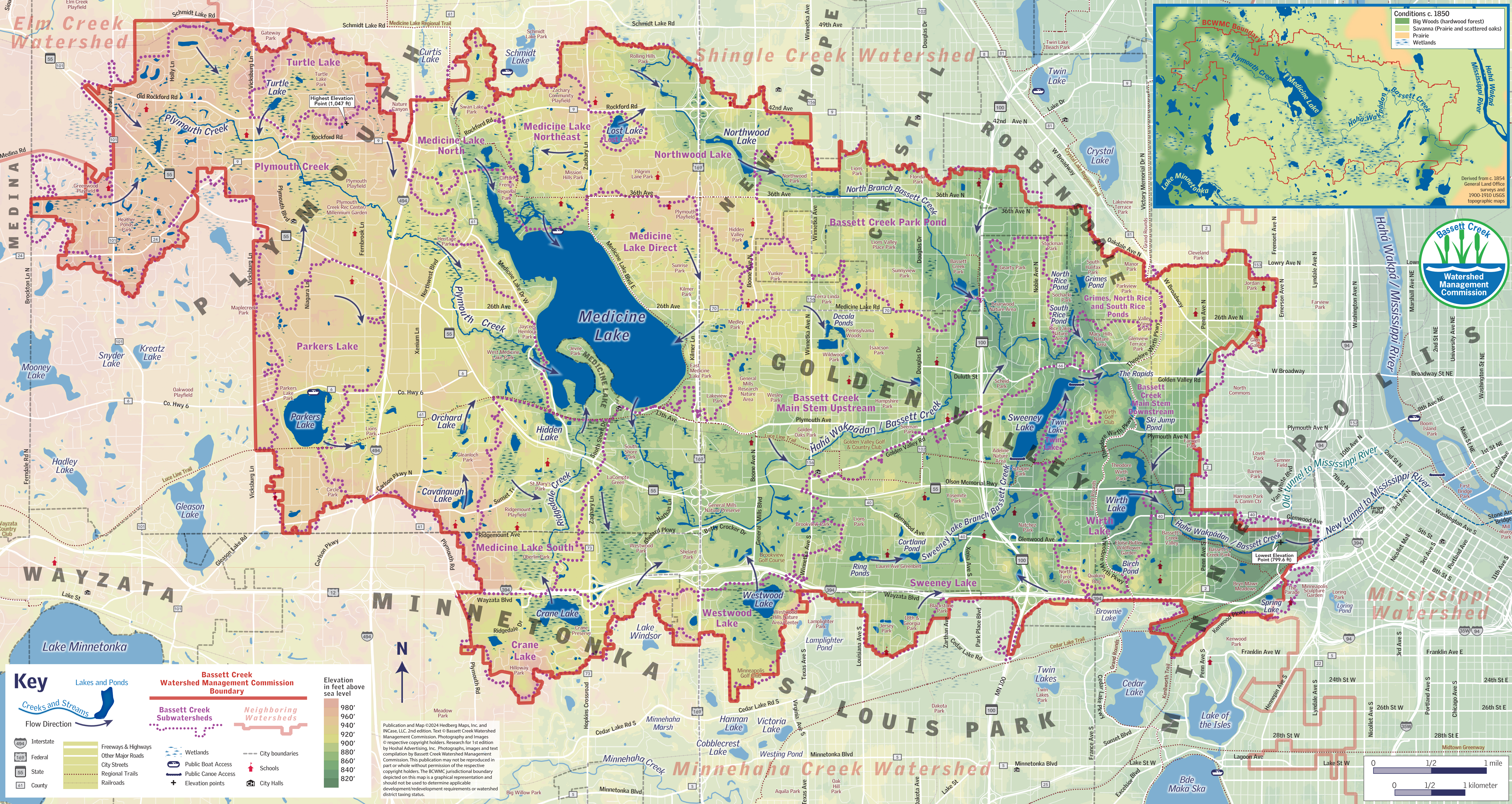
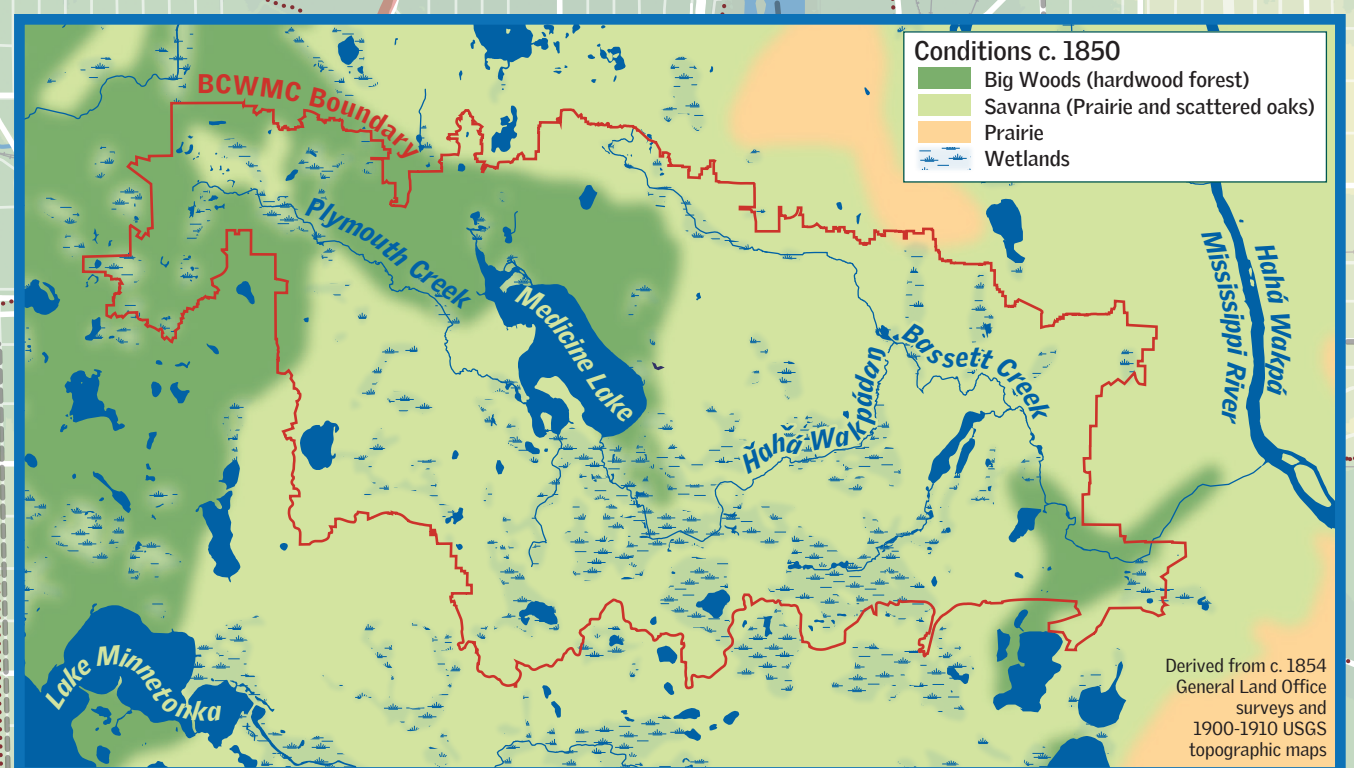


