



Agenda

Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board Meeting

June 26, 2025, 1 p.m.

In-person at the Dakota County Extension and Conservation Center and virtual via Microsoft Teams

1. Call to Order
 2. Roll Call
 3. Audience Comments on Items Not on the Agenda
(please limit audience comments to five minutes)
 4. Approval of Agenda Action Page 1
 5. Approval of Minutes from the May 22, 2025, Meeting Action Page 3
 6. Consent Agenda Action Page 9
 - a. Acceptance of Treasurer's Reports
 - b. Authorization to Insert Proposed Revisions to the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization Standards into the 2026-2035 Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan
 7. Approval of Expenses Action Page 13
 8. Business Items
 - a. Presentation of Summarized Results from the 2024 Vermillion River Monitoring Network Report Information Page 14
 - b. Discussion of Climate Resiliency Issue Category in Draft 2026-2035 Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan Information Page 26
 9. Staff Reports
 10. Adjourn Action
 11. Visit to Future North Creek Channel and Crossing Improvement Project Site Information Page 32
- Immediately Following Meeting (Optional)

Please note, the June 26, 2025, Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board meeting will take place **in-person** in Conference Room A at the Extension and Conservation Center, 4100 220th Street West, Farmington, Minnesota, **and via teleconference** on Microsoft Teams.

Microsoft Teams

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 250 720 001 229

Passcode: VY65Jw35

Dial in by phone

[+1 651-273-3070,,980027819#](#) United States, Hastings

[Find a local number](#)

Phone conference ID: 980 027 819#



Other Information

Next Meeting Date: **July 24, 2025**, at 1 p.m.

You will be notified if the meeting is cancelled due to an anticipated lack of quorum.



Meeting Minutes

Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board (JPB) Meeting

Thursday, May 22, 2025, 1 p.m., in-person at the Dakota County Extension and Conservation Center, Farmington, MN, and virtual via Microsoft Teams

JPB Commissioners in Attendance

- Dakota County Commissioner Bill Droste
- Dakota County Commissioner Mary Liz Holberg
- Scott County Commissioner Tom Wolf

Vermillion River Watershed Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Members in Attendance

- John Nicolai
- Sandy Weber

Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization (VRWJPO) Staff in Attendance

- Travis Thiel, VRWJPO Administrator, Dakota County
- Jeff Dunn, VRWJPO Water Resources Engineer, Dakota County
- Brita Moore-Kutz, Communications and Outreach Specialist, Dakota County
- Kelly Perrine, Senior Watershed Specialist, Dakota County

Others in Attendance

- Nikki Stewart, Environmental Resources Department Director, Dakota County
- Joe Barten, Senior Resource Conservationist, Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) (virtual)
- Drea Doffing, Castle Rock Township resident and Planning Commission member
- Bruce Johnson, Board member, Dakota County SWCD
- Lucie O'Neill, Dakota County Attorney's Office (virtual)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1 p.m.



2. Roll Call

Commissioners Droste, Holberg, and Wolf were present.

3. Audience Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

Drea Doffing, a member of the Castle Rock Township Planning Commission, raised questions about a proposed solar energy farm in the township. She had seen the VRWJPO's submitted comments about the project, which mentioned mitigating wetland impacts in accordance with the requirements of the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act (WCA). She asked if that meant that the developers would have to come before the VRWJPO regarding the WCA application. Travis Thiel responded that the Dakota County SWCD is the administrator of the WCA for Castle Rock Township and it is the township's responsibility to ensure that wetlands are not impacted at the project site.

Drea asked if the VRWJPO had any regulations surrounding potential carcinogenic metals that she thought might be found in solar panels. Travis responded that VRWJPO Standards cover stormwater, floodplain, or buffer requirements, but not toxic chemicals. He said that if any potential issues in that arena would arise the recommendation would be to call the Minnesota Duty Officer.

Drea asked whether the agricultural producers who are committing to sell or lease their land to the solar farm project and there are wetlands on their property, will they lose United States Department of Agriculture benefits for those properties. Travis wasn't sure about that.

Lastly, Drea asked whether the VRWJPO thought an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) should be done for this project. Staff responded that an environmental assessment was being already done for the project and the township could decide whether it was in their interest to request an EIS that might provide a more thorough review of potential environmental impacts.

4. Approval of Agenda

Res. No. VRW 25-16: Motion by Commissioner Holberg to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Droste

5. Approval of Minutes from the April 24, 2025, Meeting

Res. No. VRW 25-17: Motion by Commissioner Holberg to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Droste. Motion carried on a 3-0 voice vote.

6. Approval of Consent Agenda

- a. Acceptance of Treasurer's Reports

Res. No. VRW 25-18: Motion by Commissioner Droste to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Commissioner Holberg. Motion carried on a 3-0 voice vote.



7. Approval of Expenses

Travis Thiel presented the expenses from April 1-April 30, 2025, totaling \$52,073.94. He noted that there was an expense listed for Scott SWCD's monitoring station in the Vermillion River Monitoring Network, though the Scott SWCD employee responsible for that monitoring station has departed the agency and will not be replaced. The Dakota SWCD will take responsibility for that station for the foreseeable future. The expense from Scott SWCD in the April expense report was for the first quarter of 2025, before the employee's departure. The change will require edits to the joint powers agreements (JPAs) between the VRWJPO and the SWCDs for services.

Res. No. VRW 25-19: Motion by Commissioner Holberg to approve the expenses, seconded by Commissioner Droste. Motion carried on a 3-0 roll call vote.

8. Business Items

- a. Approval of Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization Wetland Banking Policy

Travis presented the updated Wetland Banking Policy, modified to include the Board's provided direction from the April 24, 2025, meeting. The Commissioners had indicated they'd be comfortable adjusting the wetland bank credit sale price to \$60,000 or slightly more. Staff desire to have a calculatable means of identifying credit costs. Staff reviewed average credit costs in the surrounding wetland bank service areas and proposed selling credits in the VRWJPO for the previous year's annually calculated median value of Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)-reported costs per credit for bank service areas 6, 7, and 9. VRWJPO is part of bank service area 8. This would put the credit costs at \$60,111 per acre in 2025.

Res. No. VRW 25-20: Motion by Commissioner Holberg to approve the revised Wetland Banking Policy, seconded by Commissioner Droste. Motion carried on a 3-0 voice vote.

- b. Presentation and Discussion of Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan Implementation Table and Summary of Approval and Adoption Timeline

The Board had received the draft Implementation Table (Table) that is being incorporated into the 2026-2035 Watershed Management Plan (Plan) and was asked for their feedback. The Table includes action items for the VRWJPO to meet the Plan's goals. It has been developed out of stakeholder input and prioritization. The Plan is still a draft and will remain so for several more months.

