

Le Sueur County Environmental Services

NEWSLETTER

April 3, 2025

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2025 Le Sueur County Lakes Water Sampling

Le Sueur County Environmental Services will continue to partner with area lakes to test lake water conditions and assess issues. Water sampling season runs from May to September. You can still sign up for sampling efforts throughout the sampling season, even if you missed a month or two!

The process for sampling is relatively streamlined. In the spring, the County contacts RMB Environmental Laboratories and requests a set of coolers with the sampling bottles. Once the County receives these bottles, we reach out to our samplers to come pick up their coolers. On a scheduled day of the month, the samplers go out and collect water in the two provided sample bottles. The cooler is brought into our office, we give you your cooler for the next month, and we complete the rest for you! We drive the coolers up to the lab in Burnsville and get restocked so everything is ready for next month.

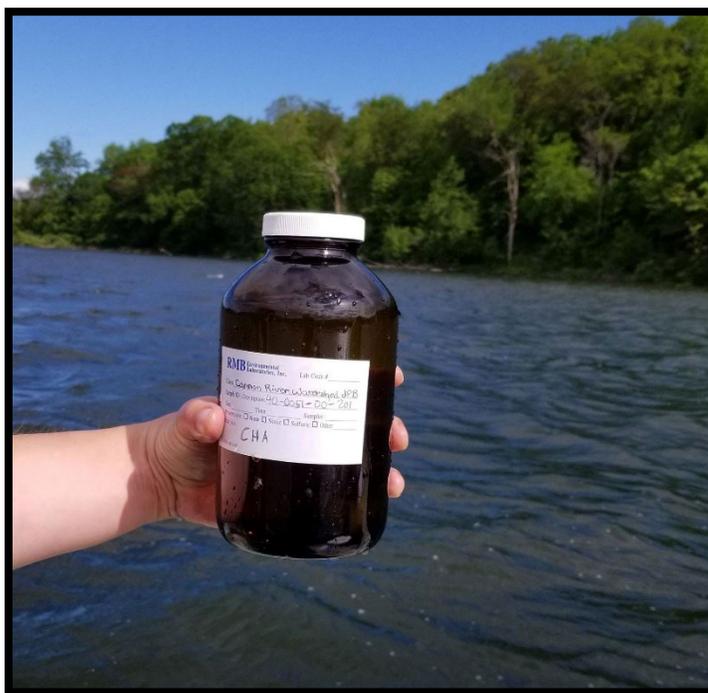


Figure 1. Lake Water Sample. Photo Credit: Le Sueur County

RMB Labs keeps a database on their own website, and also reports the results to MPCA at the end of the season. Data can be viewed at <https://lakes.rmbel.com/>.

The lakes that have already signed up this year include: Frances, Volney, Tetonka, East Jefferson, and German lake. We have about five more lakes that may be interested in sampling this year.

Le Sueur County is hoping to continue to sign up more lakes! If you or someone you know lives on a lake and is willing to sample in the summer, feel free to contact **Trevor Rudenick** at trevor.rudenick@lesueurcounty.gov or 507-357-8556 to get set up for next year

Middle Minnesota River-Mankato Watershed Monitoring Efforts

Le Sueur SWCD and Le Sueur County have partnered for monitoring efforts in the Middle Minnesota River-Mankato Watershed. These monitoring efforts are due to the State of Minnesota entering into its second round of developing the Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies Report. This report assesses conditions within a watershed and provides recommendations on how to protect and improve. As part of developing this report, water resources, both lakes and streams, are monitored and sampled for different water quality parameters.

We are in our second year of monitoring efforts for this watershed. Lake Emily and Shanaska Creek will be sampled in 2025. Lake Washington and Scotch Lake were contracted to only be sampled in 2024.