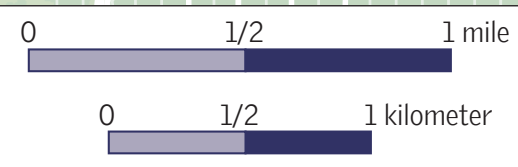
Ĥaĥá Wakpádaŋ / Bassett Creek Watershed



Key

- Lakes and Ponds
- Creeks and Streams
- Flow Direction
- Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission Boundary
- Bassett Creek Subwatersheds
- Neighboring Watersheds
- Elevation in feet above sea level
 - 980'
 - 960'
 - 940'
 - 920'
 - 900'
 - 880'
 - 860'
 - 840'
 - 820'
- Wetlands
- Public Boat Access
- Public Canoe Access
- Schools
- City Halls
- City boundaries
- Freeways & Highways
- Other Major Roads
- City Streets
- Regional Trails
- Railroads
- Interstate
- Federal
- State
- County

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Watershed Awareness and Protection



Northern Medicine Lake. Photo by Hughes Company Innovations

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO



The Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC) works to reduce flooding and to protect and improve the condition of lakes, streams, wetlands, and ponds within its borders. The BCWMC is a cooperative organization among the nine cities within the watershed. It uses a multi-pronged approach to managing waterbodies: projects, policy, data collection and analysis, and education/engagement.

WHAT IS A WATERSHED?

