



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Water-quality testing results are in for Todd County**

After two years of water sampling and testing the health of the Mississippi River Brainerd Watershed's lakes and streams, the results are in, and for an overwhelming majority of Todd County's waters it's good news.

Out of the 16 lakes and streams tested in Todd County, 12 met or exceeded the state standards of water quality. That's 75%, numbers Shannon Wettstein, water planner for Todd County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) wasn't surprised about.

"Many of the lakes sampled within the watershed are in great shape and these we will continue to work to keep clean," said Wettstein. "Those which did not meet the state standards were not a huge surprise and we will begin efforts to reduce nutrient contributions to these waters."

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the local SWCDs have been collecting samples from within the Mississippi River Brainerd Watershed, which covers parts of Crow Wing, Aitkin, Cass, Morrison and Todd counties, including 212 lakes larger than 10 acres, and 2,149 river miles. Elements studied include water clarity, oxygen, nutrient, and bacteria levels in area lakes, streams, and rivers. MPCA crews also sampled fish using electrofishing equipment and collected invertebrate samples.

"By monitoring the state's major watersheds it helps to prioritize efforts and to bring them back to water-quality goals," said Bonnie Finnerty, watershed project manager

with the MPCA's Baxter office. "Having data helps to support the conversations and provides a goal-focused context for people to work together."

Rick Krauel has been a member of Todd County's Long Lake Improvement Association for 21 years and its president for 16 years. Long Lake met the state water quality standards.

"We've been continually monitoring Long Lake for the last 30 years," said Krauel. "Since the late 1990s, we've performed secchi disk tests for water clarity. We also test for phosphorus, chlorophyll, and test the lake's inlets for phosphorus and e-coli."

Three Todd County lakes did not meet state standards: Trace, Big Swan, and Moose. Wettstein said these waters will be further investigated and a plan will be created to restore water quality. Strategies will also be developed to protect lakes and streams that meet water-quality standards.

A public meeting will be held for residents of lakes and streams located in the five counties of the Mississippi River Brainerd Watershed that did not meet the standards. Representatives from the MPCA and SWCD will talk to residents about the assessment data and the current water quality analysis results, potential risks, or solutions. There will also be time for questions. The meeting will be held 3–5 p.m. on Thursday, July 26, at Center Township Hall, 24339 County Road 3, Merrifield.

For more information about the five-county Mississippi River Brainerd Watershed, visit [www.crowwingswcd.org](http://www.crowwingswcd.org). Scroll down the homepage and click on the image of the Storymap of the Mississippi Brainerd Watershed. The interactive Storymap will be continually updated with data, website links, videos, media coverage, events, and more.

This project, funded by the Clean Water and Land Legacy Amendment, was created to preserve Minnesota's drinking water sources, as well as protect, enhance and restore wetlands, prairies, forests, fish, game, and wildlife habitat. For more information about Todd County SWCD, visit [www.co.todd.mn.us](http://www.co.todd.mn.us).