



400 Court Ave P.O. Box 1051

Gaylord, MN 55334

**Spring 2016**

Vol. 13 Issue 2

# RIVER WATCHER NEWSLETTER

High Island Creek & Rush River  
Watershed 319 TMDL Project

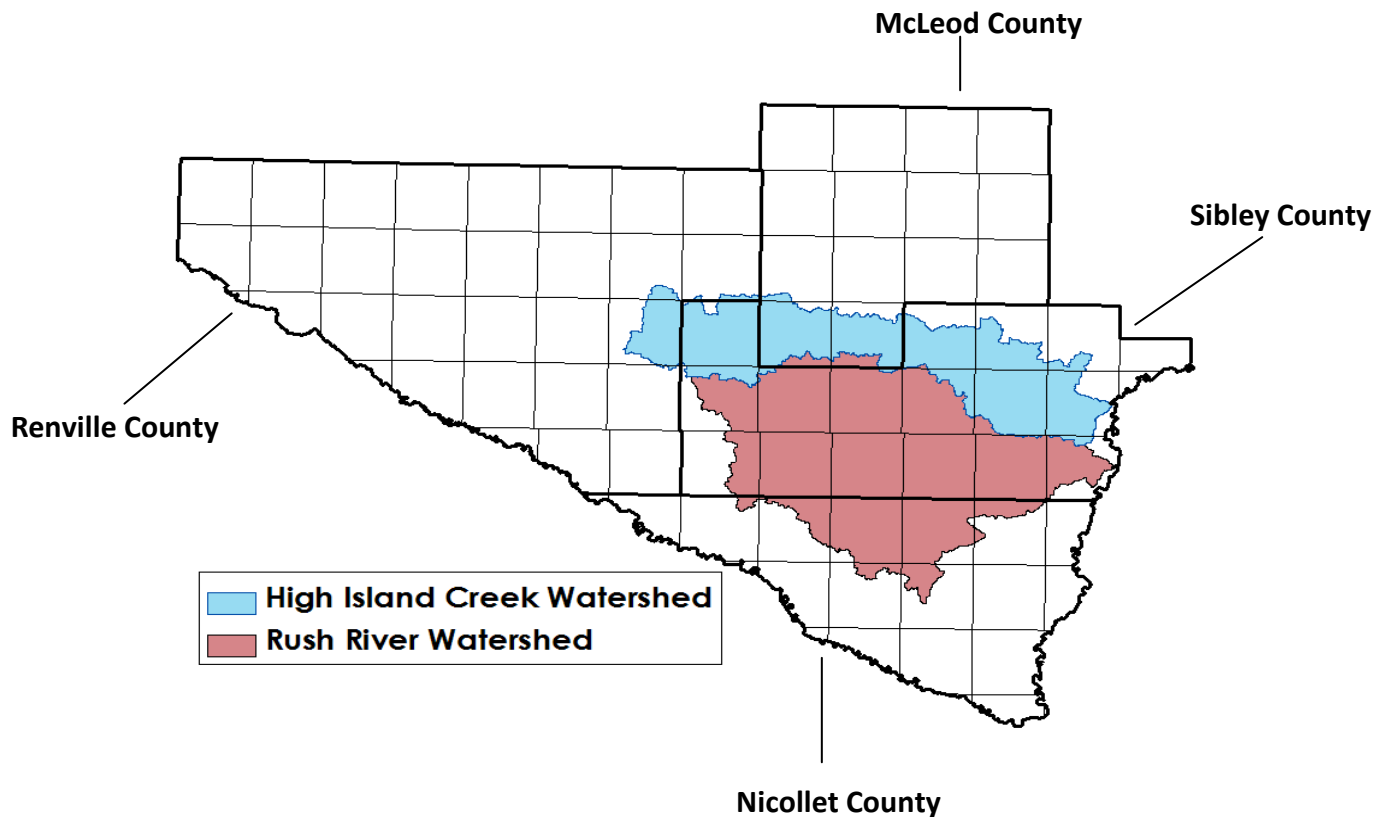
## Changing of Seasons

As seasons change many peoples thoughts begin to change as well. Some may think about their favorite hobby in the seasons ahead, others may think of tasks to complete or work to be done. As we change seasons this year consider conservation practices to improve water quality as well. Perhaps this is the year your neighbor or yourself tries something different to promote water quality improvements. Some ideas to consider this summer as we work toward harvest months are cover crops, extended buffer strips, alternative open intakes, and conservation tillage. Each of these practices offers a similar water quality improvement, to reduce the amount of sediment that enters our waterways. Cover crops, extended buffer strips, and open intake alternatives are unique that they entitle landowners within the High Island Creek and Rush River watersheds to an incentive or cost share option if the landowner so chooses. Cover crop implementation entitles the landowner to a \$30/acre incentive payment, buffer strips that enter a CRP 15 year contract entitle the landowner to a \$400/acre incentive payment, and open intake alternatives entitle the land owner to 75% cost share up to \$600/ alternative. Please consider taking advantage of these dollars while they remain available to you, these funds will expire and may not be available a few years down the road, therefore it is best to consider utilizing these funds as soon as possible. Get in contact with Coleton Draeger/ Watershed Coordinator @ 507-237-4050 or Ron Otto/Watershed Technician @ 507-237-5435 EXT.105 today for more details!



Pictured above two different open intake alternatives: left, a slotted riser placed on an open intake to slow direct flow; right implementation of a rock tile inlet, the open intake in this scenario is removed and replaced by coiled tile covered by rock, water filters through the rock and allows sediment to settle out of the water column prior to entering tile lines.