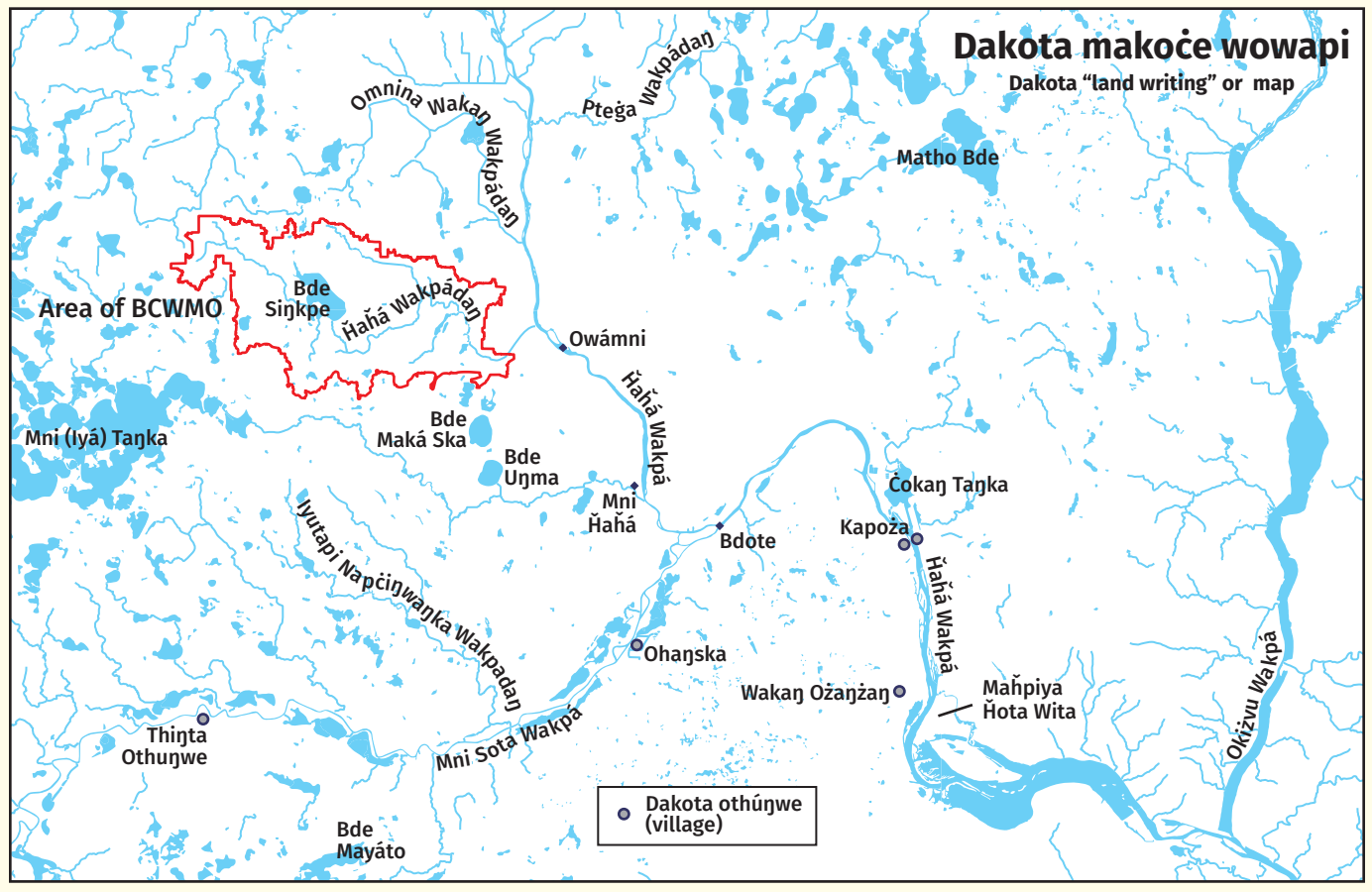
A watershed is an area of land that drains to a common lake, stream, or river. We all live in a watershed and watersheds come in all shapes and sizes. Watershed boundaries cross county, state, and national boundaries.

The Ĥaĥá Wakpádanj/Bassett Creek watershed is about 40 square miles. It begins in western Plymouth, where ponds, wetlands, and swales or ditches drain to Plymouth Creek, which flows southeasterly before emptying into the western side of Medicine Lake.