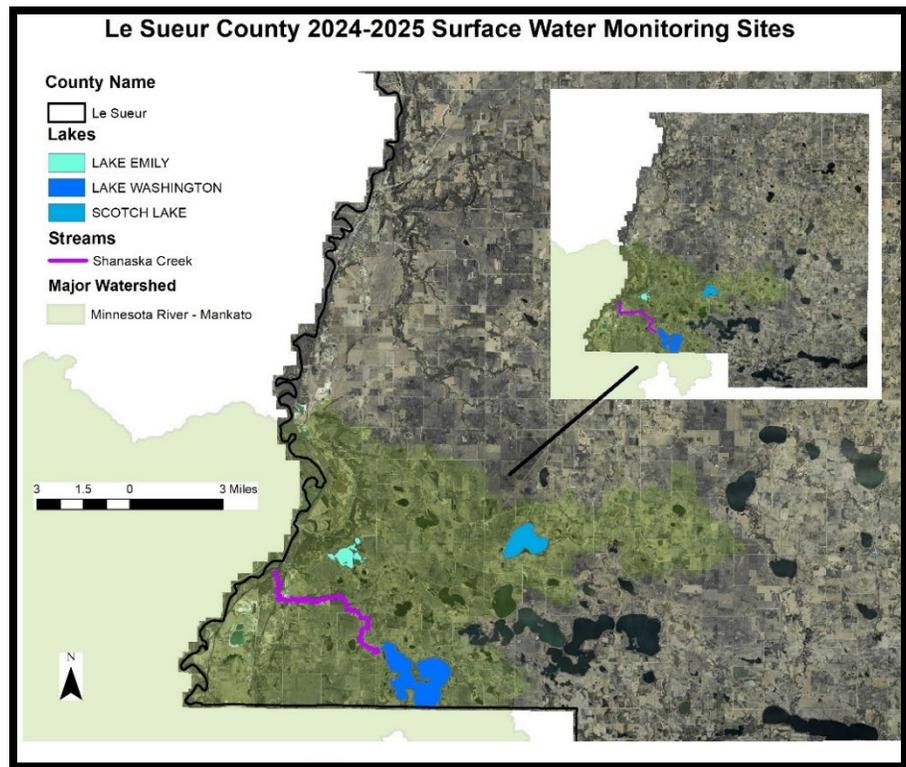


Figure 2. Map of Monitoring Site for Middle Minnesota River-Mankato Watershed.
Photo Credit: Le Sueur County



Figure 3. Shanaska Creek May 2024.
Photo credit: Le Sueur SWCD

Lower Minnesota River- Watershed

Monitoring Efforts

Le Sueur SWCD and Le Sueur County have partnered for additional monitoring efforts within the County for the Lower Minnesota River Watershed. These efforts are very similar to the Middle Minnesota River Mankato Watershed and are also a result of the State of Minnesota entering into its second round of developing the Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies Report to assess the health of resources and conditions within the watershed.

Both lakes and streams will be included as part of this monitoring effort. Lakes will be sampled to assess Total Phosphorus, Chlorophyll A, and Water Clarity. Clear Lake is the only lake that will be sampled within this watershed. The Lake is contracted to be sampled both in 2024 and 2025. Streams will be sampled to assess Total Phosphorus, Dissolved Oxygen, Total Suspended Solids (Sediment), Bacteria, water clarity, and pH. Forest Prairie Creek, Le Sueur Creek, and Unnamed Creek 761 Near Henderson will be sampled.

