

Notice of availability and request for comments on draft Cannon River Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) Report Update 2026

General information

Public comment period begins: June 29, 2026

Public comment period ends: July 29, 2026

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The draft report for the Cannon River Watershed 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 the report and post it on the MPCA Cannon River Watershed web page. 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: 07040002 Cannon River Major Watershed

Description of the Cannon River Watershed

The WRAPS Report Update is the next iteration of the initial Cannon River Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies Report (2016) required by the state Clean Water Legacy Act. This report uses TMDL and other information to develop strategies for addressing point and nonpoint pollution sources. The objective of the WRAPS Update process is to provide updated information and refine strategies to restore impaired waters and protect the 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 Cannon River Watershed is a large river system in southeastern Minnesota that drains water from more than 1,400 square miles of land. Rain and snow that fall within the watershed flow into local streams, lakes, and wetlands, eventually reaching the Cannon River and then the Mississippi River at Red Wing. The watershed includes parts of Rice, Goodhue, Dakota, Steele, Le Sueur, Scott, and Waseca counties, and connects many communities through shared water resources. A transition between the driftless terrain of southeast Minnesota and the glaciated lands of south-central Minnesota, this watershed is located at the intersection of three different ecoregions: north central hardwoods, western cornbelt plains, and the driftless area. It encompasses a diverse landscape that supports productive farms and growing urban centers. It includes 90 lakes and 107 wetlands of 10 acres or more, numerous rivers and streams, and groundwater that is sensitive to pollution. More than 70% of the land area is in cultivation. While the watershed provides important ecological, recreational, and economic benefits, it continues to face persistent water-quality challenges. Primary stressors include excess nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen), sediment, and bacteria, largely driven by agricultural runoff, tile drainage, urban stormwater, and altered hydrology.

The Cannon River Watershed consists of two river systems:

- From the south, the Straight River headwaters begin as a fan of smaller streams and ditches and connects with the Cannon River in Faribault, Minnesota.
- The Cannon River begins as outflow of Shields Lake then flows east connecting with a number of other lakes, streams, and the Straight River. Continuing east, it flows through the Cannon Lake Reservoir and the Byllesby Reservoir. Once it reaches the driftless area, the river flows past scenic limestone bluffs until it finally empties into the Mississippi River north of Red Wing, Minnesota. Minnesota has designated the Cannon River, from Faribault to the Mississippi River, as a Wild and Scenic River.

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 Kristen Dieterman
7381 Airport View Dr SW
Rochester, MN 55902

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.
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

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. A public informational meeting is an informal meeting during which interested persons can ask questions concerning the proposed project. The MPCA staff would be present to provide information.

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.