Ĥaĥá Wakpádanj/Bassett Creek emerges from the southern edge of Medicine Lake and flows south and then east, picking up water from the North Branch and the Sweeney Lake Branch of Bassett Creek before entering a tunnel and traveling 2.4 miles underground to the Mississippi River. The map on the other side shows land elevation in a color gradient. The highest elevations at the "top" of the watershed in Plymouth (light reds and yellows) gradually lead to the lower areas to the east (light then darker greens). The watershed of Ĥaĥá Wakpádanj/Bassett Creek is a small part of the larger Mississippi River basin.

The Dakota people cherished the Ĥaĥá Wakpádanj/Bassett Creek waterway long before European settlers arrived. The creek teemed with fish and aquatic life. The Dakota harvested wild rice from nearby waters and sustainably hunted wildlife for food, hides, and tools.

Birthed as one person in Mni Sota Makoċhe (modern-day Minnesota) from their home in the constellation of the bison's backbone, the Dakota are part of a larger confederacy known as the Oceti Šakowijŋ Oyate, or the Seven Council Starfire Nations. This confederacy includes four Dakota, two Nakota, and one Lakota band, covering



TREAT YOUR CURB LIKE A SHORELINE

Since we all live in a watershed, it's important to know some basics. Sometimes it's obvious that our property drains to a particular body of water; sometimes it's not. In urban areas, such as the Ĥaĥá Wakpádanj/Bassett Creek watershed, runoff from most properties eventually gets to a lake or creek and from there into the Mississippi River. Even if you live several blocks or miles from the nearest creek or lake, runoff from your property drains through storm sewers under your street, essentially turning every curb into a shoreline.

Storm sewer systems are an important part of city infrastructure. They protect structures and property from floods by quickly and efficiently conveying water from parking lots, rooftops, and roads. Unlike the sanitary sewer systems that treat wastewater collected from inside the home, storm sewer systems do not treat runoff water before discharging it into a water body.

Stormwater runoff carries numerous pollutants, including salt from winter deicers, lawn fertilizers, nutrients from grass clippings and fallen leaves, pesticides, toxins from coal-tar driveway sealants, oil from leaking cars, and pet waste. In creeks and lakes, these pollutants accumulate and result in poor water quality. This affects aesthetics and recreational enjoyment of the lakes. It's also bad for fish, insects, birds and their habitats.



Storm drains in Bryn Mawr, Minneapolis. Photos by Nat Case

You can learn to pronounce the creek name through a short YouTube video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=IwDrekliInM

meaning "the land where the water reflects the skies." This area remained Dakota homeland until the 1700s, when both Ojibwe and European settlers began to enter the territory. In 1849, Minnesota became a territory, and within two years, the U.S. government annexed it entirely, except for a seven-mile tract intended for the Dakota people. Cut off from their traditional means of hunting and foraging, the Dakota faced starvation, which was the spark that ignited the 1862 U.S.-Dakota War. Following the war, the Dakota were imprisoned in a concentration camp at Fort Snelling, where hundreds died from deplorable conditions. The aftermath saw the largest mass execution in U.S. history, where 38 Dakota men were hanged. Survivors were forcibly exiled from their homeland. The Dakota still feel the impact of the 1862 war today.

Ĥaĥá Wakpádanj/Bassett Creek leads to the falls in Ĥaĥá Wakpá (Mississippi River), hence the name Ĥaĥá Wakpádanj, or "Creek to the River of the Falls."

In the late 1800s, scientists categorized natural vegetation according to its ecosystem. In the map above, diversity appears limited to certain plants. In reality, before colonization, the watershed was a beautiful and abundant place full of wildlife, food, and medicine. Although the Lakota and Nakota went west to the prairies, the Dakota remained near the lakes, rivers, and wetlands, which gave them access to the greatest biodiversity of plant life for food and medicine.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

OUR WATERS NEED A LOW-SALT DIET



Salt (aka "chloride") is toxic to freshwater organisms like fish, frogs, and bugs. Once it's in the water, there is almost no way to

remove it. It only takes one teaspoon of salt to permanently render five gallons of water too salty for freshwater critters. Most salt pollution comes from winter deicers on roads, parking lots, and driveways. In fact, a University of Minnesota study found that about 78 percent of salt applied in the Twin Cities for winter maintenance is either transported to groundwater or remains in local lakes and wetlands. Salt can also come from water softeners, fertilizer, manure, and dust suppressants. You can reduce winter salt use on your property by shoveling early and often to avoid ice buildup. Consider using sand or grit instead of salt, or only using salt sparingly. (Just twelve ounces of salt are enough to melt 250 square feet of ice!) Sweep up salt lying on dry pavement and reuse it during the next storm. If you hire winter maintenance crews, make sure they are Smart Salt certified through the MN Pollution Control Agency. Advocate for reduced salt use where you see it piling up at stores, schools, work, etc. Ask city or BCWMC watershed staff if you'd like to learn more about salt reduction ideas.

BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

1. CUT THE SALT

It only takes one teaspoon of salt to permanently pollute five gallons of water so that it's no longer usable by freshwater organisms such as fish, frogs, and bugs. See at left for salt alternatives and other low-salt tips.

2. CLEAN STREETS LEAD TO CLEAN WATER

Rainwater gets away from us too quickly sometimes. With it go grass clippings, leaves, fertilizer, and anything else that can run off our rooftops, driveways, and sidewalks. If left to accumulate, these organics find their way through storm drains into our lakes and rivers. Keep your hard surfaces and street front clear of clippings, leaves, and excess fertilizer. Regularly inspect your local storm drain and remove debris where possible. Consider "adopting" your drain (www.adopt-a-drain.org) to track your clean-up progress.

3. PICK UP AFTER YOUR PET

When pets leave waste behind, even on grass or in your yard, rainwater can wash it into lakes and streams. Pet waste contains bacteria, including E. coli, that can cause illness in people, pets, and wildlife. Pet waste also contains nutrients that cause destructive algae blooms in lakes and streams.



Photo by Laura Jester

4. REPLACE SOME TURF, BUILD A RAIN GARDEN

Trade some of your turf for native plants or choose a turfgrass alternative. Native plants are great for pollinators and require less maintenance and irrigation. Better yet, install a rain garden to catch rainwater runoff in your yard. Rain gardens have plants that tolerate occasional, partial flooding. They provide beautiful landscaping and wildlife habitat. By soaking up rain where it falls, they also slow stormwater runoff, help prevent erosion, and remove pollutants.



Photo by Laura Jester

5. NATURALIZE YOUR SHORE OR STREAMBANK

If you live on a lake, creek, or wetland, create a buffer of native vegetation that provides wildlife habitat and filters runoff before it reaches the water. Vegetation along the water stabilizes shorelines and streambanks, protects your property from erosion, and improves habitat.

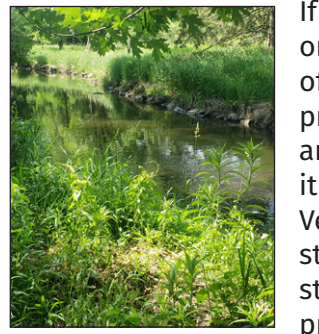


Photo by Laura Jester

6. RECYCLE EXPIRED MEDICATIONS

Never put these in the trash or flush them down the toilet. Look for a secure Hennepin County medical waste recycling container at a public facility near you.

7. REDIRECT RAINWATER

Direct downspout back into your yard, away from driveways and sidewalks where it can run off your property. Make a shallow depression away from your foundation so downspout water will soak into the ground. Better yet, save that water in a rain barrel and use the reservoir for watering landscape plants in dry times.

8. TAKE A KID FISHING!

Life isn't all about work. Those who most appreciate the need for water protection and water conservation are those who learn its value through experience. In this watershed, Wirth Lake and Westwood Lake are designated by the MN DNR as Fishing in the Neighborhood (FIN) lakes.

9. CONSERVE, CONSERVE, CONSERVE

Vegetation along the water stabilizes shorelines and streambanks, protects your property from erosion, and improves habitat. Every drop counts and unlimited clean water isn't a guarantee, even in Minnesota. Swap out a shower fixture for a wa-ter-saving shower head or install a low-volume toilet. Turn off the water while you brush teeth or trade in that garbage disposal for composting organics. Capture rain in a rain barrel or get a rain sensor for your irrigation system. Lower your energy consumption and your purchasing consumption — energy production and manufacturing take a lot of water.

10. GET INVOLVED

You don't have to be a water scientist to get involved. There are plenty of things you can do with little effort. Monitor a local lake or wetland. Organize a fall clean-up. Learn to identify and control invasive species. Join a lake or neighborhood association. Participate. It's the way change begins.



Map & Guide Watershed Bassett Creek Ĥaĥá Wakpádanj

EXPERIENCE

Ĥaĥá Wakpádanj and the Bassett Creek Watershed – a great waterway flowing through our communities.

