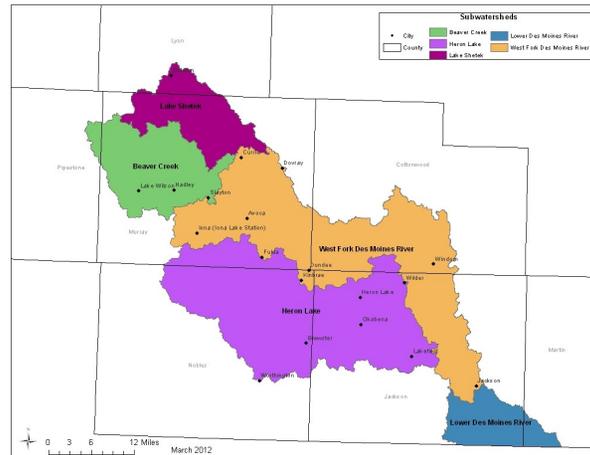


West Fork Des Moines River watershed

The West Fork Des Moines River (WFDMR) watershed is located in southwestern Minnesota and covers an area of 1,333 square miles. The watershed extends across seven counties: Murray, Cottonwood, Jackson, and Nobles and small portions of Pipestone, Lyon, and Martin. There are five main subwatersheds within the WFDMR watershed: Lake Shetek, Beaver Creek, Heron Lake, West Fork mainstem, and the Lower Des Moines.

The WFDMR watershed completed a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Study in 2008 that included 34 impairments addressing bacteria, turbidity, and phosphorus. The TMDL is a calculation of the maximum amount of pollutant a water body can receive and still meet water quality standards.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) estimates that the overall magnitude of reduction needed to meet water quality standards ranges from 10 to 86 percent for bacteria, 50 to 80 percent for turbidity, and 87 percent for phosphorus in North and South Heron Lake.



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Environmental
Protection Agency
319 Grant

West Fork Des Moines River Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Project



WATERSHED
ASSISTANCE
THROUGH
EDUCATION &
RESOURCES

HERON LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICT

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Why care about bacteria?

Bacteria is found in the intestines of all warm-blood animals, including humans, and is excreted in the feces. If bacteria gets into the water, it can be a health concern because it is an indicator species. This means that if it is present in a stream or lake, there may be other forms of bacteria present. An example of this would be *E. coli* bacteria, which can be deadly.



Noncompliant septic systems and unsewered communities can be part of the problem. Environmental offices estimated that 66% of the

septic systems in the watershed are non-compliant. Wastewater treatment plants can be another source.



Stormwater runoff is often forgotten or minimized when thinking about bacteria, but runoff from streets can also contain bacteria from pets, birds, and humans. Wildlife is also a contributor, but usually their numbers are limited and seasonal. Management practices of livestock and manure usually is a significant portion to the bacteria loading. In most watersheds, there tends to be more livestock than pets, wildlife, and humans combined.



The Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Study completed for the West Fork Des Moines River (WFDMR) and Heron Lake determined that to meet water quality standards there is a need to reduce bacteria by 10 percent to 86 percent.

What's happening in this project?

Project partners worked together to develop this grant program as one method to assist in bacteria reduction.

A Level III Feedlot Inventory will be conducted in the Nobles, Jackson, Murray, and Cottonwood County portions of the West Fork Des Moines River (WFDMR) watershed. This project consists of conducting an intensive, onsite inventory and inspection of eighty percent of the feedlots in the watershed. The purpose of the inventory is to gather information about feedlots, potential repairs, and estimated costs. The project started October 1, 2011, and will continue until August 31, 2015.

The goal of this project is to enhance partnerships between Murray, Nobles, Jackson, and Cottonwood Counties and the Heron Lake Watershed District (HLWD) through the employment of a watershed coordinator to assist with obtaining current feedlot information through onsite inspections and education.



A one-day workshop will be held in 2013 for feedlot owners and operators to increase their knowledge about manure management topics and water quality.

Project promotion will be done through brochures and project updates. This information will be available to all on the HLWD website at www.hlwdonline.org. Click on the **WFDMR TMDL** tab.

An Advisory Committee and Technical Committee will be utilized throughout the project. These committees will meet twice a year to receive updates and provide input and direction.

Environmental Financial Assistance Programs

- * State cost-share for terraces, sediment basins, grassed waterways, tree plantings, and more
- * Tree sales, shelterbelt design, planting services, and tree matting
- * Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
- * Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)
- * Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- * Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP)
- * Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)
- * Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM)
- * Alternative Tile Intake Cost-share Program
- * Agricultural Best Management Practices Loan Program (AgBMP)
- * Clean Water Partnership (CWP) Loan Program for Septic System Replacement and Conservation Tillage Equipment