Kelly Perrine noted that Minnesota statutes and rules outline specific requirements for watershed plans with the understanding that it is more of a guide and that there may be deviations, depending on available funding or other unforeseen factors. However, BWSR wants watershed organizations to be as transparent as possible. Staff have organized the Table to reflect the funding they are hoping to allocate to various practices, including funds from the



VRWJPO General Fund, partner funds, and grant funds, if the action isn't solely identified within the General Fund budget category.

- Commissioner Droste asked if the Board would review the table every year or if it was strictly staff's responsibility. Travis said that once the Plan is enacted, revising the Implementation Table would require an amendment to the Plan every year if they chose to do it that way.
- In the Table, staff had proposed a 3% increase in the Watershed Tax District levy administered by Dakota and Scott counties. Commissioner Holberg asked if that meant that was going to be required. Travis responded that the Plan is a guide and is part of a budgeting plan for the next ten years. Travis noted that Dakota County Commissioner Mike Slavik, a previous member of the JPB, had asked staff to provide a five-year levy projection to help with forecasting, so the levy increase shown in the Table illustrates that projection over the next ten years. The percentage could change based on the tax capacity of each county's section of the watershed.
- Commissioner Droste noticed a street sweeping study was included as an action item and asked who was leading it. Kelly answered that the VRWJPO and Dakota County are partnering on that. Commissioner Droste said he noticed street sweepers out often near where he lives in Rosemount, which Kelly said are likely deployed as part of the construction permitting process. The study she is proposing is for municipal street sweepers to reduce pollutant loading in stormwater runoff.
- Commissioner Holberg expressed concern about the use of the term "Climate Resiliency" as one of the Issue Category titles in the Plan. With recent directives from the federal government for federal agencies not to use certain words, she wondered if the VRWJPO might be at risk of not receiving grants if they keep that term in the Plan.
 - Kelly responded that staff had chosen those words because of stakeholder input as well as state agencies' use of "climate resiliency," such as in the Minnesota Climate Action Plan.
 - Commissioner Holberg then asked about what projects would fall into the Climate Resiliency category. Kelly said that the VRWJPO's role in that arena primarily falls with stormwater infrastructure and adapting it for frequent, intense precipitation events.
 - Jeff Dunn added that the organization applies climate resiliency terminology as a reason for a number of different applications, which include applications for grant funding. The Climate Resiliency section of the Implementation Table includes floodplain and green infrastructure, in addition to stormwater actions.
- Commissioner Holberg then asked if, instead of having a whole Climate Resiliency category, the VRWJPO could add those actions into the Stormwater Management section, which she thought would more accurately reflect what the organization does without risking consequences from the current presidential administration. Staff were concerned that leaving out references to climate would in turn risk ability to procure potential state grant funds, because any grants that the VRWJPO applies to from state



agencies must be for a project named in the Watershed Plan. Some grants are specifically geared toward climate resiliency.

- Commissioner Droste added that from his perspective, he did not see the state government changing course regarding its goals and operations regarding climate resiliency.
- In the context of comments about data center water use and groundwater supply, Commissioner Droste shared that he'd toured the Flint Hills refinery recently and learned about the facility's voluntary water reuse systems, which have saved a significant amount of groundwater.

Information only.

9. Staff Reports

Kelly Perrine

- Kelly mentioned that a wetland restoration project in Castle Rock Township for the VRWJPO's wetland bank has received comments from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps requested the installation of three additional hydrology monitoring wells. This pushes back the work plan for the project and may potentially delay payment to the landowner for the easement purchase to 2026.

Brita Moore-Kutz

- Brita will host a table for the VRWJPO at the Dakota County Take a Kid Fishing event on Sunday, June 8, at Thompson County Park.

Jeff Dunn

- Jeff is in discussions with Eureka Township about potential changes in permitting after changes to the VRWJPO Standards with the next Plan are approved. He asked the Township Board if they would assume permitting authority for soil disturbance and stormwater projects if the proposed revisions to the VRWJPO Standards are less burdensome to enforce. VRWJPO is the permitting authority in Eureka Township, the only location in the watershed where this is the case. The township has until Nov. 1 to decide.

10. Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Droste to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Holberg. Motion carried on a 3-0 voice vote.



Next Meeting Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025, 1 p.m., at the Dakota County Extension and Conservation Center Conference Room A and via teleconference on Microsoft Teams.

Respectfully submitted by

Brita Moore-Kutz

Communications and Outreach Specialist, Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization

Attest

Commissioner

Secretary/ Treasurer

Date



2025 Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization

May 2025 Treasurer's Report

Account Category	MTD Actuals	YTD Actuals	% Budget	Budget	Balance
41 – County Levies	0	0	0%	1,026,882	1,026,882
41002 – Dakota County Levy	0	0	0%	990,832	990,832
41031 – Scott County Levy	0	0	0%	36,050	36,050
43 – Investment Interest & Wetland Bank Revenue	35,463	149,449	93%	160,000	10,551
43099 - Misc Other Revenue	31,366	128,378	117%	110,000	-18,378
43291 - Interest on Investments	4,097	21,072	42%	50,000	28,928
45 – Permit Revenue	20	40	4%	1,000	960
47 – Grant Revenue	139	77,289	9%	821,184	743,895
49 – Operations & CIP Fund Balance	0	0	0%	795,014	795,014
49495 - Use of Fund Balance (Operations)	0	0	-	0	0
49495 - Use of Fund Balance (CIP)	0	0	0%	795,014	795,014
Total Revenue	35,622	226,778	8%	2,804,080	2,577,302
53 – Salaries	44,807	219,417	40%	544,500	325,083
53001 - Dakota County Staff Time	43,366	214,444	41%	522,500	308,056
53039 - Scott County Staff Time	1,441	4,973	23%	22,000	17,027
53 – Dept/County Support	2,845	8,056	10%	78,100	70,044
53002 - Administrative & Consulting	781	2,256	4%	53,100	50,844
53004 - Legal	2,064	5,800	23%	25,000	19,200
54 – Travel & Training	0	0	0%	2,000	2,000
55 – Office Support	1,715	1,715	6%	30,000	28,285
57 – Operations & Programs	14,420	26,472	10%	256,700	230,228
57011 - Monitoring Direct Expenses	12,270	14,897	12%	127,500	112,604
57011 - Public Outreach Direct Expenses	0	525	1%	42,100	41,575
57011 - Feasibility Direct Expenses	2,000	2,000	4%	55,000	53,000
57011- Other Direct Expenses	150	9,051	28%	32,100	23,049
59 – CIP	1,829	2,051	0%	1,892,780	1,890,729
Total Expenses	65,615	257,712	9%	2,804,080	2,546,368
VERMILLION RIVER WATERSHED Surplus/Deficit	-29,993	-30,934		0	-30,934

Vermillion River
watershed
reflecting life

10

- Post-Construction Water Quality Criteria
- Removed sections for waivers, trading, and exceptions.

