

Minnesota River and Greater Blue Earth River Basin

Total suspended solids TMDL study

Key points

- The draft Total Maximum Daily Limit (TMDL) study addresses all total suspended solids (TSS) impairments along the Minnesota River mainstem, impairments at the mouths of Chippewa River, Yellow Medicine River, Hawk Creek, Redwood River, Cottonwood River, and most of the Greater Blue Earth River sediment impairments.
- Each reach has a different reduction estimate, but overall the MPCA is calling for about a 50% reduction in sediment loads.
- Achieving the sediment TMDLs in the Minnesota River will be critical to achieving downstream water quality goals in both the South Metro Mississippi River and Lake Pepin.

Project timeline

2012	Turbidity TMDL studies drafted for both Minnesota River and Greater Blue Earth River watershed. Both TMDLs received contested case hearing requests.
2015	MPCA adopted a total suspended solids (TSS) standard to replace previous turbidity standard.
2016	New basin model developed; mainstem reaches of the Minnesota River consolidated into fewer, longer reaches. MPCA decided to withdraw both TMDL reports and redevelop as one TMDL study. MPCA contracted Tetra Tech to draft new TSS TMDL study.
2018	Pre-public notice period for new TSS TMDL study in June 2018. Preliminary review by U.S. EPA in November – December 2018, with two rounds of comments. Process delayed because of federal government shutdown.
2019	MPCA worked through EPA comments and ensured Minnesota River TMDL was consistent with downstream South Metro Mississippi TSS TMDL. MPCA completed draft TMDL, placed on public notice for an extended period of time (60 days), from July 11 – September 20, 2019.

For more information about the draft report, visit the MPCA’s Minnesota River and Greater Blue Earth River Basin TMDL for TSS webpage at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/minnesota-river-and-greater-blue-earth-river-basin-tmdl-tss>.