



2005 Targeted Watersheds Grants: Vermillion River Minnesota

WHY IS THIS WATERSHED SPECIAL?

The Vermillion River is located near the urban area of Minneapolis/Saint Paul, Minnesota. At 335 square miles, the rural and suburban watershed is the largest in the seven-county metropolitan area. It is experiencing typical problems posed by growth and development including an increasing volume of runoff, yet it remains a world-class trout stream. According to Trout Unlimited, the Vermillion River is the only remaining world-class trout stream in a major metropolitan area in the United States.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

The Vermillion River faces the same problems as most urban rivers: increased turbidity, thermal loading, and high fecal coliform concentrations. The EPA Targeted Watersheds Grant will address:

- Increased flow volume resulting from more impervious surfaces, agricultural drainage, and greater point source discharges.
- Increased thermal loading, as a result of point sources discharges and increasing amounts of impervious surface.

RESTORATION ACTIVITIES

The Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization (VRWJPO) will use the Targeted Watersheds Grant funds to address the flow volume and thermal loading issues in the watershed. They will accomplish this by:



Scientists routinely gather data and conduct research on the Vermillion River and its tributaries. The grant will enhance the already-extensive monitoring network to help identify the critical functions of the watershed that exist in different locations.

- Identifying critical tradable watershed functions and creating a common currency and regulatory framework in which to implement the trading system.
- Establishing infiltration and shading requirements to preserve the cold water in-flows to the Vermillion River to protect the trout fishery
- Setting uniform regulatory standards and criteria to support market trading, including recommending changes to ordinances, rules and zoning to incorporate ecological functions.
- Augmenting the existing water quality monitoring network throughout the watershed to gauge improvements, establish a baseline, and evaluate the effects of this project on future watershed functions.



A STRONG PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE

The Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization brings together government, academia, and non-profit organizations to help improve Midwestern trout streams. Partners include:

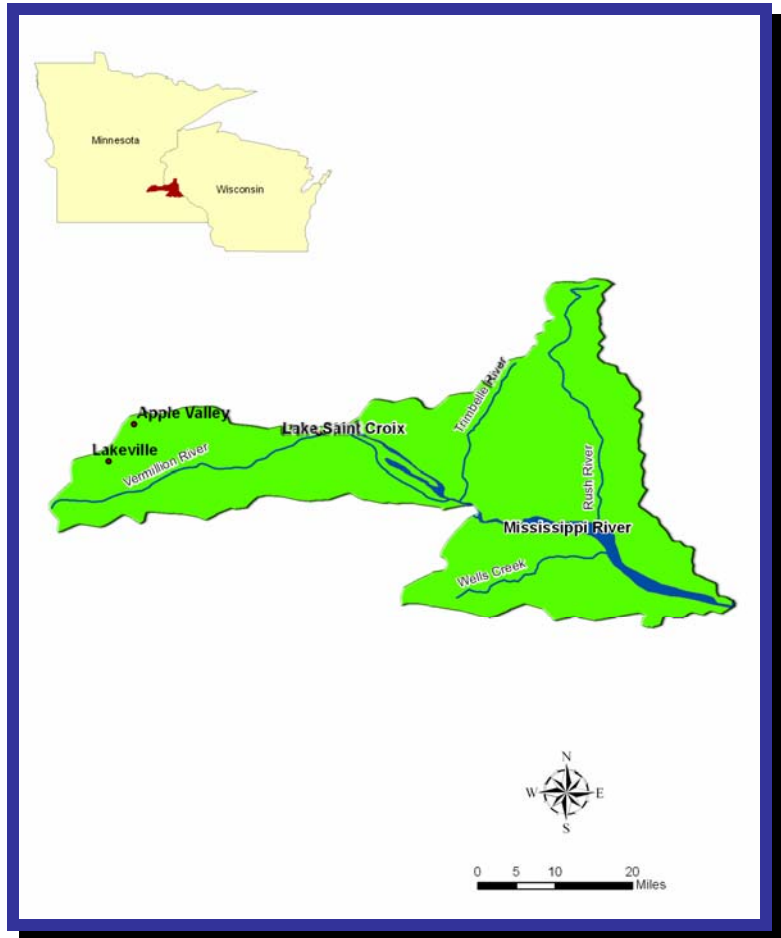
- Applied Ecological Services
- University of Minnesota, Department of Applied Economics
- University of Minnesota, Department of Civil Engineering
- Dakota and Scott Counties
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Cities and Townships of the Vermillion River Watershed
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- Metropolitan Council

EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grants

EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grants program is a competitive grant program designed to encourage collaborative, community-driven approaches to meet clean water goals.



Fast-paced growth increases surface water runoff and the risk of water resource contamination. It also decreases the amount of water infiltrating into the ground, thereby reducing groundwater recharge.



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The Vermillion River's temperature is near the upper limit of the thermal regime required to sustain the existing healthy trout population.