## Watershed Boundaries



### ATTENTION

#### SEPTIC SYSTEMS LOANS STILL AVAILABLE

**Don't forget: low interest loans for residents in the Rush River Watershed portion of Nicollet County, and the High Island Creek Watershed portion of McLeod County still have funds available to offer low interest Septic System Loans. Don't miss out on this great opportunity and stop by your local Environmental Services office in the respective county today to take advantage of these funds!**

**Funds Expire: 8/31/2016**

#### Attention Watershed Residents...

**Did you know that you can dispose of your household hazardous waste items for free!!!**

These items include, paint (latex & oil), stains, cleaners, garden chemicals, solvents, used oil & gas, adhesives, etc... Sibley County residents can dispose of their items at the McLeod County hazardous waste center or the tri-county hazardous waste center which is located at 1065 5th Avenue SE in Hutchinson. They are open every Tuesday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. year round. Farmers can also dispose of unused Ag chemicals by contacting Al Christensen at 507-381-9196.

# Buffers improve water quality

(This article was written by Minnesota Pollution Control Agency staff and was recently featured in MPCA's monthly Waterfront Bulletin)

Can we really see a difference in water quality in streams from sites where there are buffers compared to sites without buffers?

To answer this question, the MPCA looked at the quality of the buffers next to and upstream of more than 3,500 fish monitoring sites and 3,000 invertebrate monitoring sites across Minnesota. We focused on biology because that reflects conditions of water quality over time. Buffer quality was measured by calculating the percentage of the buffer area that was undisturbed by human activities.

