



1962: More than one million gallons of oil begin to spill onto a frozen Minnesota River from a broken pipeline in Savage. For over a month a steady stream of oil flows from the Richards Oil Company work site.

1967: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is established by the State Legislature, taking over authority from Water Pollution Control Commission with added air quality and solid waste authority.



1963: A 40-foot high soybean-oil storage tank collapses in Mankato, releasing a 3 million-gallon tidal wave of soybean oil. It flooded several blocks of the city near the junction of the Blue Earth and Minnesota rivers. The gooey wave also topples storage tanks and rail cars, releasing an additional half-million gallons of salad oil and other substances into the Blue Earth River.

Spring, 1963: By the end of March the ice begins to break up on the Minnesota River as oil flows into the Mississippi. Dead ducks start to turn up on the river's backwaters at the end of the month. When it is all over, the final toll for dead ducks is estimated at 10,000 with 177 muskrats, 26 beavers, along with uncounted numbers of fish, turtles and songbirds.

1972: The federal Clean Water Act begins the process of eliminating point-source pollution charges and helps build wastewater treatment systems across the nation. This investment, along with regulatory programs helps significantly reduce pollution from cities and industries discharging wastewater to Minnesota rivers.



1987: The United States Congress enacts Section 319 of the federal Clean Water Act to establish a national program to control nonpoint sources of water pollution. MPCA develops the Clean Water Partnership Program to address pollution associated with runoff from agricultural and urban areas.

1960

1970

1980

1992: Governor Carlson stands on the banks of the Minnesota River in Bloomington, holds up a jar of dirty river water and declares it is time to clean up the waterway. "Our goal is that within 10 years, our children will be swimming, fishing, picnicking and recreating at this river," stated Governor.

1994: MRAP



The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency brings together 30 stakeholders including citizens, farmers and government staff from across the basin to come up with ten recommendations on how to improve water quality.

1995: The State Legislature establishes the Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board (now called the Minnesota River Board) consisting of 37 county commissioners to coordinate the effort to improve water quality in the watershed. The board meets every other month to work with river-related funding and education programs.



1996: For two years in row, American Rivers – a national conservation group – places the Minnesota River on its list of twenty "Most Endangered U.S. Rivers" because of pollution.



1998: The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) – a federal-state effort – is launched to permanently protect critically sensitive land by taking it out of cropland production. More than 100,000 acres of ecologically sensitive riparian land was enrolled into permanent conservation easements across the entire Minnesota River Basin in just four years.



2000: The first State of the Minnesota River Report is produced to consolidate surface water quality monitoring information collected throughout the Minnesota River Basin by a variety of partners.



2008: American Rivers - a national organization - names the Minnesota River the 5th most endangered river in the United States due to the threat of a proposed \$1.6 billion coal-fired power plant and the potential drawdown of 3.2 billion gallons of water from Big Stone Lake and the Minnesota River.

1990

2000

2010