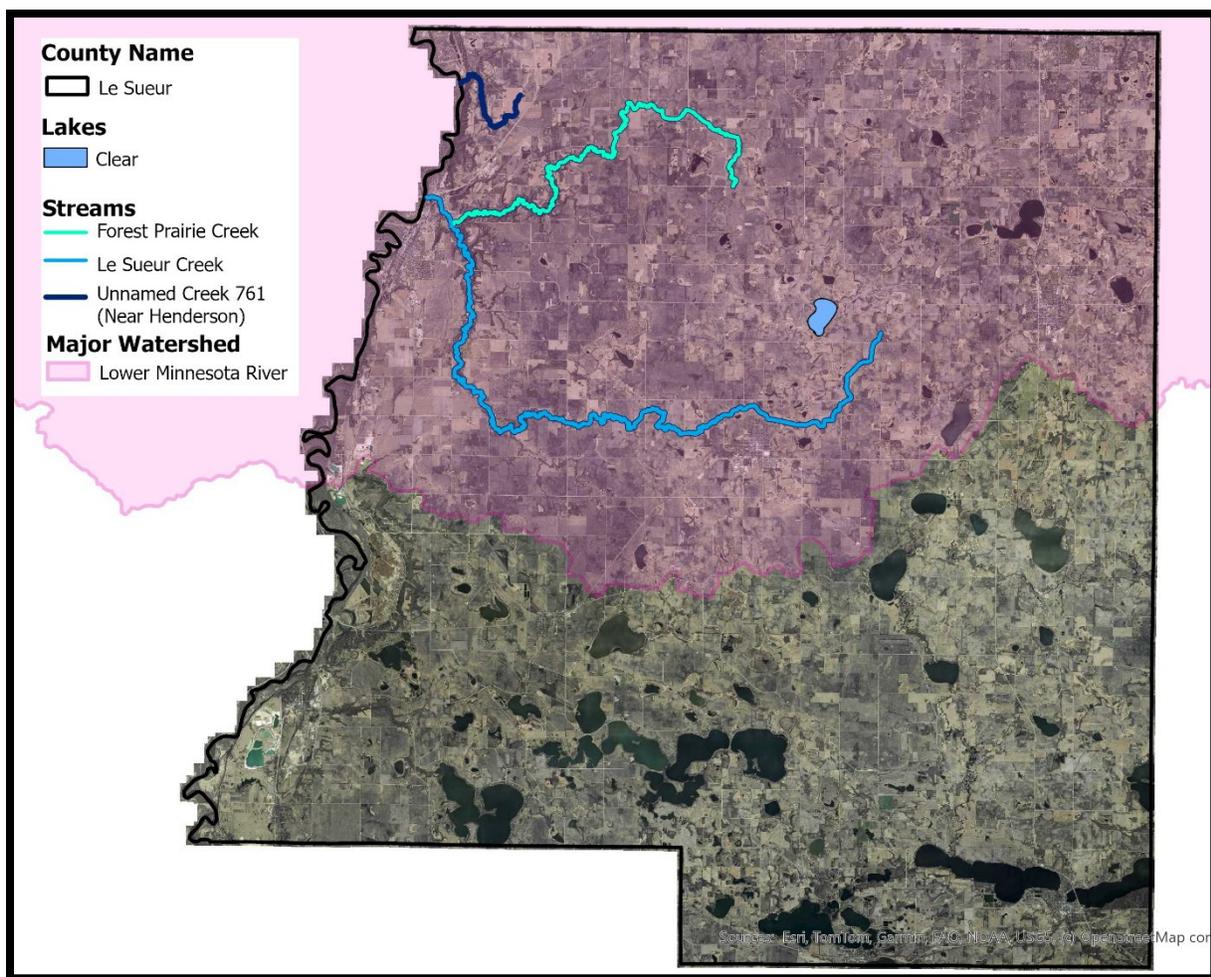


Figure 4. Map of Monitoring Site for Lower Minnesota River Watershed. Photo Credit: Le Sueur County

Le Sueur County Water Testing Clinic

Le Sueur County Environmental Services Department has partnered with the Le Sueur County Soil and Water Conservation District to host a Spring Water Testing Clinic on **Tuesday, April 22nd** from **9:00am-5:30pm.**

There are two different tests available:

- Nitrates
- Coliform Bacteria

Each test will be \$17.00.

A water test order form with payment is required before picking up your water testing kit. Kits may be picked up any time, but an appointment is required. There are a limited number of kits, and they will be available on a first come first serve basis.

The water testing clinic will help raise awareness within the community about testing your drinking water regularly in order to protect your health!

If you would like to print off a copy of the water test order form, or learn more about the clinic, please visit the following website: <https://www.co.le-sueur.mn.us/684/Water-Testing>.

You may also contact Holly Bushman at holly.bushman@lesueurcounty.gov or 507-357-8540.

