



Scott Watershed Management Organization

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A Public Information Meeting will be held to present information on the Sand Creek Watershed Total Maximum Daily Load Investigation Study. The project will compile watershed information such as land cover, feedlot locations, geomorphology, drained wetland inventories, and erosion surveys, collect water quality monitoring data, and develop water quality models for Sand Creek, Cedar Lake and McMahon Lake Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDLs).

The WMO would like to invite you to a public information meeting scheduled for **Tuesday, February 19, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at the New Prague Library, 400 Main Street E., New Prague.**

Sand Creek Study

The Scott WMO was selected for a Clean Water Partnership Grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for the Sand Creek watershed. This project is a partnership between Scott County, the Scott Watershed Management Organization (WMO), Rice County, Le Sueur County, Scott SWCD, Le Sueur SWCD, Cedar Lake Improvement District, the Cedar Lake Sewer District and the Metropolitan Council. The project area consists of the Sand Creek watershed which covers portions of Scott, Rice, and Le Sueur Counties with about sixty percent of the area in Scott County as indicated on the map. The Sand Creek watershed drains 271 square miles, and is tributary to the Minnesota River. Drainage in the watershed is generally south to north with headwaters areas in Rice and Le Sueur Counties. Prior to discharging to the Minnesota River, the creek flows through Louisville Swamp, which is part of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

The project addresses water quality concerns of Sand Creek, Cedar Lake, McMahon Lake, and an unnamed tributary to the Minnesota River in Scott County. These water bodies are listed as impaired by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) on the Federal Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list as follows:

- Sand Creek from the mouth to confluence with Porter Creek is impaired for aquatic life due to turbidity and fish Index of Biotic Integrity (IBI).
- Unnamed tributary to Sand Creek (near Louisville Swamp) is impaired for aquatic life due to fish IBI.
- Cedar and McMahon Lakes impaired for recreation due to excess nutrients and impaired for aquatic consumption due to mercury.

The project will compile watershed information such as land cover, feedlot locations, geomorphology, drained wetland inventories, and erosion surveys, collect water quality monitoring data, and develop water quality models for Sand Creek, Cedar Lake and McMahan Lake Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDLs). A total maximum daily load is the amount of a pollutant that can be discharged to a public water and still have that public water meet its water quality standard for that pollutant. The project will involve the public and decision makers, and will complete draft TMDL studies for Cedar and McMahan Lakes. Cedar and McMahan Lakes are impaired due to excessive nutrients. The project does not address the mercury impairments since they are more regional in nature and are addressed by the MPCA's recently completed statewide mercury TMDL. The project will complete portions of TMDLs for Sand, and an unnamed tributary. The project will complete the following TMDL-related work regarding the turbidity listings for Sand Creek:

- Watershed and land use description/characterization
- Assessment of current loading, including seasonal variation and critical conditions (e.g., relation to flow and rain events)
- Characterization of point and nonpoint pollutant sources (using available data, previous studies, proposed field studies and modeling).

The meeting is intended to be an introduction to the study and will discuss details of the Sand Creek project. We're anticipating that the study will be complete in 2009, between now and then we will have additional public meetings to convey study findings and discuss implementation actions.