

## **ABBREVIATED VERSION OF ARTICLE:**

### **Rum River Watershed Gets Checkup; Mixed Results**

The Rum River runs from Lake Mille Lacs to the Mississippi River. It is one of only seven State Scenic and Recreational Waterways, and part of the State's water trails system. Recently, the soil and water conservation districts and county departments joined with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to test the health of the river and the surrounding watershed.

The diagnosis was mixed with some areas being in good shape and others not so good. Within the north metro, lakes with excessive nutrients that cause algae blooms include: Rogers (Anoka County); Skogman, Fannie, Little Stanchfield, Long, Francis, Tennyson, Baxter, Green, North and South Stanchfield (Isanti County). High E.coli bacteria was found in the West Branch of the Rum River, Cedar Creek and Seeyle Brook. Crooked Brook (tributary to Cedar Cr in north central Anoka Co) and Trott Brook (City of Ramsey) had too little oxygen for fish. There are studies underway to gather more information on these impaired lakes to determine the amount of nutrient reductions needed and strategies.

The Rum River and other lakes are in good shape. Still, researchers noted reason for continued vigilance. For example, the Rum River in Isanti and Anoka Co is almost at state standards for nutrients and Lake George in Oak Grove has a declining water quality trend, which is being further investigated.

Within NW Anoka County, the Upper Rum River Watershed Management Organization (URRWMO) is monitoring these studies. The URRWMO is a joint organization of six cities (Bethel, East Bethel, Ham Lake, Nowthen, Oak Grove and St. Francis). The group will be updating its comprehensive plan in the next 18 months, and will be looking closely at the water quality needs in the watershed during that process. To learn more about the URRWMO and their upcoming planning process visit [www.URRWMO.org](http://www.URRWMO.org).

*ATTACH MAP TO ABBREVIATED ARTICLE IF POSSIBLE.*

## **FULL ARTICLE:**

## **Rum River Watershed Gets Checkup; Mixed Results**

The Rum River runs from Lake Mille Lacs through Mille Lacs, Isanti, and Anoka Counties before it drains into the Mississippi River. Thousands of people enjoy this river for fishing and canoeing every year. It is one of only seven State Scenic and Recreational Waterways, and part of the State's water trails system. Recently, the soil and water conservation districts and county departments joined with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to learn about the health of the river and the surrounding watershed.

The diagnosis was mixed with some areas being in good shape and others not so good. In order to determine the health of a river, the State has developed limits for a variety of different pollutants. Some of these limits include the concentration of certain nutrients, the presence of harmful bacteria like E. coli, the presence of soil sediment, and the amount of life-supporting oxygen found within the water. Area lakes and rivers were tested.

Several lakes and streams within the Rum River watershed exceed these limits and are classified as impaired. Within the north metro, lakes with excessive nutrients that cause algae blooms include: Rogers (Anoka County); Skogman, Fannie, Little Stanchfield, Long, Francis, Tennyson, Baxter, Green, North and South Stanchfield (Isanti County). High E.coli bacteria was found in the West Branch of the Rum River, Cedar Creek and Seeyle Brook. Crooked Brook (tributary to Cedar Cr in north central Anoka Co) and Trott Brook (City of Ramsey) had too little oxygen for fish. There are studies underway to gather more information on these impaired lakes to determine the amount of nutrient reductions needed and strategies.

On the positive side, several lakes and streams are below these limits and meet the State's water quality standards. Overall the Rum River and other lakes are in good shape. Still, there is reason to be cautious. For example, the Rum River in Isanti and Anoka Co is almost at state standards for nutrients. Lake George in Oak Grove has a declining water quality trend. By finding ways to protect these waters before they become impaired, a lot of money can be saved because it is easier to protect water quality than it is to restore it.

Within NW Anoka County, the Upper Rum River Watershed Management Organization (URRWMO) is monitoring these studies and management planning. The URRWMO is a joint organization of six cities (Bethel, East Bethel, Ham Lake, Nowthen, Oak Grove and St. Francis). The group will be updating its comprehensive plan in the next 18 months, and will be looking closely at the water quality needs in the watershed during that process. To learn more about the URRWMO and their upcoming planning process visit [www.URRWMO.org](http://www.URRWMO.org).

# Rum River Watershed

## Upper Mississippi River Basin

