



# THE CEDAR RIVER PROJECT

IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE'S  
UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER  
INITIATIVE

2018  
SUMMARY

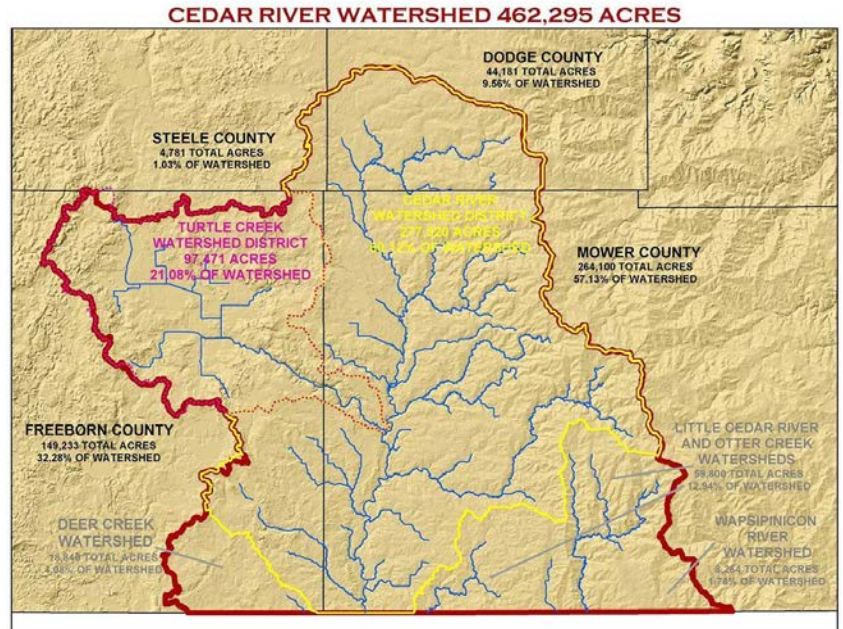
# OUR GOAL

SAFE, FISHABLE, SWIMMABLE WATER THROUGHOUT THE WATERSHED AS CALLED FOR BY THE CLEAN WATER ACT PASSED 46 YEARS AGO. THE CEDAR RIVER IS DESIGNATED AND PROMOTED AS A WATER RECREATION ROUTE.

**IT SHOULD BE SAFE TO USE IT AS SUCH.**

# OUR FINDINGS

- **1700 homes' septic compliance is unknown** in the Cedar, Upper Iowa, Root and Wapsipinnicon River watersheds.
- During 2017 and 2018, **43** volunteer stream monitors drew over **580** samples from **83** sites across the Cedar River watershed and tested them for **e-coli, an indicator of fecal contamination.**
- Limited DNA testing indicated at least three sources for the fecal contamination: **swine, cattle and human.**
- **In Dobbins Creek, Rose Creek and other locations both in Mower and Dodge County, 13/15 tested positive for human e-coli contamination. Swine DNA was found in the majority of water samples. Cattle was found in approximately half.**
- Human health risks of E-coli include vomiting, nausea, fever, diarrhea and stomach ache, upper respiratory illnesses, as well as rash, eye ailments, earaches including pain and infection and infected wounds (EPA, 2012)



**67%** of the samples had e-coli contamination which exceeded the acceptable MN State Human Health Standard for human contact.

- After major rainstorms, we consistently found **extremely high e-coli readings** on most streams and tributaries at **5X, 10X, 20X or more of the standard.** This indicates to us that the rain is flushing e-coli on the land, and in tile lines and ditches into the streams.
- We have reason to believe that **our results are reflective of the conditions of the other streams and rivers** of our county and region.

**WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE HEALTH OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS WHO ENJOY OUR STREAMS, RIVERS AND LAKES, AND REQUEST AN URGENT EFFORT BY ALL MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY TO ADDRESS THIS AND OTHER RELATED SOURCES OF POLLUTION.**



## OUR REQUESTS

- **Mower County should immediately notify the estimated 1700 home owners across the county with questionable sewage disposal** that they will be required to verify that their systems are up to standards, and if not, to bring them up to today's standards for the good of the community.
- **Mower Co. SWCD should provide resources** to work with small, unregulated cattle feeding operations to encourage best practices around waterways.
- Request that **Hormel Corporation and the Cedar River Partnership take a lead** on addressing the contamination on hog rearing and related manure spreading
- Encourage these same farms to **participate in annual soil and water conservation district educational workshops.**
- Prioritize **homes along both north and south Dobbins Creek** because both the Hormel Nature Center and Eastside Lake are water recreation areas of high use by our children.
- **Provide public assistance for lower income individuals** to comply with this necessary upgrade which protects us all.
- We request that **all homes** throughout the county be required to be in **septic compliance within a 5 year window.**



