

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD OPEN THROUGH SEPT. 20 FOR POMME DE TERRE RIVER
WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT

For release: Aug. 21, 2007

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Marshall, Minn. - A public comment period begins Aug. 20 and continues through Sept. 20, 2007 on a report addressing water pollution in the lower portion of the Pomme de Terre River. The report, known as a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), focuses on pollution caused by fecal coliform bacteria.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has placed the lower section of the river on the state's impaired waters list for exceeding water quality standards. Monitoring data show that the section from Muddy Creek to Marsh Lake is impaired for fecal coliform bacteria. The water quality standard or maximum for fecal coliform bacteria is an average of 200 colony forming units (CFU) per 100 milliliters (mL) of water. Tests showed up to 4,000 CFU following several rain events.

The TMDL report is part of a nationwide effort under the federal Clean Water Act to identify and clean up pollution in streams, rivers and lakes. Every two years, states are required to submit a list of impaired waters to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). A TMDL report is a scientific study that calculates the maximum amount of a pollutant a water body can receive (known as the "loading capacity") without exceeding water quality standards.

Fecal coliform bacteria can affect human health and limit recreational use of the water. The TMDL report focuses on general allocations, or limits, imposed on all pollution sources necessary to meet water quality standards. Sources of bacteria include failing septic systems, unsewered communities, wildlife, and stormwater runoff from livestock feedlots and manure applied to cropland.

A public information meeting on the project was held May 10 at Pomme de Terre Park in Morris. After receiving public comments, the MPCA will revise the draft Pomme de Terre River TMDL report and submit it to the EPA for approval. Following EPA approval of the study a plan will be developed to reduce fecal coliform bacteria pollution in the river.

The Pomme de Terre River fecal coliform bacteria TMDL draft report is available on the Web at www.pca.state.mn.us/water/tmdl/index.html, or at the MPCA Marshall office, 1420 E. College Dr., Suite 900. Comments may be submitted to Muriel Runholt, MPCA, 1420 E. College Dr., Suite 900, Marshall, MN, 56258. For more information, contact Runholt at 507-537-7137, or Marilyn Bayerl, 320-283-6127.

Written comments must include the following:

1. A statement of your interest in the draft TMDL report;
2. A statement of the action you wish the MPCA to take, including specific references to sections of the draft TMDL that you believe should be changed; and
3. Specific reasons supporting your position.

More information on the state's impaired waters list and TMDL studies is available on the Web at www.pca.state.mn.us/water/tmdl/index.html, or toll-free at 1-800-657-3864.

Broadcast version

A Minnesota Pollution Control Agency report about pollution in the lower portion of the Pomme de Terre River is open for public comment August 20 through September 20. The report focuses on fecal coliform bacteria pollution from animal and human waste. For more information, go to the agency's Web site at www.pca.state.mn.us.

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The mission of the MPCA is to work with Minnesotans to protect, conserve and improve our environment and enhance our quality of life.