## What we found

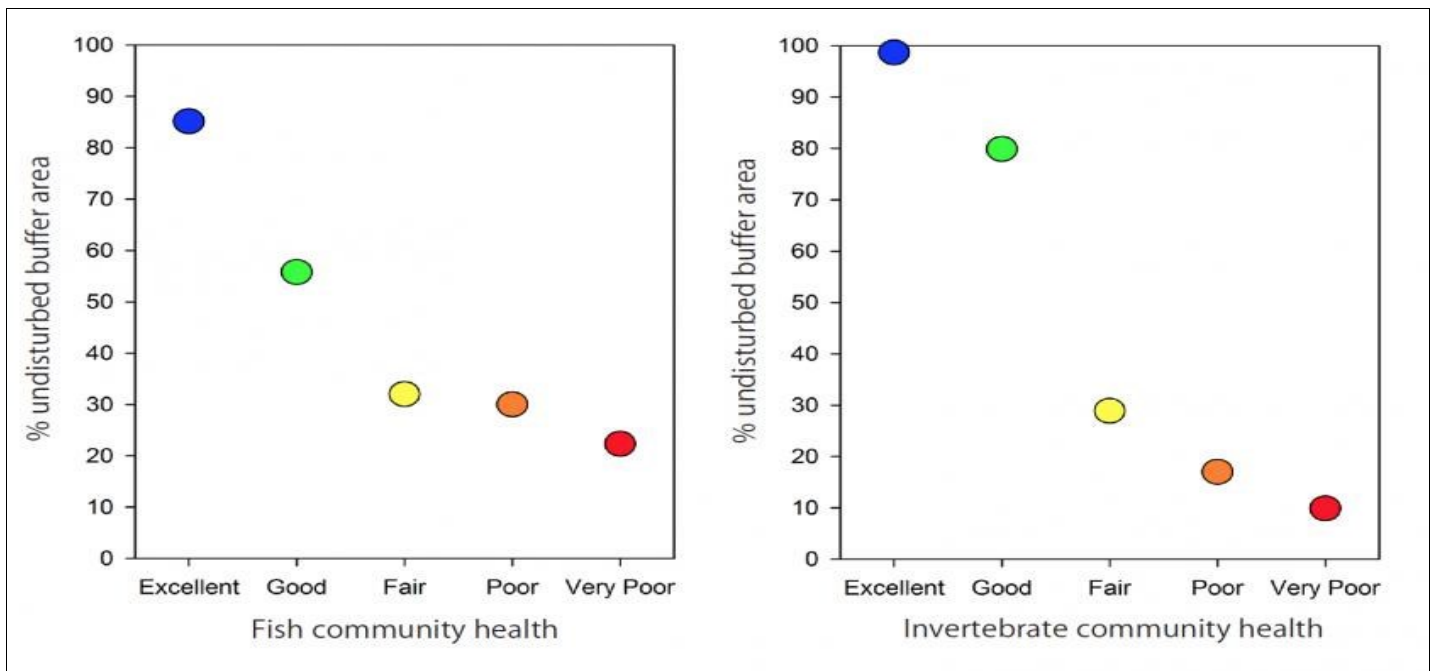
Our analysis of data and information clearly shows that buffers are important for clean water and healthy aquatic life (fish and bugs). And that the greater the percentage of stream channel that is buffered up-stream of a monitoring site, the better the health of the aquatic life. Watersheds with missing or disturbed buffers have less healthy fish and bug (invertebrate) communities.

The buffer zone is critical to protecting and restoring water quality and healthy aquatic life, natural stream functions and aquatic habitat due to its immediate proximity to the water.

On average, streams with:

- More than 85% intact buffers have excellent aquatic life
- About 50% – 85% intact buffers have good aquatic life
- Between 25% – 50% intact buffers have fair aquatic life
- Less than 25% intact buffers have poor or very poor aquatic life

We compared the buffer quality to the health of the fish and invertebrate communities at each site. The sites were grouped into “excellent,” “good,” “fair,” “poor,” and “very poor” categories based on the health of the biological community.





Sibley County Collection for...  
**Tires, Appliance & Electronics at the  
Sibley Co. Fairgrounds in Arlington**  
Thurs. June 23rd, 2016 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

**Appliances:** Must be empty. Washers, dryers, hot water heaters, stoves, furnaces, microwaves, dehumidifiers, refrigerators, freezers, & air conditioners.....\$10.00

**The contractor may reject any appliances that do not conform to their permit requirements.**

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**Tires:** Car/ light truck ..... \$2.00 each  
Semi/ small implement ... \$5.00 each  
Large Implement ..... \$10.00 each

*Charges are Double  
for Tires  
on Rims.*

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**NEW ITEMS ACCEPTED THIS YEAR!!!**



Kids Car seats will be FREE Disposal!!  
Mattress or Box Spring will be \$10 per item  
Mattresses & Box Springs WILL NOT be accept-  
ed if wet from being outside OR are deemed to be  
infested



**Electronics accepted:** TV, computer equipment, VCR/CD/DVD, stereo, copier, cell phone, boombox, fax machine, etc.

Electronics and TV's 19" or larger.....\$10.00

TV screens and items smaller than 19".....\$5.00

Computer hard drives w/ mouse & keyboards.....\$5.00



*Items cannot be dropped off before 9:00 a.m. on June 23rd  
Proof of Sibley County residency may be requested*



**Please note:** This collection is not open to commercial operators who deal in the sale and/ or repair of tires, appliances, or electronics.

