

Notice of availability and request for comments on draft Big Fork River Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS)

General information

Public comment period begins: June 2, 2025

Public comment period ends: July 2, 2025

MPCA contact person:

Lindsey Krumrie
Watershed Division
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
525 S Lake Ave, Ste 400
Duluth, MN 55802-2362
Phone: 218-302-6605
Email: lindsey.krumrie@state.mn.us
File manager phone: 651-757-2728 or 844-828-0942

The draft report for the Big Fork River WRAPS is available for review on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) draft/public noticed [MPCA Public Comments webpage](#), or at the MPCA office address listed under the MPCA contact person above. Following the comment period, the MPCA will revise and finalize the report. Comments, petitions, and other requests must be received at the MPCA in writing on or before the public comment period end date and time identified above.

Watershed: 09030006 Big Fork River Watershed (BFRW)

Description of the Big Fork River WRAPS

The WRAPS Update Report is the next iteration of the initial BFR WRAPS Report required by the state Clean Water Legacy Act. This report uses watershed science and information to develop strategies for addressing point and nonpoint pollution sources. The objective of the WRAPS Update process is to provide updated information and refined strategies for the restoration of impaired waters and protection of unimpaired waters from degradation. This report is a collaborative effort between the MPCA, other state agencies, local government partners, and other stakeholders and supports the work planned under the One Watershed, One Plan program.

The BFRW is approximately 1.3 million acres and is the 6th largest HUC-8 watershed in Minnesota. The watershed spans across 2 counties, Itasca County and Koochiching County, and 2 Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) Reservations of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and Bois Forte Band of Chippewa. The 2 largest towns in the watershed are Bigfork and Big Falls, with populations of 446 and 175 people, respectively.

The first WRAPS report for the BFRW was completed in October 2017. During that cycle (2010 through 2020), intensive watershed monitoring (IWM) started in 2010. This initial WRAPS report included sections on watershed background and description, watershed conditions (condition status, water quality trends, stressors and sources, total maximum daily load (TMDL) summary, protection considerations), prioritizing and implementing restoration and protection, and a monitoring plan.

The second 10-year cycle (2020 through 2030) began in May 2020 with the IWM process. The intent of the WRAPS Update is to report data that's currently absent from the first round and to incorporate any new findings from the monitoring and assessment process. This updated WRAPS report includes focused data presented in user-friendly maps and narratives, designed to streamline watershed protection and restoration needs. This report will be available to help state agencies, local governments, tribal governments, and other watershed stakeholders determine how to best proceed with protecting and restoring surface waters and groundwater in the BFRW.

Procedure for public participation

As stated in Minn. R. chs. 7000 and 7001, there are three formal procedures for public participation in the MPCA's consideration of this matter. Interested persons may:

1. Submit written comments on the draft report.
2. Petition the MPCA to hold a public informational meeting.
3. Petition the MPCA to hold a contested case hearing.

Submitting written comments

Comments may be submitted to the MPCA by the two methods below:

1. Online at www.pca.state.mn.us/publiccomments
2. U.S. Mail to the following address:

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
c/o Lindsey Krumrie
525 S Lake Ave, Ste 400
Duluth, MN 558022362

To submit comments or petitions online or by mail to the MPCA, you must state:

1. Your interest in the draft WRAPS report.
2. The action you wish the MPCA to take, including specific references to the section of the draft report you believe should be changed. It is important to clearly specify which of the two reports the comments pertain to since the reports will proceed along separate tracks for final approval.
3. The reason(s) supporting your position, stated with sufficient specificity as to allow the MPCA to investigate the merits of the position.

Public informational meeting

A public informational meeting is an informal meeting during which interested persons can ask questions concerning the proposed project. The MPCA staff will be present to provide information. If an interested person would like the MPCA to hold a public informational meeting, the person should include all information identified above and in addition include a statement of the reasons the person desires the MPCA to hold a public informational meeting and the issues that the person would like the agency to address at the public informational meeting.

Contested case hearing

A contested case hearing is a formal proceeding before an administrative law judge empowered to advise the MPCA regarding issues of fact. As described in Minn. R. 7000.1800, persons who submit petitions for a contested case hearing must also state the issues they propose to address in a contested case hearing, the specific relief requested or resolution of the matter, and the reasons (which may be in the form of proposed findings) supporting an MPCA decision to hold a contested case hearing. Failure to comply with these rules exactly may result in a denial of the request. To the extent known, the petitioner may also submit a list of prospective witnesses to be called at a hearing, a proposed list of publications, references, or studies to be introduced at a hearing and the approximate time required for the petitioner to present the matter at a hearing. The decision whether to hold a contested case hearing will be made under Minn. R. 7000.1900.