Section 10: Agricultural Standards

- Removed section. Most routine ongoing agricultural activities are exempt from permitting under the Clean Water Act and voluntary stewardship programs are managed through other organizations like Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

This is the VRWJPB's opportunity to review the proposed revisions to the Standards prior to any formal review of the WMP by agencies and stakeholders. If authorized, staff will insert the proposed Standards as Appendix D of the 2026-2035 Watershed Management Plan.

EXPLANATION OF FISCAL/FTE IMPACT

None

RESOLUTION

6b. Authorization to Insert Proposed Revisions to the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization Standards into the 2026-2035 Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan

WHEREAS, the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization (VRWJPO) Standard revisions for incorporation into the 2026-2035 Watershed Management Plan were drafted after input from Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan Stakeholder surveys; and

WHEREAS, feedback from the stakeholder surveys suggested that any regulations and criteria that are overly complicated, are not enforceable by the VRWJPO, and are not pertinent to engineering design should be removed from the Standards; and

WHEREAS, based on stakeholder input, the VRWJPO updated the Standards to the extent feasible for review and approval by the Vermillion River Watershed Technical Advisory Committee (TAC); and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2025, VRWJPO staff met with the TAC to discuss the proposed revisions, and their input was incorporated into the proposed revisions to the Standards.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board hereby authorizes staff to insert the proposed revisions to the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization Standards into the 2026-2035 Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan.



Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization

4100 220th St. W., Suite 103, Farmington, MN 55024

May 2025 Expense Report

The previous invoices submitted between April 1 and April 30, 2025 total: \$52,073.94

The final invoices submitted between May 1 and May 31, 2025 total:

<u>Invoice</u>	<u>Vendor</u>		<u>Amount</u>
	DC Staff Time	\$	43,365.57
	DC Legal	\$	2,063.87
May	Mail charges	\$	1.77
IN32279	Scott County	\$	1,441.10
2391095	Stantec	\$	465.00
Pcard Weber	Amazon - Hand Fuel Pump DCP33841	\$	16.98
3458	Dakota County Soil & Water Conservation District	\$	15,169.50
INV08101601	Spartan/American Solutions	\$	1,713.66
Pcard Thiel	Pellicci Ace - Drill for project maintenance/ice auger	\$	299.00
2397137	Stantec	\$	1,078.91
TOTAL \$			65,615.36

Action Requested: Approval of all expenses as presented

8a. Presentation of Summarized Results from the 2024 Vermillion River Monitoring Network Report

Meeting Date: 06/26/25
Item Type: Regular-Information
Contact: Kelly Perrine
Telephone: 952-891-7002
Prepared by: Travis Thiel

**PURPOSE/ACTION REQUESTED**

- Staff will present summarized results from the 2024 Vermillion River Monitoring Network report

SUMMARY

Water quality and flow data collected through the Vermillion River Monitoring Network (VRMN) provides staff and stakeholders with information needed to make informed decisions on the water quality issues facing the Vermillion River and its tributaries. It also allows staff to prioritize resource needs and make recommendations to allocate budget to address those needs appropriately. Kelly Perrine will provide a brief presentation summarizing the results from the 2024 VRMN report. A link to the 2024 VRMN report and previous reports can be accessed [here](#).

EXPLANATION OF FISCAL/FTE IMPACT

No fiscal impact.

Supporting Documents:


Attachment A: Presentation of 2024 VRMN Report Results

Previous Board Action(s):

RESOLUTION

8a. Presentation of Summarized Results from the 2024 Vermillion River Monitoring Network Report

Information only



Presentation of Vermillion River Monitoring Network 2024 Report

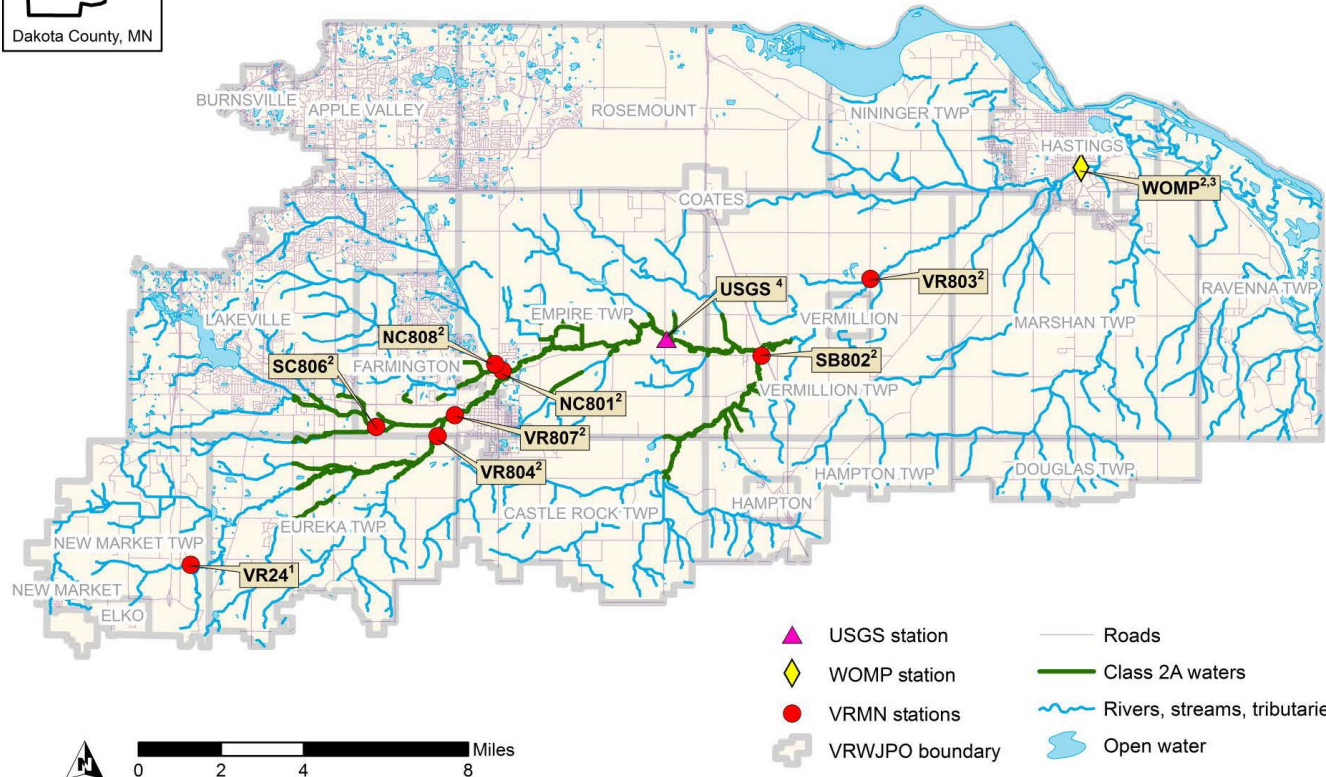
Kelly Perrine

Senior Watershed Specialist

Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization

Vermillion River Monitoring Network

Vermillion River Monitoring Network Chemistry and Flow Monitoring Stations



- 9 monitoring stations
- 8 SWCD owned, 1 Met Council owned
- Physical, chemical, biological and flow
- Snowmelt, baseflow and runoff



0 2 4 8 Miles

This drawing is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data located in various City, County, and State Offices and other sources, affecting the area shown, and is to be used for reference purposes only. Dakota County SWCD is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained. If discrepancies are found please contact the Dakota County Soil & Water Conservation District at 651.480.7777.

