South Branch Subwatershed

Includes:
- Northeastern Eureka Township,
- Northern Castle Rock Township,
- Northwest Hampton Township,
- Southeastern corner of Empire Township
- Southwestern corner of Vermillion Township,
- City of Hampton, and
- South Branch and all of its tributaries.

Strategies for a healthy subwatershed

The land area around the South Branch (and smaller streams that run into it) make up the South Branch Subwatershed. The South Branch Subwatershed (shown in red on map, left) is part of the Vermillion River Watershed (shown in blue). Land and water in this area drain to the South Branch.

The South Branch Subwatershed is primarily rural and agricultural. It is planned for agricultural use in the future. Over many years of agricultural production, landowners have altered the land to expand, improve crop yields, and drain soggy fields.

These land-use changes also altered the natural flow of water, allowing rain water to move more quickly from where it falls. Agricultural runoff carries pollutants such as sediment, nitrate, and E. coli bacteria to rivers and streams.

Practices that slow down stormwater and soak up the rain can improve water quality. Practices include grassed waterways (to slow water and reduce erosion), restored wetlands, water and sediment control ponds (to hold stormwater, remove pollutants, and let water soak into the ground), and cover crops (to hold soil in place, increase organic matter, and retain nutrients).

Healthy land and water resources depend on everyone. Find out more about what you can do to improve the South Branch Subwatershed’s water resources.
The Vermillion River Watershed encompasses an area of approximately 335 square miles, including portions of two counties and all or portions of 20 cities, towns, and townships. The main stem of the river begins in southeastern Scott County in New Market Township flowing east through central Dakota County, passing over a waterfall in the City of Hastings, and then discharging to the Mississippi River both through a northerly flowing outlet near the City of Hastings as well as through a southerly flowing outlet near the City of Red Wing, Minnesota.