

Watershed Newsletter

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The Otter Tail River Watershed

The Otter Tail River originates in Elbow Lake in northern Becker County and the White Earth Reservation and flows south through Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge, pine forest, wild rice lakes, and tamarack bogs. It then enters a mosaic of large and small lakes, deciduous forests, and farmland. Major lakes along the river include Big Pine, Rush, and Otter Tail. As the river flows south, lakeshore development and agricultural practices increase.

The Pelican River begins north of Detroit Lakes and flows through the Pelican River Chain of Lakes, including Detroit, Sallie, Melissa, Pelican, Lizzie, and Prairie. The Pelican River then joins the Otter Tail River near Fergus Falls, which then flows west to meet the Bois de Sioux River near Breckenridge, MN and forms the Red River of the North.

Plan Progress

The Counties, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and Watershed Districts in the watershed began a voluntary state-funded planning process in 2021 to prioritize where to work and what to work on in the watershed.

The One Watershed One Plan effort officially began with Public Open houses in Detroit Lakes and Fergus Falls in September 2021. At these meetings, participants learned about the watershed and planning process and had a chance to offer input by discussing potential issues and opportunities for the plan to address.

Issues gathered from the public were compiled and compared to priorities from state agencies and existing county water plans, resulting in a watershed issues list. This information is being used to determine priority issues for the watershed.

Plan Timeline

The planning committees are currently prioritizing all the issues that have been gathered from the public, and existing plans and reports.

Project Partners

Becker SWCD
Becker County
East Otter Tail SWCD
West Otter Tail SWCD
Otter Tail County
Pelican River Watershed District
Cormorant Lakes Watershed District

Accomplishments

- Public Open Houses
- Public Survey
- Land & Water Resource Narrative
- Draft Issues

Next Steps

- Prioritize Issues
- Prioritize Resources

Project Contact

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