- ¹ Monitored by Scott Soil and Water Conservation District
² Monitored by Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District
³ Owned by Metropolitan Council
⁴ Owned by United States Geological Survey

2024 Report – New Look

North Creek Subwatershed

2024 Activity Summary

- Water samples were collected monthly from March (snowmelt) through October at NC801 and NC808
- Water level monitoring equipment was installed at NC801 and NC808 by Dakota SWCD staff
 - Continuous water level and temperature readings are collected at 15 minute intervals

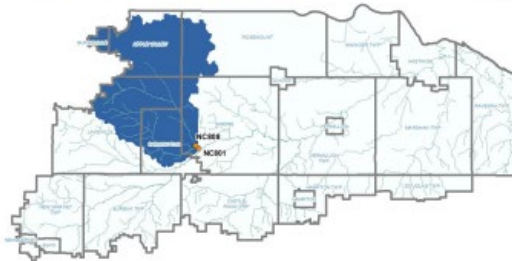


Monitoring Sites

- NC801
 - North Creek at Hwy 3 (DS)
- NC808
 - North Creek at Hwy 3 (US)

Topography and Land Use

- Relatively flat to gently rolling
- Residential with some agriculture, commercial, and industrial



Field Data - Temperature, Dissolved Oxygen, Transparency, Conductivity, pH

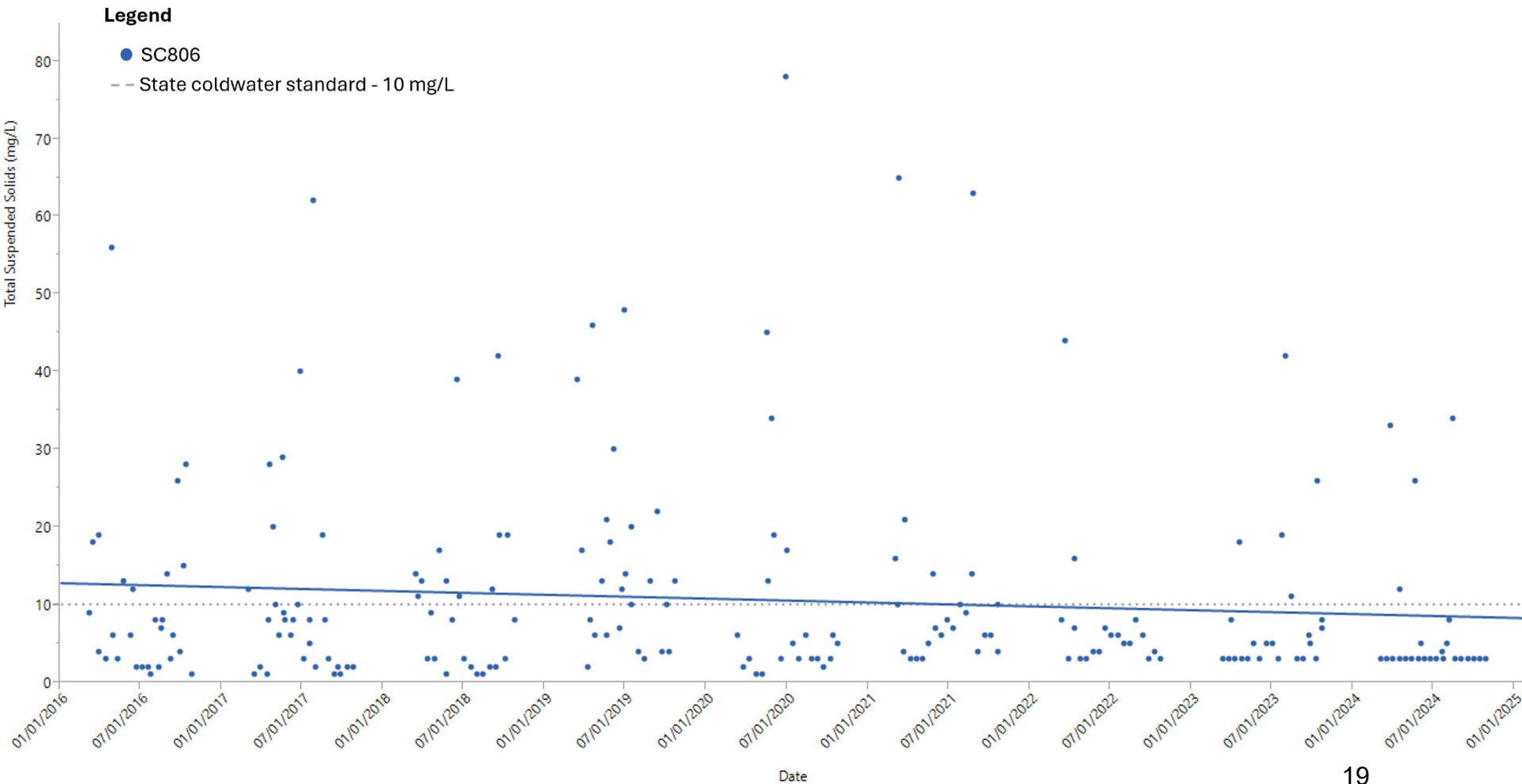
Water quality data were collected at NC801 and NC808 during all flow conditions from March to October, 2024. **On most occasions, field parameters fell within the desired ranges.** Dissolved oxygen (too low at both sites), transparency (reduced for both sites), and conductivity (exceeded at both) were issues identified during runoff events.