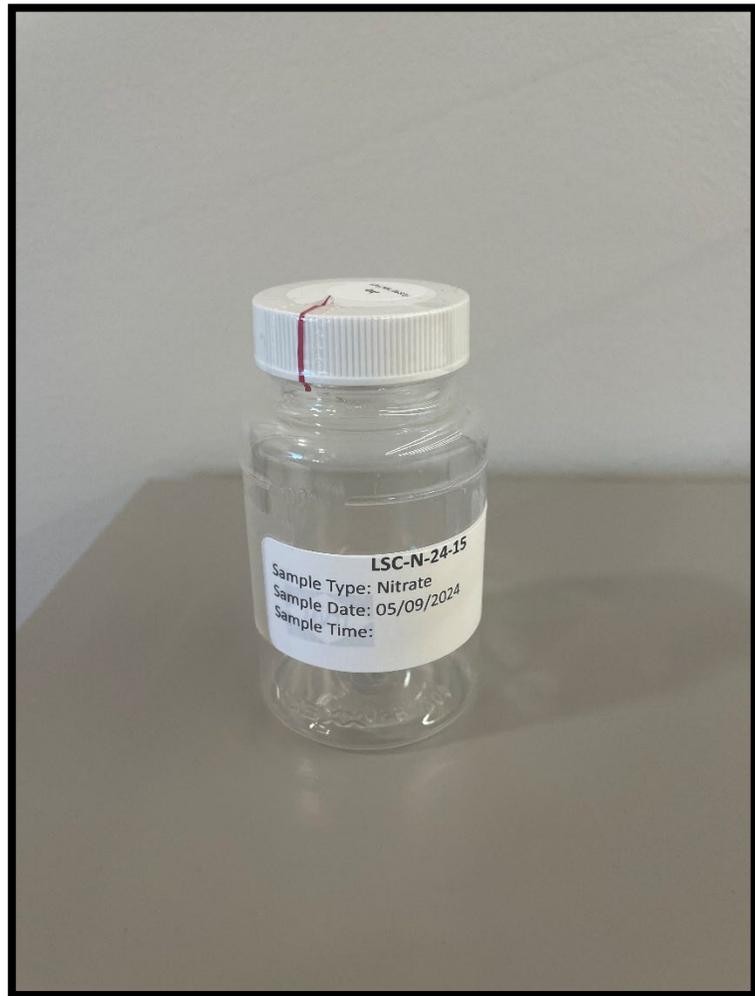


Figure 5. Water Test Bottle. Photo Credit: Le Sueur County

Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Organization Native Planting Cost-Share

As a friendly reminder, the Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Organization is offering cost-share for Native Plantings for Shoreland Owners.

Project Requirements: The project must be located within the Cannon River Watershed and within 300 feet of a Lake.

Cost-Share Available: \$500 is available for each parcel for a planting project that is a minimum of 150 square feet.

If you would like to learn more, please visit the Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Organization webpage: <https://www.cannonriverwatershedmn.gov/costshareincentives>.

If you would like to speak to a local staff member, please contact Trevor Rudenick at trevor.rudenick@lesueurcounty.gov



Figure 6. Native Shoreland Planting Cost-Share Flyer. Photo Credit: CRWJPO

Le Sueur County Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update

COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE & ZONING CODE UPDATE

Le Sueur County, MN



WHAT IS VISION 2050?

The Le Sueur County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan is undergoing an update in order to better serve and guide the county's growth. As one of the oldest counties in Minnesota, Le Sueur County aims to create a plan that balances its rich historical past and resources, while growing its tax-base with forward-looking strategies. This plan will serve as a physical guide and policy framework for county staff and decision-makers, shaping land use and development in Le Sueur County over the next 25 years. In parallel to the Land Use update, the County is also updating its zoning code.

These two documents work well to be updated together because:

- Land use policy and zoning regulation alignment
- Cohesive framework for development
- Regulations that support the overall vision for the county

Together, the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Zoning Code Update for the foundation of VISION 2050.

PROJECT GOALS

-  **GUIDE GROWTH**
-  **ALIGN REGULATIONS**
-  **REPRESENTATIVE ENGAGEMENT**

TIMELINE

- PHASE 1: FALL 2024**
This phase will engage the community! The project team will gather input on existing conditions and identify issues and opportunities in the area.
- PHASE 2: SPRING 2025**
This phase will present the draft plan and seek public feedback.
- PHASE 3: SPRING 2025**
This phase will update the plan based on feedback heard in the second phase. It will also support the approval process.

LEARN MORE & STAY INFORMED!

Learn more about the project and sign up for updates by scanning the QR code or visiting: bit.ly/LSVision2050
Sign up for text updates by texting "VISION 2050" to 507-357-5557



Figure 7. Comprehensive Land Use Plan & Zoning Code Update Flyer. Photo Credit: Bolton & Menk Inc.

Le Sueur County Environmental Services 2024 Annual Report

The Environmental Services Department for first time has developed an Annual Report! The purpose of the annual report is to provide a detailed summary of the work that our department completed for that specific fiscal year. Our office manages many different programs including: Planning and Zoning, Septics, Feedlots, Solid Waste, Shoreland, Water Management, Aquatic Invasive Species. Additionally, we assist with the County Drainage Program. This is a way for our department to inform stakeholders about the work we do!

If you are interested in viewing the 2024 Annual Report, please visit the following webpage: <https://www.lesueurcounty.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6679/2024-Le-Sueur-County-Environmental-Services-Annual-Report>.

