

Press Release

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Lower Sauk River and Pearl Lake Are Impaired

In 2005-2006 the Sauk River Watershed District (SRWD) conducted a diagnostic study on the lower reach of the Sauk River, which has been listed by the State of Minnesota as impaired for fecal coliform. Stream water quality monitoring was conducted by the SRWD staff with data analysis and reporting being done by Barr Engineering under contract with the SRWD. The purpose of the diagnostic study was to determine the water quality status of the Sauk River and identify probable sources. The Lower Sauk River Diagnostic Study identified e-coli and turbidity concerns in the Mill Creek watershed which impacted the Sauk River.

Data collected for the diagnostic study from various monitoring efforts by the SRWD, Stearns County agencies, and area lake associations was used to assess the water quality status of Mill Creek and the lakes within the Mill Creek watershed. Mill Creek and Pearl Lake (DNR ID 73-0037) were listed as impaired by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). Pearl Lake was listed for excessive nutrients. Mill Creek had been listed for turbidity and E-coli. The SRWD contracted with Barr Engineering (Barr) to conduct a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study on Mill Creek, Pearl Lake and the lower reach of the Sauk River. The purpose of this study was to determine the maximum amount of nutrients and turbidity these waterbodies can receive without violating MPCA's water quality standards. The information listed in the results of this full TMDL study are found in this report. This report can be found at the SRWD's website at www.srwdmn.org.

The Clean Water Act requires that an adaptive implementation plan be developed to reduce nutrient loads to achieve the reductions to meet water quality standards. The SRWD will be hosting a final public meeting during the official public comment period as required. Watershed residents will be given the opportunity to comment on the study and to offer input for the implementation plan. The final public comment meeting is set for Thursday, September 16, 2010 at 7:00 pm. The meeting for the Lower Sauk TMDL will be located at Rockville City Hall. All those who may be affected by the TMDL should attend the public meeting and give any comments or discuss concerns they may have. These comments will be addressed in the final Lower Sauk TMDL report before final approval from the MPCA and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).