Parameter	Desired Range	NC801 Range	NC808 Range
Temperature (°C)	Less than 30	1.84 - 20.81	1.84 - 20.99
Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L)	Coldwater - Greater than 7.0	4.41 - 12.39	4.42 - 12.53
Transparency (cm)	Greater than 25	25 - 100	25 - 100
Conductivity (µS/cm)	Less than 698	394.7 - 829	275.1 - 852
pH (S.U.)	6.5 to 9.0	7.33 - 8.2	7.21 - 8.23

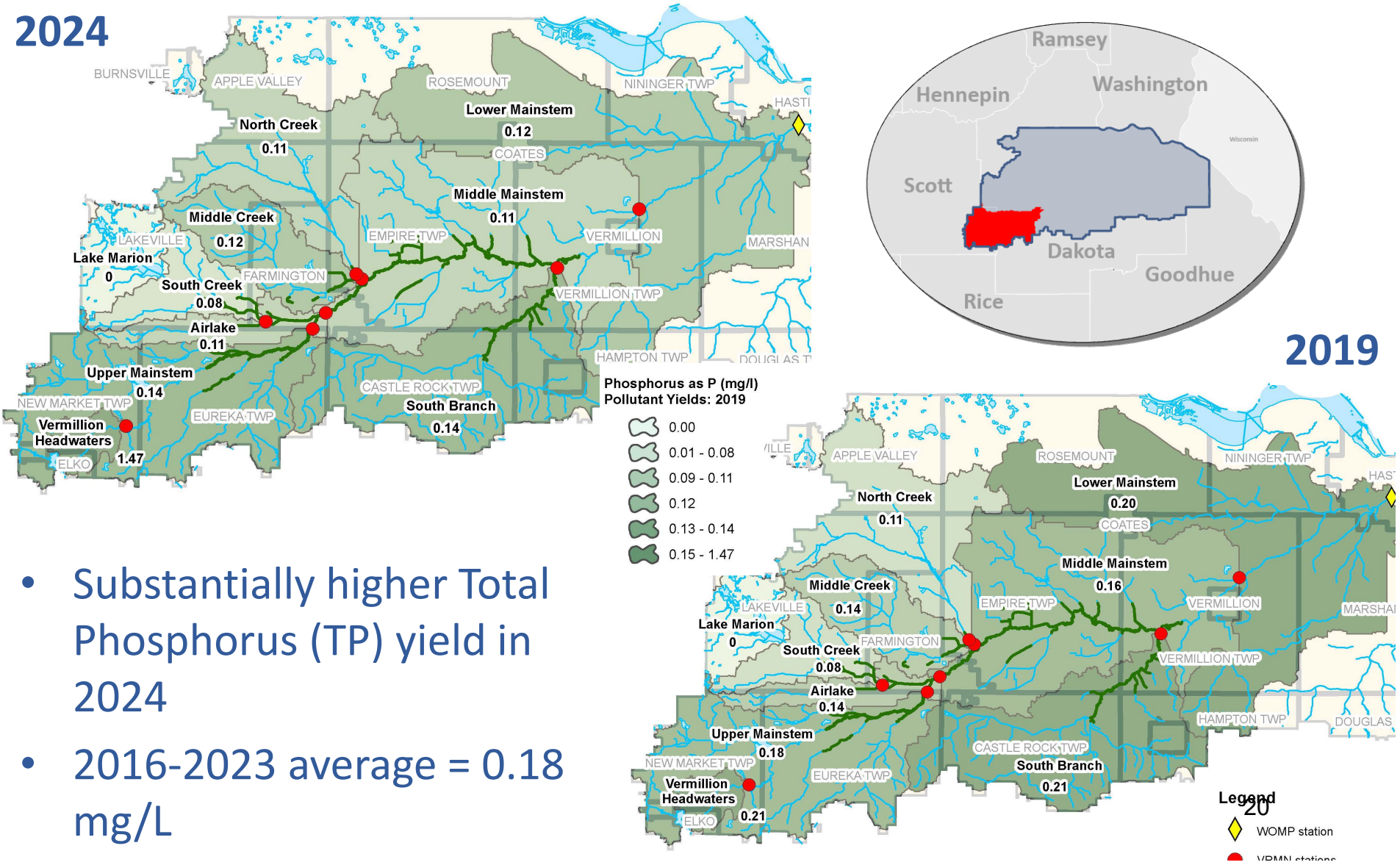
- Concise report
- Data in graphic format
- Easily digestible
- User friendly
- Organized according to subwatershed

Takeaways – South Creek Improvement

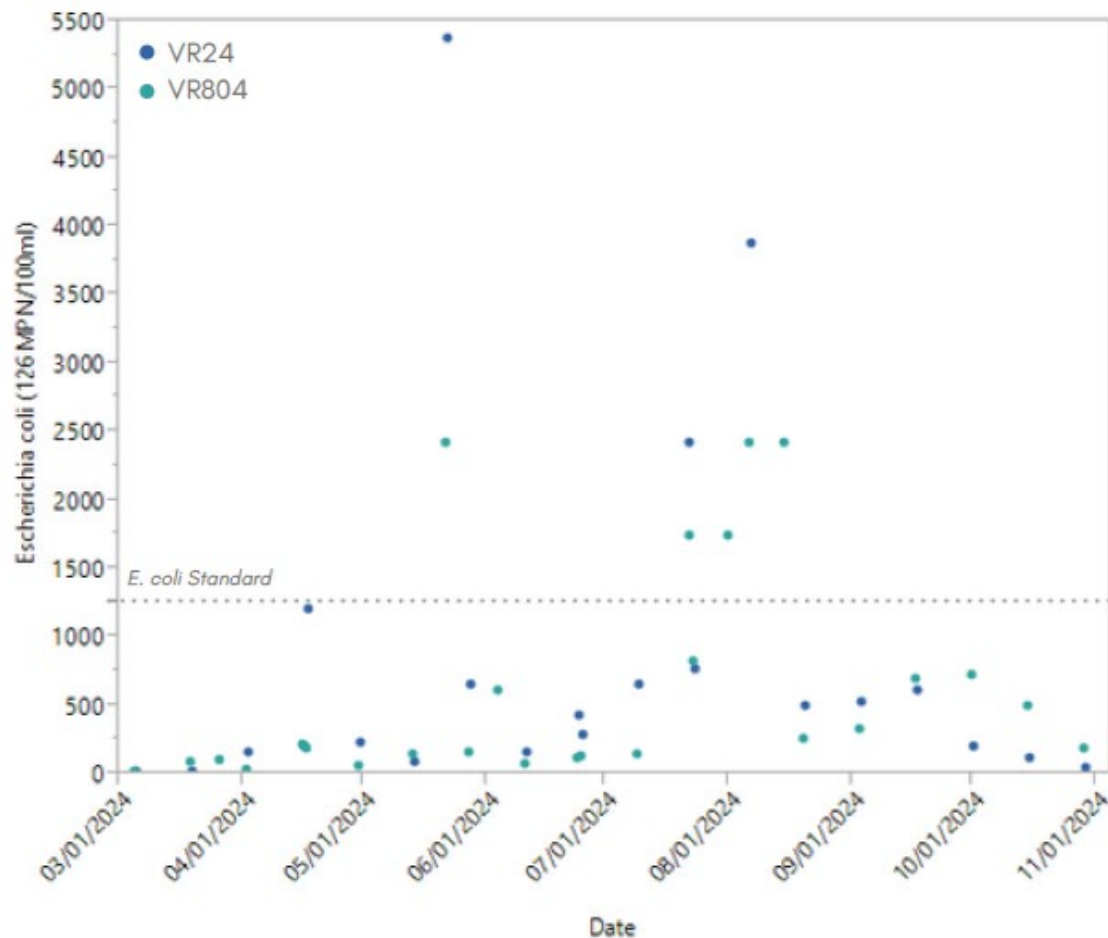
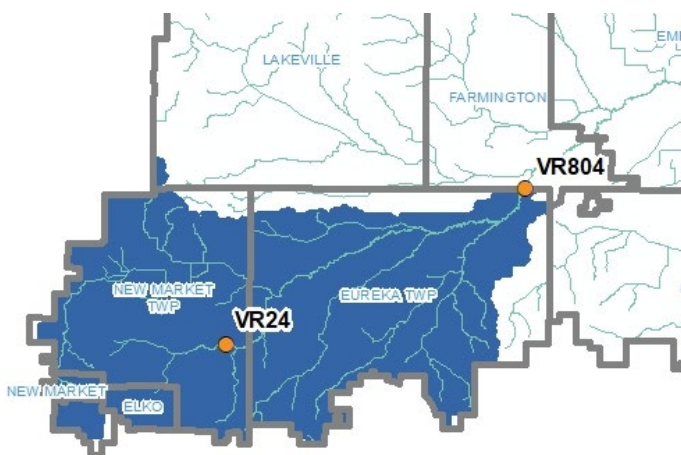
South Creek Subwatershed Total Suspended Solids Monitoring: 2016-2024



