

# MISSISSIPPI MAKEOVER

## A Plan for Restoration, Just Around the Bend

*Restoration Focus: The Mississippi River above Lake Pepin, the Lower Vermillion River, and Spring Lake are polluted with sediment and algae. Community support and sound science can protect and restore these ecosystems, creating a regional gem for recreation, wildlife and economic opportunities.*

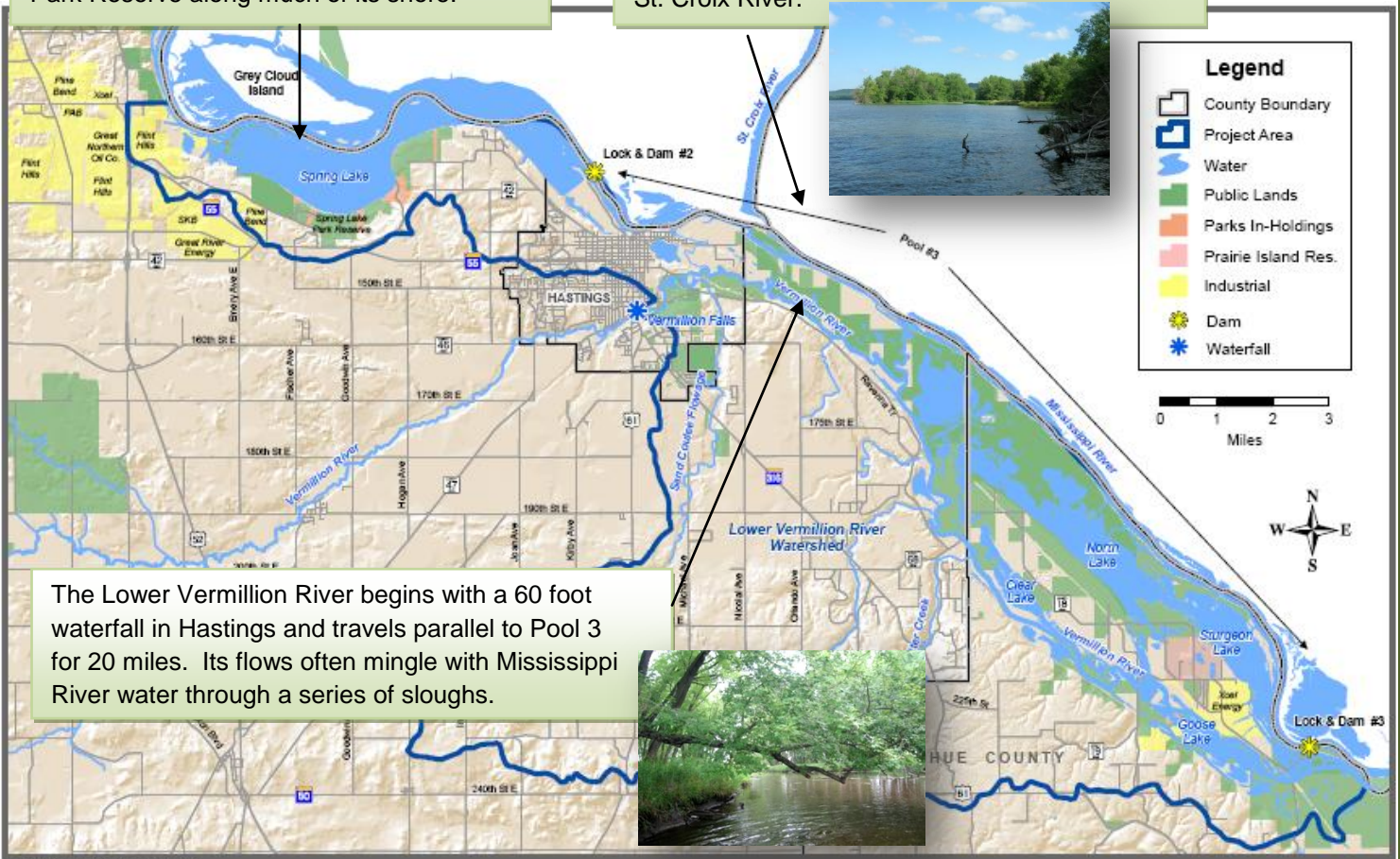


*Healthy Ecosystem  
Abundant Wildlife  
Recreational Mecca*

Spring Lake is a wide and shallow expanse of water within the Mississippi River upstream of Hastings in Pool 2. It was once a renowned duck hunting area and now boasts Dakota County's Spring Lake Park Reserve along much of its shore.

Pool 3 of the Mississippi River extends from Lock and Dam 2 in Hastings downstream to Lock and Dam 3 near Red Wing. Pool 3 includes many large floodplain lakes and the confluence with the St. Croix River.

The Lower Vermillion River begins with a 60 foot waterfall in Hastings and travels parallel to Pool 3 for 20 miles. Its flows often mingle with Mississippi River water through a series of sloughs.



Prepared by the Dakota County Office of GIS

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## What is the Mississippi Makeover Project?



The ultimate goal of this project is a healthy and protected ecosystem that attracts abundant wildlife, becomes a mecca for outdoor enthusiasts, and provides economic benefits to local communities.

- ✓ It is a smaller part of the ongoing Mississippi River/Lake Pepin Total Maximum Daily Load Study.
- ✓ It concentrates on the geographic area that includes Pool 3, Spring Lake, and the Lower Vermillion River.
- ✓ It aims to bridge multiple projects and priorities of agencies that have responsibility to protect and improve water quality, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities in this area.
- ✓ It will result in congruent and complimentary project goals among local stakeholders and agencies.
- ✓ It includes the following steps:
  1. Convene a citizen advisory group to recommend key indicators of restoration success to governmental agencies for these areas. (Winter 2008 - 2009)
  2. Convene a technical/scientific panel to determine how the selected indicators can best be achieved, accurately measured and tracked over time. (Late winter/Spring 2009)
  3. Develop a comprehensive plan for implementing the results of this project including timelines, budgets, responsible parties, and realistic outcomes. (Summer/Fall 2009)

## Low Water Clarity Results in Big Habitat Problems

One of the biggest problems with the water quality in the Mississippi River, Spring Lake, and the Lower Vermillion River is low clarity. These waterbodies have high amounts of sediment, algae, and other materials suspended in the water, giving it a cloudy or turbid appearance. High turbidity is aesthetically offensive to humans, but it's even more unpleasant for plants and animals that live in these habitats. Cloudy water can prevent fish from finding prey, prevent light from reaching riverbed plants, allow sediment to bury insects and fish eggs, and generally degrades habitat quality. It is also contributing to the rapid filling-in of Lake Pepin which is occurring at 10 times the pre-settlement rate. The sources of turbidity are varied. Much of the solution to the water clarity impairment will require changes in the watersheds that drain to the Mississippi River. However, part of the solution includes river management. Activities such as water level drawdowns and island building can greatly improve both water clarity and river habitats.



## A Partnership

The Mississippi Makeover Project is a partnership of the following groups:

- ✓ Local Citizens and Stakeholders
- ✓ Dakota County – project coordinator
- ✓ Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District – project coordinator
- ✓ MN and WI Departments of Natural Resources
- ✓ MN Pollution Control Agency
- ✓ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- ✓ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

For more information please contact Laura Jester, Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District, (651) 480-7784 or [laura.jester@co.dakota.mn.us](mailto:laura.jester@co.dakota.mn.us).