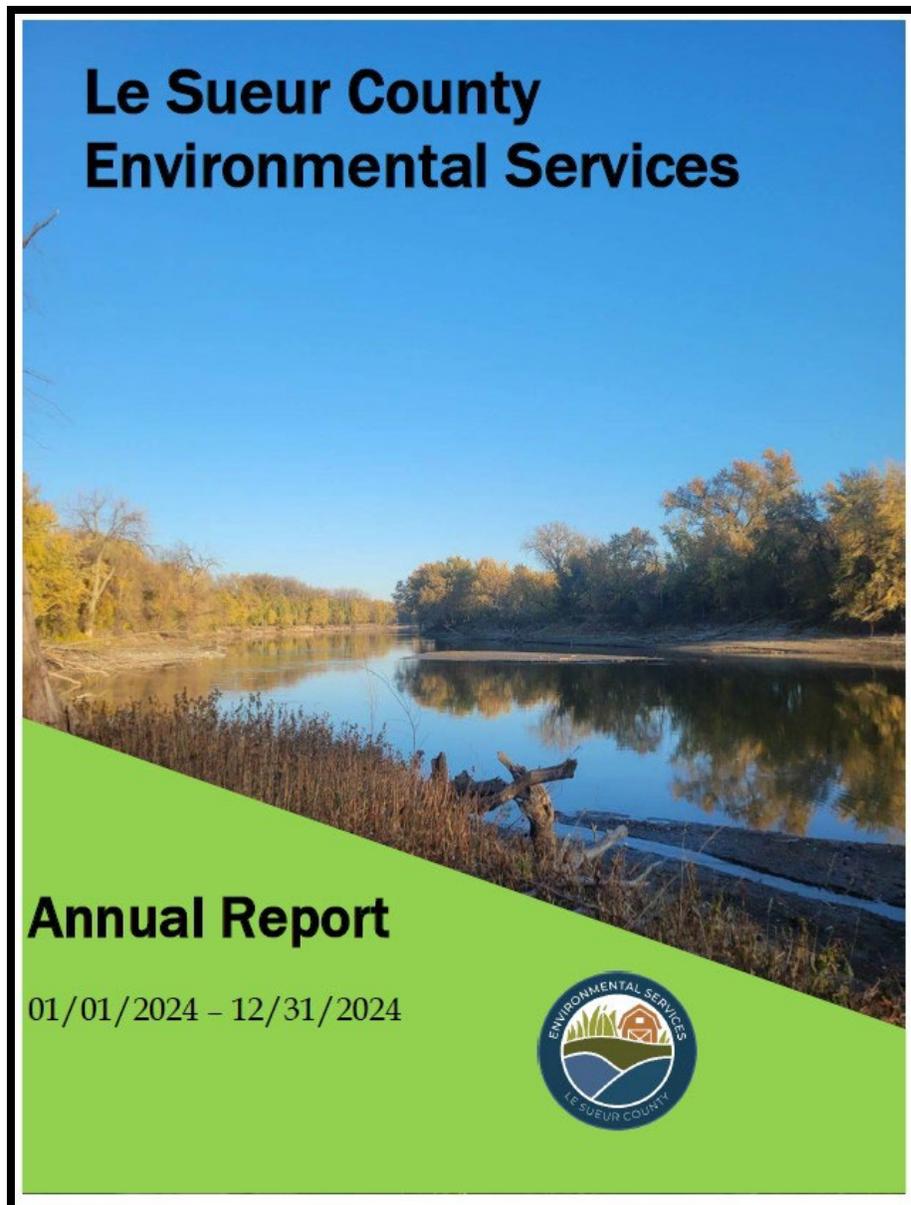


Figure 8. Le Sueur County Environmental Services Annual Report Cover Page.
Photo Credit: Le Sueur County

Minnesota Duty Officer Program

Our office often receives reports of environmental or public health incidents. While this is important to report to your local office, residents should also call the Minnesota Duty Officer. Locally we do not have someone on call in the Environmental Services Department to respond to incidents outside of working hours.

The Minnesota Duty Officer program allows residents to call in to request assistance for concerns or issues that are **only** related to environmental issues or public health concerns. **There is always someone on call!** Please call immediately and do not wait to report the incident.

