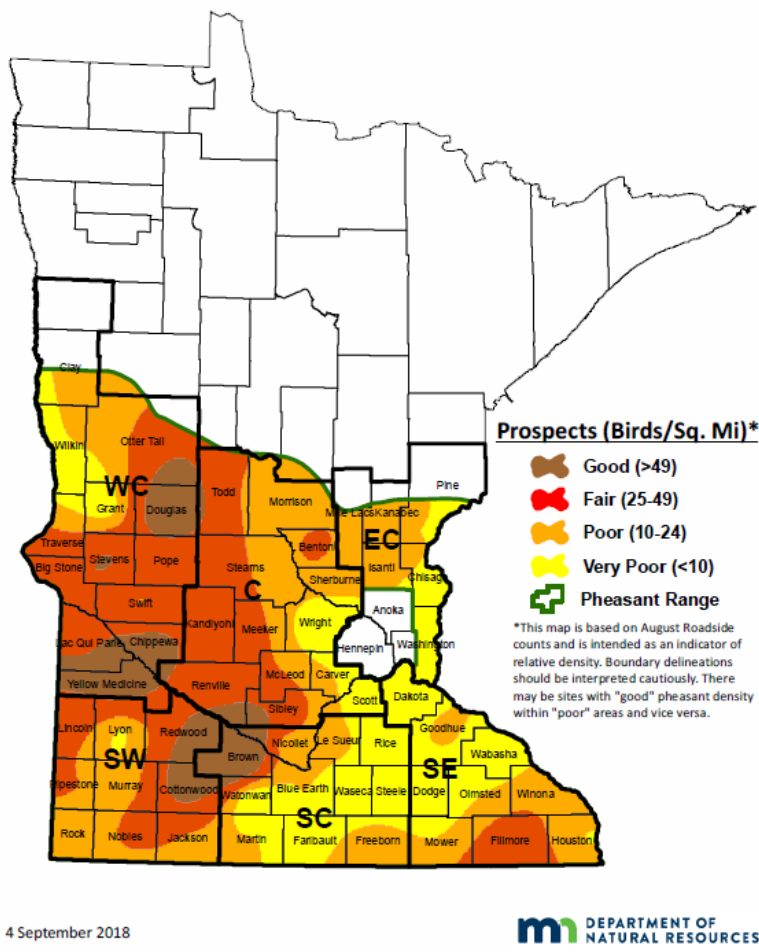
Lower Minnesota River Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies: Lessons learned from community based watershed planning.

The federal Clean Water Act has many effects on decisions that are made at all levels of government. Locally, perhaps none are more important than the establishment of total maximum daily load studies (TMDL), and the resulting watershed restoration and protection strategies (WRAPS) that are developed as part of the state of Minnesota’s actions to fulfil the requirements of the Clean Water Act. TMDL studies outline the pollution reductions needed for impaired waters to return to their intended uses. WRAPS reports, which are developed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) are meant to help guide local and state government focus in their efforts to reach the reductions outlined by the TMDL studies. In the Lower Minnesota River watershed, the MPCA partnered with Sibley County and Sibley SWCD to gather local input into strategies that would to deliver effective conservation throughout the watershed. Working along side with Rice, Nicollet, Le Sueur and McLeod counties, as well as Queenan Productions and the University of Minnesota’s Center for Changing Landscapes, we now have a better picture as to the drivers of conservation practice acceptance in the Lower Minnesota River watershed. This knowledge was gained in large part by surveys and in person interviews of landowners in the watershed performed by the Center for Changing Landscapes. The resulting document , “Assessment of Landowner Conservation Action in the Lower Minnesota Watershed” (<https://www.sibleyswcd.org/reporting>) will help state and local officials deliver effective conservation practices for the extended future. Other project highlights included work done by Queenan Productions, which put together a video (<https://www.sibleyswcd.org/cover-crops>) highlighting a local farmer who incorporates cover crops into his corn/soybean operation. Throughout the WRAPS process, communication and partnership development was crucial, and we now have a stronger team of conservation professionals in the Lower Minnesota watershed.



Pheasant Hunting Preview: DNR Roadside Survey Suggests Pheasant Numbers Up in Central Zone

2018 Pheasant Hunting Prospects



The results of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources annual August Roadside Survey (ARS) are in and the outlook for pheasant hunting in Minnesota looks good! The August Roadside Survey, has been conducted annually by the DNR since 1955. The 2018 ARS, performed by DNR wildlife and enforcement personnel, consisted of 171 routes throughout Minnesota’s farmland zones, each of which is 25 miles long. Observers record the species they see, and the data helps to provide an **Index of Relative Abundance**, which show annual changes and long term trends in populations. Range wide, the number of pheasants observed in 2018 (45.5 birds/100 mi) have increased 19% from the 2017 numbers (38.2 birds/100 mi) and was just slightly above the 10 year average of 44.7 birds/100 mi. Locally, the pheasant index in the central region saw an increase of 95%, suggesting that pheasant numbers are up from 2017. It should be a good fall for pheasant hunters in Minnesota!



Waterfowl Hunters! Remember to Clean, Drain and Dry all equipment to help prevent the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species.

Transporting aquatic plants, snails, zebra mussels or other prohibited invasive species in or on boats, trailers, or other equipment (decoys, waders, push poles) is illegal. Waterfowl hunters can use emergent aquatic vegetation cut above the waterline for use in blinds, but please remember to leave it on site.

Clean aquatic plants, animals and mud from your boat, trailer, waders or hip boots, push poles, clothing, decoy and line, dogs, and ATV or truck.

Drain all water from boats and equipment and leave drain plugs out when transporting.

Dry everything for at least 5 days before hunting in other waters.

Using elliptical, bulb-shaped or strap decoy anchors can help make clean up easier. The key to stopping the spread of aquatic invasive species is to arrive at site clean of all aquatic vegetation and animals, and leave the site clean. Clean in, Clean out!