*For more information call the Tri-County Solid Waste Office at  
507-381-9196 or visit us at [www.co.nicollet.mn.us/180/Tri-County-Solid-Waste](http://www.co.nicollet.mn.us/180/Tri-County-Solid-Waste)*



### **Low Interest Loans available for upgrading of Noncompliant Septic Systems**

Owners of a Subsurface Sewage Treatment System (SSTS) are eligible for low-interest loans to upgrade their non-conforming septic system. Furthermore, those in the High Island Creek Watershed are eligible for an additional \$500 incentive from the High Island Creek Watershed District. Check with your county contact for further details.

#### **To Be Eligible:**

- Applicant must be a property owner of a non-conforming septic system:
  - Discharge to the surface
  - Tiled to drainage or road ditch
  - Discharge to cesspool, seep-age pits or dry wells
  - Less than a 2-foot separation to seasonally saturated soil
  - Lack of a system
  - Does not meet setbacks to existing well

#### **Not Eligible:**

- Refinancing a previously installed system
- Septic for new homes
- Non-residential property
- Project started before design and loan approval
- Under court order to repair system

#### **Contact Information:**

**Sibley County:** Ron Otto  
Sibley SWCD office  
111 6<sup>th</sup> Street, P.O. Box 161  
Gaylord, MN 55334  
507-237-5435 ext. 105

**Nicollet County:** Mandy Landkamer  
Environmental Services Office  
501 South Minnesota Avenue  
St. Peter, MN 56082  
507-934-0250

**McLeod County:** Roger Berggren  
Environmental Services Office  
830 11<sup>th</sup> Street East, Suite 110  
Glencoe, MN 55336  
320-864-1214

**Renville County:** Diane Mitchell  
Renville County Government  
Services Center  
105 S. 5th Street, Suite 318  
Olivia, MN 56277  
320-523-3760

### **REMINDER**

As you begin to launch your boat at your favorite access this summer, don't let aquatic invasive species slip into the back of your mind. Lets work together to keep the waters within the High Island Creek and Rush River watersheds AIS free! Follow the 3 simple steps of Clean, Drain, Dry to participate in this effort!



**High Island Creek & Rush River**

**Watershed Implementation Projects**

**400 Court Ave, P.O. Box 1051**

**Gaylord, MN 55334**

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**Project Sponsor**

Sibley County

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Environmental Services of  
Sibley, Renville, McLeod &  
Nicollet Counties,  
University of Minnesota  
Extension Service,  
High Island Creek Water-  
shed District,  
Natural Resource Conser-  
vation Service

**Attention High Island Creek Watershed Residents:**

Landowners and renters within the High Island Creek Watershed District must obtain watershed district permits or file notification forms before tiling, ditching, dredging, filling or otherwise altering the natural drainage of an area. Wetlands and stream courses may be protected under the USDA Farm Program, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Army Corp of Engineers or Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act programs.

Protect your legal status and farm program benefits. Before beginning drainage work, contact Al Kerber—Watershed Ditch Inspector @ 320-510-1783. Failure to obtain a permit may result in a fine of \$500 or more.

**Sponsors:**

Cities of Arlington, New  
Auburn, Gaylord, Win-  
throp, Gibbon & Lafayette,  
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This newsletter is sponsored by the High Island Creek & Rush River Watershed 319 TMDL Project. This publication is issued quarterly and is funded through the 319 grant program from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and various local and state organizations.

Both Projects are equal opportunity organizations and employers. Questions and comments can be directed to: Coleton Draeger

**Watershed Grants Coordinator / Phone: (507) 237-4050**