When you call the Minnesota Duty Officer, please provide as much detail as possible about the incident (date, time, location, details about what you are seeing, etc.). This really helps State Agencies and as well as Local Agencies handle the situation in an efficient and effective manner.

If there are any reports that are submitted to the Minnesota Duty Officer located within Le Sueur County, locally we will be notified by the Duty Officer.

Examples of incidents that are commonly reported include:

- Hazardous material spills
- Pipeline breaks or leaks
- Natural Disasters
- Water Quality Concerns-Smells in water and strange substances in water
- Derailments

To learn more about this program, please visit the following webpage:

Minnesota Department of Public Safety

<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/bca/bca-divisions/investigative-services/additional-investigative-services/mn-duty-officer-program>.

To report an incident please call: 1-800-422-0798 or 651-649-5451



Minnesota Native Plant

Wild Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)

Wild Columbine, also referred to as Red or American Comlumbine, is a perennial, that is a part of the Ranunculaceae (Buttercup) family.

This species grows anywhere from 1 to 3 feet in height. The leaves are compound and have groups of 3 leaflets that are arranged alternately on the stem. They are very distinct compared to other native plant species. The only other species that have similar leaves would be Early Meadow Rue.

The inflorescence (flower head) is comprised of a cluster of showy red and yellow flowers that hang like a bell and clearly display the yellow stamens that hang below the bell shaped flowers. The size of the flower is about 1-2 inches long. Wild Columbine blooms from May to June and is an important early blooming species.

This plant can tolerate many different types of soil conditions but prefers well drained soils.



Figure 9. Wild Columbine Compound Leaves. Photo Credit: Holly Bushman



Figure 10. Wild Columbine Flower Head-Petals and Stamens. Photo Credit: Holly Bushman



Wild Columbine can tolerate full shade, semi shade, and sunny areas. This species is commonly used in shady areas as it is difficult to find a diversity of plant species for shade. You'll find this species thriving in a variety of woodland edges, woodlands, steep slopes, and bluffs.

Wild Columbine is great for pollinators! Hummingbirds and other insects that have long tongues favor this species!

Figure 11. Wild Columbine Bell Shaped Flowers. *Photo Credit: Holly Bushman*



Figure 12. Wild Columbine in Wooded Area. *Photo Credit: Holly Bushman*

Non-Native Plant

Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*)

Yellow Iris is a perennial aquatic plant that is a part of the Iridaceae, (Iris) family. This species is native to Asia and Europe was brought into the United States as an ornamental plant.

Yellow Iris grows any from 2 to 5 feet tall. The leaves on this species are very long, thick, and shaped like a sword. The leaves are arranged in clusters at the base of the plant and can display different shades of green in color.

The inflorescence (flower head) has 2-3 flowers on one stalk. Each flower contains shorter petals in the middle and larger, drooping petals on the outside. The outside petals have brown markings (as seen to the right). The flower is deep yellow in color and blooms from May-July.

This species thrives in wet and mesic soil conditions. Yellow iris prefers partial sun to full sun areas. You'll find Yellow Iris thriving within wetlands, marshes, ditches, and along shorelines.

This species can outcompete native vegetation and can create dense mats which then become a monoculture. Controlling this species is important in maintaining biodiversity. The two different types of effective treatment options to control this species is mechanical removal (digging/handpulling) and applying a chemical treatment. If you are removing Yellow Iris by hand, please be careful in making sure to get all of the roots out!

Please note that there are multiple Iris Species that can be observed. Many of the iris species are nonnative, but Minnesota does have two native species: Northern and Southern Blue Flag Iris!



Figure 13. Yellow Iris Inflorescence. Photo Credit: Nancy Lowenstein, Auburn University



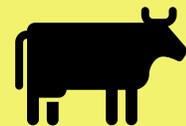
Figure 14. Yellow Iris along a shoreline. *Photo Credit: University of Minnesota Extension*



Figure 15. Yellow Iris within a wetland area.
Photo Credit: Katy Chayka-Minnesota Wildflowers

Interesting Fact:

Yellow Iris is toxic to livestock and other animals!



Contact Information

Environmental Services Department

Planning & Zoning, Feedlots, Solid Waste, & Septics

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Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Vacant-District Conservationist

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

Alan Gleisner-Area Hydrologist

Phone: 320-753-0344

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To see which DNR staff is the Area Hydrologist for your region, please click on the following link:

https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/area_hydros.pdf

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Jeff Flory-Aquatic Invasive Species Specialist

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