



US Army Corps
of Engineers
St. Paul District

Information Paper

Feasibility Study: Sunrise River Watershed Study, Minnesota



North Branch of the Sunrise River, Chisago County, Minnesota

Contact

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Location/Description

The St. Croix River in eastern Minnesota and western Wisconsin is considered one of the most pristine rivers in the Midwest. The National Park Service manages it as a National Wild and Scenic River. The St. Croix River provides valuable habitat and is home for one of two remaining populations of the federally endangered mussel, winged mapleleaf (*Quadrula fragosa*). It also has a large population of the endangered Higgins eye pearlymussel (*Lampsilis higginsii*). Unfortunately, the ecological well-being of the St. Croix River basin is threatened by many human-caused stresses, including habitat degradation, pollution, and other stressors.

This study focuses on comprehensive water resource management and planning for the Sunrise River watershed, a 381-square-mile subbasin of the St. Croix River watershed. The Sunrise River basin affects habitat not only in the Sunrise River, but also in the downstream St. Croix River. The Sunrise River basin is one of the major loading sources for sediment and phosphorous in the St. Croix River watershed. Study emphasis will be on habitat restoration or protection, water quality

improvement, watershed and land-use management, and other environmental problems and opportunities. The study will culminate in a watershed study report that will outline goals and objectives for key water resource issues and identify strategies for meeting these goals and objectives over the next 20 to 30 years.

Chisago County, Minnesota, is the non-Federal project sponsor. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is working closely with the sponsor to provide study assistance and guidance. Several other stakeholders are also participating in the study, including other local, State and Federal agencies. Actions performed under this study will benefit not only the Sunrise River watershed but also downstream habitat in the St. Croix River basin. Included are areas of the St. Croix River that harbor winged mapleleaf and Higgins eye mussels.

Status

The feasibility study was initiated in 2007 with the signing of the feasibility cost share agreement. The study has focused on collaboration with project sponsors to identify project needs and completion of project work by both the Corps and the sponsors. Baseline data collection has been completed and includes observations on streamflow, water quality, fish and macroinvertebrate diversity, invasive species and wetland areas. Watershed modeling also has been finalized. A draft report is scheduled to be completed early in 2013, with the final report completed soon after.

Authority

The study is authorized by Resolution of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the U.S. House of Representatives dated September 25, 2002. The proposed planning effort will complement the outputs from other Federal, State, and local initiatives and will be a cooperative effort with local interests, nongovernment organizations, and other State and Federal agencies.

Fiscal

All needed Federal funding has been received	\$445,000
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