Takeaways – Vermillion Headwaters TP

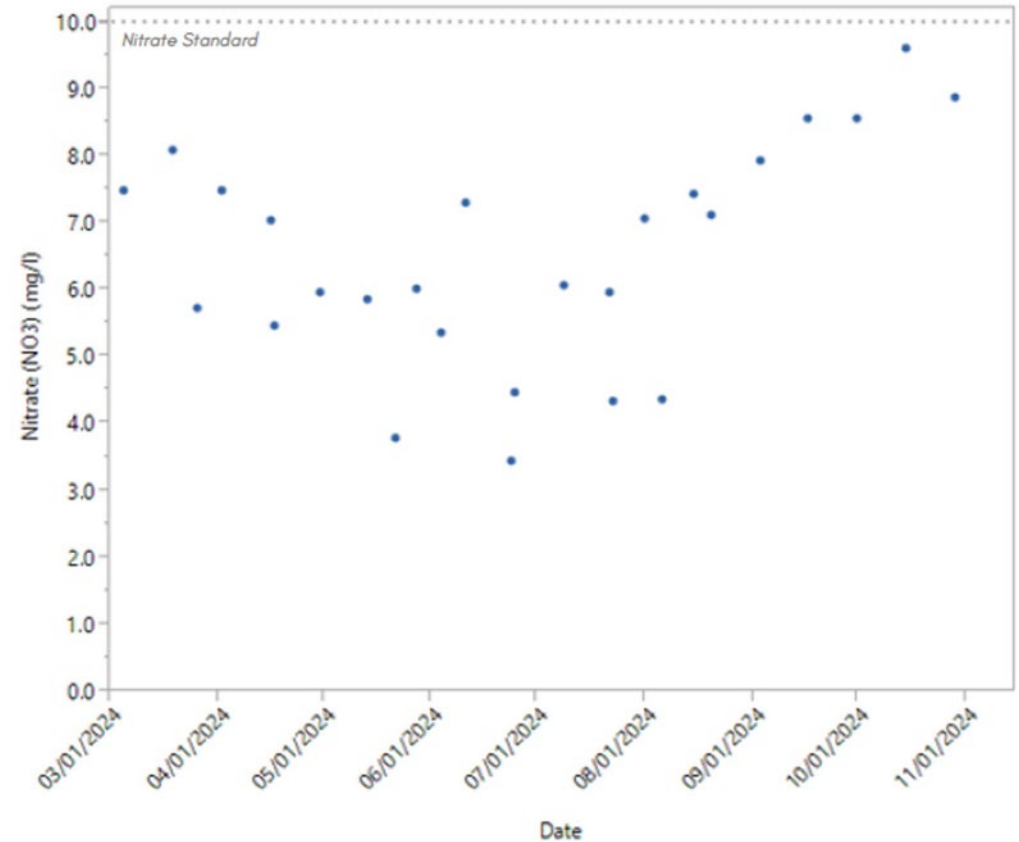
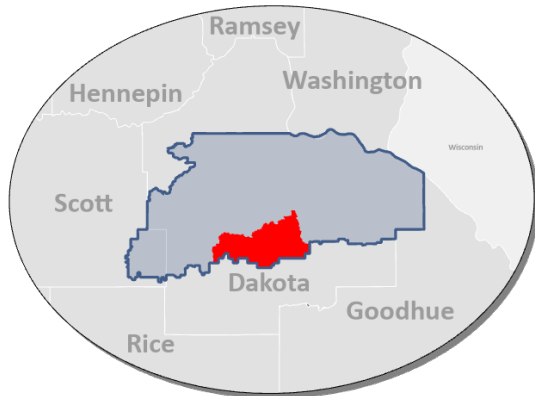


Takeaways – Vermillion Headwaters E. coli



VR24 Outliers - 11,120 MPN/100 mL on March 26, 10,810 MPN/100 mL on June 4, 30,760 MPN/100 mL on August 1, and 86,640 MPN/100 mL on August 15.

