

About the Collaborative

The Minnesota River Collaborative is a group of organizations dedicated to improving the water quality of the Minnesota River Basin. While our primary focus is on water quality, we recognize the equal importance of addressing issues related to reducing the impacts of flooding, erosion, pollution, aquifer recharge, and protecting wildlife habitat.

Current drainage systems in Minnesota accelerate the rate water drains from the land. This results in increased riverbank erosion and sedimentation, downstream flooding, and inadequate filtration of pollutants such as nitrates, phosphates, pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides, all of which have detrimental effects on aquatic environments and contaminate groundwater.

As drainage systems across Minnesota are being redesigned and improved, there exists an opportunity to integrate practices that reduce a project's environmental impact and its cumulative effects on our ecosystem. However, these environmentally friendly practices are frequently ignored in project designs, necessitating the intervention of advocacy groups like the Collaborative to ensure their inclusion and promote sustainable practices.

Collaborative Members

While in the beginning of the Collaborative we had a handful of committed volunteers, the group has grown to over thirty individuals that comprise volunteers with expertise in law, science, engineering, agriculture, soils, hydrology and grassroots organizing.

In addition to the individual involvement, the organizations listed below have provided support to the Collaborative.

The Coalition for a Clean Minnesota River

CURE

Friends of the Minnesota Valley

Izaak Walton Leagues'

Upper Mississippi River Initiative

Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance

**Minnesota Center for Environmental
Advocacy**

Minnesota Well Owners Organization



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MINNESOTA RIVER COLLABORATIVE

Dedicated to improving
water quality and mitigating
the impacts of altered hydrology
and water pollution in the
Minnesota River Basin

Brief History of the Collaborative

In 2017, a modest volunteer effort began to address water quality by examining drainage improvement projects in the Minnesota River watershed. Gathering crucial documents, including petitions for projects, engineering reports, stakeholder comments, and advisory letters from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the effort gained momentum.

Over the years, the effort has evolved to include a paid project manager, volunteer civil engineers, retired lawyers, conservation activists, governmental agency retirees and organizations including the Coalition for a Clean Minnesota River, CURE, Friends of the Minnesota Valley, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, Minnesota Well Owners Organization and other various wildlife and conservation groups.

Now the Collaborative is actively developing relationships with local, county, state and federal government agencies to facilitate coordinated, environmentally sound solutions to drainage projects in the Minnesota River Basin. The Collaborative's work includes maintaining consistent communication, advocating for sensible legislation, and, if need be, pursuing litigation.

Scope of the Work

- **Monitoring & maintaining a database on drainage improvement projects in the Minnesota River Basin**
- **Intervening on drainage projects that do not meet the criteria as established in the Minnesota Drainage Code.**
- **Working with landowners, farmers, and other concerned citizens to employ strategies that support overall water protection for the entire Minnesota River Basin.**
- **Consulting with the local, county, state and federal government agencies when appropriate**
- **Seeking out other potentially interested organizations.**
- **Participating in the Minnesota Drainage Working Group**
- **Proposing legislation to improve regulation and oversight of drainage**
- **Encouraging funding of efforts to avoid adverse effects and consider accumulative impacts from drainage projects**