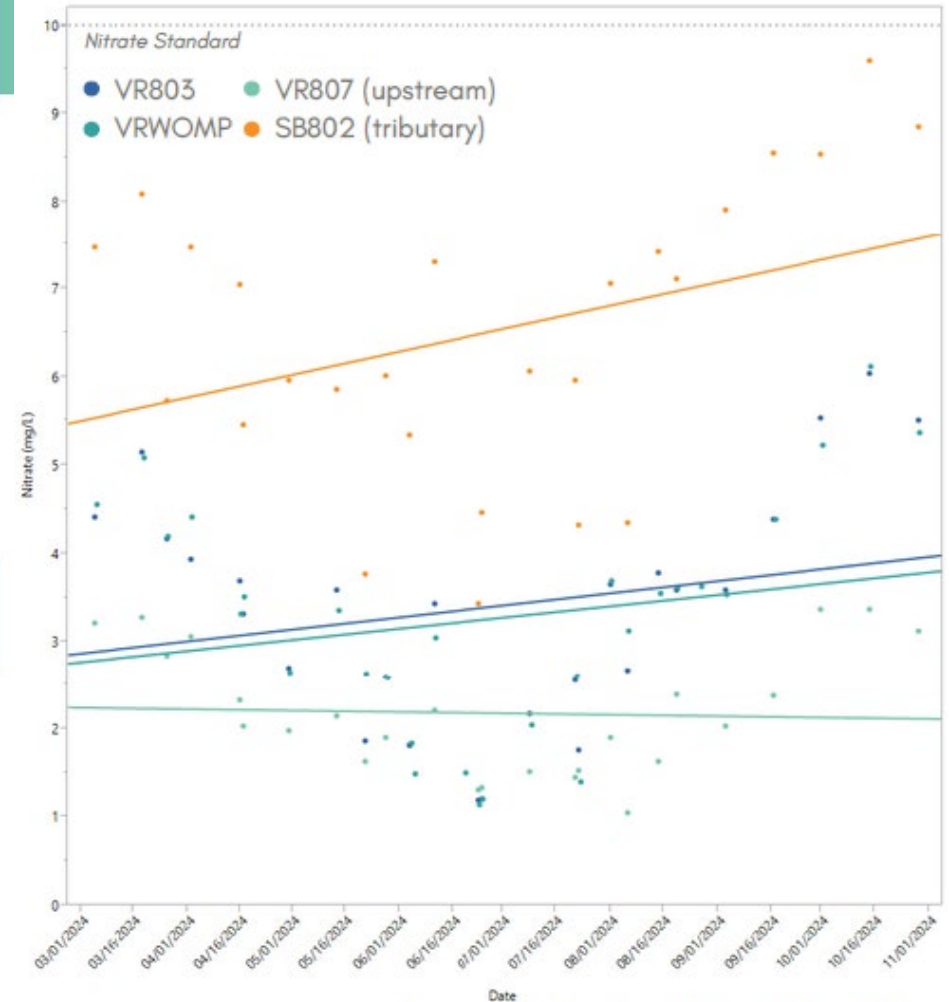
Takeaways – South Branch Nitrate



South Branch Vermillion River

- Upstream subwatersheds average less than ½ South Branch

Takeaways – Lower Mainstem Nitrate



Lower Mainstem Vermillion River

- Downstream reaches impacted by South Branch

State of the Watershed

Subwatershed	TSS Trend	TP Trend	NO3 Trend
Upper Mainstem	↑	↓	↓
South Creek	↑	➡	↑
Middle Mainstem	➡	➡	↓
North Creek	↑	➡	➡
South Branch	↑	↓	↓
Lower Mainstem	↑	➡	↓



= Improving



= Stable



= Worsening

Questions

Kelly Perrine

Senior Watershed Specialist

Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization

(952) 891-4002

Kelly.Perrine@co.dakota.mn.us

8b. Discussion of Climate Resiliency Issue Category in Draft 2026-2035 Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan

Meeting Date: 06/26/25
Item Type: Regular-Information
Contact: Kelly Perrine
Telephone: 952-891-7002
Prepared by: Kelly Perrine

**PURPOSE/ACTION REQUESTED**

- Staff are seeking Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board (VRWJPB) input regarding the Climate Resiliency Issue Category within the draft 2026-2035 Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan (WMP).

SUMMARY

In accordance with the requirements of MN Rule 8410 and MN Statute 103B, Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization (VRWJPO) staff are continuing to develop the WMP with planned adoption in early 2026. At the May 22, 2025, VRWJPB meeting, the VRWJPB was asked to provide direction relating to prioritized actions found within the WMP's implementation table; specifically, financing, timing of implementation, and whether implementation actions addressed WMP goals. During the implementation table review, Commissioner Holberg provided feedback relating to the Climate Resiliency issue category terminology. Terminology was identified as being potentially problematic due to changing directives within the federal government and the potential for repercussions in future initiatives and funding provided by the federal government due to the chosen issue category terminology.

Staff reviewed funding allotments that took place during the 2016-2025 Vermillion River WMP. During the implementation timeframe thus far, the VRWJPO has been awarded \$6.53 million in grant funding, with none coming from federal funding sources. The primary source of funding from 2016-2025 was sourced from Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) grants, which are made possible by the Clean Water Fund (CWF). The CWF receives dollars by way of the Minnesota Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment (Legacy Amendment), which is funded from Minnesota sales tax revenue.

In 2021, the MN Legislature included the Next Generation Climate Act (NGCA) in the state budget, which established funding for several climate resiliency grants administered by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). Funds were to be guided by the Climate Action Framework, created by state agencies and approved by the established Climate Change Subcabinet. The NGCA was again included in the 2023 State budget.

Staff met with MPCA and BWSR representatives to discuss climate resiliency terminology in the draft WMP as it relates to grant eligibility. At this time, BWSR identified nine FY23-25 state funded grants it administers that specifically identify "climate change resiliency," "climate resiliency," "mitigate climate change impacts," or "measurable climate impact improvements," within grant ranking criteria. BWSR staff indicated that, if the WMP does not include items relating specifically to the verbiage found above, the Grant Program and Policy Committee may find future applications less competitive. In addition, MPCA staff reported that, to qualify for the seven grants that are a part of the MPCA Local Climate Action Grant Program, "climate" must be referenced in an adopted watershed management plan. Further details relating to funding availability, including amount of dollars available versus amount of dollars requested by grant applicants, and ranking criteria terminology (used to determine grant competitiveness) according to individual grants can be found in Attachment A.

Staff are seeking VRWJPB input regarding inclusion of the Climate Resiliency Issue Category within the WMP.

EXPLANATION OF FISCAL/FTE IMPACT

No fiscal impact.

Supporting Documents:

Attachment A: Climate Resiliency in State Grants

Previous Board Action(s):

RESOLUTION

8b. Discussion of Climate Resiliency Issue Category in Draft 2026-2035 Vermillion River Watershed Management Plan

Information only.

Attachment A. Climate Resiliency in State Grants

BWSR

Grant	Funding Available	Funding Requested	Funding Awarded
FY23 Multipurpose Drainage Management	\$800,000	\$645,041	\$800,000
FY23 Drinking Water	\$1,940,000	\$993,089	\$993,089
FY23 Projects and Practices	\$7,760,000	\$24,550,759	\$9,066,037
FY24 Multipurpose Drainage Management	\$1,900,000	\$3,556,000	\$1,900,000
FY24 Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program	\$3,560,000	\$8,000,000	\$3,560,000
FY24 Water Quality and Storage Grant	\$3,000,000	\$9,370,000	\$2,989,000
FY24 Drinking Water	\$1,740,200	\$1,514,200	\$1,482,000
FY24 Projects and Practices	\$6,960,800	\$22,002,644	\$9,287,612
FY25 Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program	\$3,560,000	\$8,000,000	\$3,560,000
FY25 Pollinator Pathways	\$1,100,000	\$3,200,000	\$1,100,000
FY25 Accelerated Implementation	\$3,195,943	\$2,325,114	\$1,323,386
FY25 Drinking Water	\$1,283,000	\$2,047,472	\$1,349,198
FY25 Projects and Practices	\$5,132,000	\$16,310,174	\$6,888,989

Ranking Criteria Relating to Climate Resiliency

- FY24: Multipurpose Drainage Management
 - *Applicants should evaluate the impacts that climate change (such as fluctuating precipitation patterns and drought) may have on the ability of the proposed project to meet objectives and whether the proposed project increases landscape resiliency.*
- FY25: Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program
 - *This cost-share grant program is focused on restoring and enhancing strategically located, diverse native habitat across Minnesota on conservation lands and natural areas to benefit populations of pollinators, beneficial insects and other wildlife species with declining populations and provide co-benefits of carbon sequestration, soil health, water quality improvements, and increased landscape resiliency.*
 - *The program also provides co-benefits of carbon sequestration, soil health, water quality improvements, and increased landscape and climate resiliency.*
- FY25: Pollinator Pathways
 - *Creating these pathways, by establishing deep rooted native vegetation will have climate resiliency benefits, increase biodiversity and provide other important ecosystem service*
- FY24: Water Quality and Storage Grant
 - *Practices must control water rates and/or volumes to protect infrastructure, improve water quality and related public benefits, and mitigate climate change impacts.*
 - *Applicants should evaluate the impacts that climate change (such as fluctuating precipitation patterns and drought) may have on the ability of the proposed project to meet objectives and whether the proposed project increases landscape resiliency.*
 - *The area of interest must be identified at the time of application and an explanation provided of the flooding issues, water quality concerns, or climate vulnerabilities at that location*
 - *Priority for funding will be given to projects that meet the following criteria...Practices that demonstrate reduction in flood potential, improvement of water quality, AND mitigation for climate change.*
 - *Measurable Outcomes: Applicant provides calculated results for peak flow reduction, water quality improvements, or measurable climate impact improvements and the methodology used for these calculations.*
- FY25: Accelerated Implementation, Drinking Water and Projects and Practices
 - *Applicants should evaluate the impacts that climate change (such as fluctuating precipitation patterns and drought) may have on the ability of the proposed project to meet objectives and whether the proposed project increases landscape resiliency.*
 - *If the project will have secondary benefits, specifically describe, (quantify if possible), those benefits. Examples: hydrologic benefits, climate resiliency, enhancement of aquatic and terrestrial wildlife species, groundwater protection, enhancement of pollinator populations, or protection of rare and/or native species.*

MPCA

- MPCA Climate Grant Specialist indicated that the word *climate* must be referenced in an approved watershed management plan to qualify for the below listed grants
- SWC = Stormwater, wastewater, and community resilience

Grant	Funding Available	Funding Requested	Funding Awarded
FY22 SWC Planning Grant	\$870,000	\$2,985,191	\$919,989
FY23 SWC Planning Grant: All Communities	\$395,000	\$1,307,738	\$425,194
FY23 SWC Planning Grant: Small Communities	\$350,000	\$1,149,981	\$444,805
FY24 Implementation Grant for Stormwater Resilience	\$35,000,000	\$51,539,908	\$33,107,044
FY24 SWC Planning Grant: All Communities	\$750,000	\$1,707,981	\$1,141,649
FY24 SWC Planning Grant: Small Communities	\$500,000	\$1,335,460	\$497,677
FY24 Local Climate Action Grants	\$2,300,000	\$1,594,858	\$1,361,971
FY25 Implementation Grant for Wastewater Resilience	\$10,000,000	\$17,253,094	\$13,544,654
FY25 Implementation Grant for Community Resilience	\$5,000,000	\$6,272,849	\$5,000,000
FY25 Implementation Grant for Stormwater Resilience	\$35,000,000	\$73,082,958	\$35,000,000
FY25 SWC Planning Grant: All Communities	\$750,000	\$2,000,000	\$779,555
FY25 SWC Planning Grant: Small Communities	\$500,000	\$2,302,474	\$1,421,810
FY25 Local Climate Action Grant: Planning	\$1,500,000	\$969,298	\$986,986
FY25 Local Climate Action Grant: Implementation	\$1,500,000	\$942,360	\$945,511

11. Visit to Future North Creek Channel and Crossing Improvement Project Site Immediately Following Meeting

Meeting Date: 06/26/25
Item Type: Regular-Information
Contact: Travis Thiel
Telephone: 952-891-7546
Prepared by: Travis Thiel

**PURPOSE/ACTION REQUESTED**

- Visit a future North Creek channel and crossing improvement project site immediately following meeting adjournment to observe the pre-project condition before construction starts. (attendance optional)

SUMMARY

Commissioner Wolf suggested the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board visit the site of a North Creek channel and crossing improvement project planned for construction in 2026. Staff have arranged the visit with the landowner at the project location. The goal of the visit is to better understand the issues facing North Creek at this location and upstream, and why this project is a priority. Staff will provide information about the site, issues, constraints, funding, design, and planned construction. The site is located near Minnesota Highway 3 and Chesterfield Way in Empire and can be navigated to using this Google Maps [link](#). Please wear boots or other appropriate footwear and bring insect repellent.

EXPLANATION OF FISCAL/FTE IMPACT

No fiscal impact.

Supporting Documents:

Attachment A – Project Fact Sheet – North Creek at Hwy 3

Previous Board Action(s):

RESOLUTION

11. Visit to Future North Creek Channel and Crossing Improvement Project Site Immediately Following Meeting

Information only.



Capital Improvement Project

Empire: North Creek Culvert Improvements at State Highway 3



Figure 1. Upstream end of the field access road culvert on North Creek slated for replacement. The photo demonstrates the sharp acceleration of the stream velocity as it enters the culvert.

The North Creek tributary of the Vermillion River runs through highly developed areas in the cities of Lakeville and Farmington, and portions of the creek are Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)-designated trout stream – a rare combination of circumstances. Preserving and improving aquatic habitat in this stream reach is one of the primary missions for the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization (VRWJPO).

Upstream of State Highway 3 in the City of Empire, existing creek crossings disconnect stream reaches and make them impassable by fish and other aquatic organisms. The creek is significantly over-widened and shallow in the project area due to erosion from high stream velocities, which limits available habitat.

The VRWJPO plans to reconnect the stream segments by replacing an undersized, perched culvert at a field access road with properly sized and placed box culverts and modifying an existing culvert at a residential driveway to deepen continuous stream flow. The intent is to reduce stream velocities and provide passage for fish and other organisms. This will be combined with natural stream narrowing and bank stabilization techniques to secure eroded stream banks and improve aquatic habitat. A Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) grant from the DNR will support this project.

Partners:

- Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Installation (anticipated):

- 2026

Location:

- Empire

Subwatershed:

- North Creek

Costs and Contributions (anticipated):

- VRWJPO: \$121,550 (cash), \$18,263 (in-kind)
- Conservation Partners Legacy Grant from DNR: \$500,000

Benefits:

- Replacing the perched culvert will provide access to deeper stream flows, narrower channels, and vegetated stream banks well-suited for fish and macroinvertebrate habitats and recreational opportunities.
- The project will complement other work done upstream, such as a remeander project near 190th St W and a concurrent culvert replacement near Denali Way.



Figure 2. Downstream end of the pipe culvert slated for replacement at the field road.



Figure 3. Downstream end of the culvert at the driveway crossing, which will be modified to deepen normal flow conditions.

A Conservation Partners Legacy grant from the Outdoor Heritage Fund, one of four funds established by the Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment, supports this project.