MEMBER MUNICIPALITIES

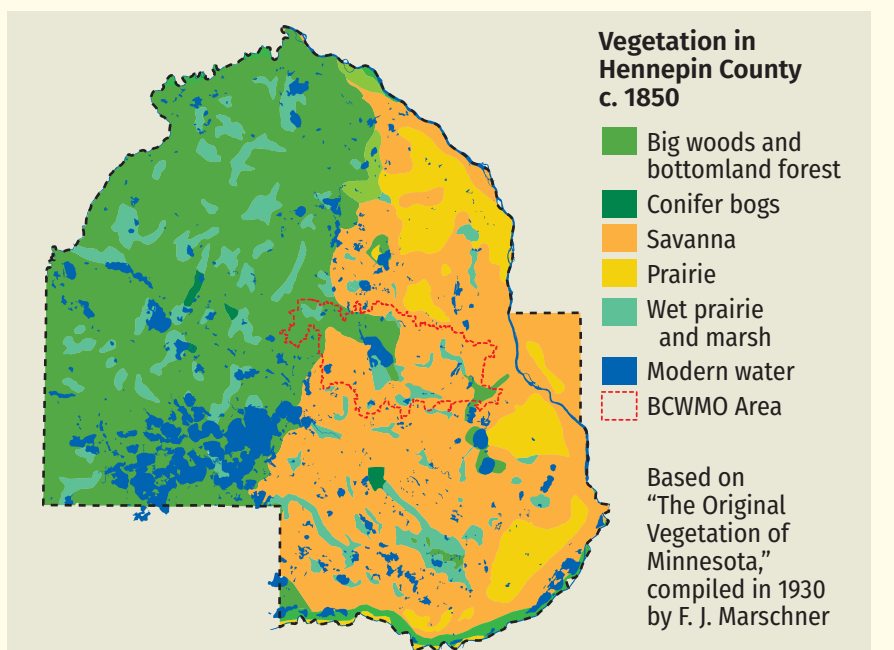


Crystal.....	crystalmn.gov
Golden Valley.....	goldenvalleymn.gov
Medicine Lake.....	cityofmedicinelake.com
Minneapolis.....	minneapolismn.gov
Minnetonka.....	minnetonkamn.gov
New Hope.....	newhopemn.gov
Plymouth.....	plymouthmn.gov
Robbinsdale.....	robbinsdalemn.com
St. Louis Park.....	stlouisparkmn.gov

BASSETTCREEKWMO.ORG



Photo by Dan Johnson



Today, the tribes of Mni Sota continue teaching their children Indigenous ways of life and impart the wisdom and importance of protecting land and water to others. Indigenous people of many different tribes live, work, and play throughout Minnesota, including in the suburbs of the Ĥaĥá Wakpádanj/Bassett Creek watershed. Their stories, memories, and knowledge were captured in the Bassett Creek Oral History Project, started by the Valley Community Presbyterian Church in collaboration with the Hennepin History Museum and the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission. All fifteen interviews are available as podcasts. Search "Bassett Creek Oral History Project" wherever you get your podcasts.

The Dakota were skilled hunters, fishermen, foragers, and farmers, as well as knowledgeable pharmacists and healers.

The Dakota maintained a triangular solstice sunrise path between Medicine Lake and the Mississippi River, which served both as a ceremonial route and a pathway for gathering food and medicine. Villages were intentionally not built along this path as it was regarded as the land's pharmacy and grocery store. The watershed supported a variety of vegetation, including rice (Psín), wild strawberries (Wažuštečaša), chokecherries (Čaŋpa), mulberries (Čaŋjska), blueberries (Ĥaza), raspberries (Takaŋheča hu) and wild plums (Kaŋta). Mother Earth also provided protein through bison, deer, duck, fish, and turtles.

Learn more about Ĥaĥá Wakpádanj and Indigenous heritage at www.bassettcreekwmo.org/haha-wakpadan-indigenous-culture

BCWMC Land and Water Acknowledgement Statement (June 2024)

We acknowledge that the waterways of the Ĥaĥá Wakpádanj, located in Mni Sota Makoċe, the homeland of the Dakota peoples, are living waters which are part of a larger living ecosystem. Historically, the Ĥaĥá Wakpádanj provided material, nutritional, and spiritual sustenance to the Dakota peoples. We acknowledge the forced removal of the Dakota from the lands and waterways that nurtured them as relatives. And, we recognize the environmental degradation that continues in the watershed today.

The living waters of Ĥaĥá Wakpádanj remain significant to the Dakota and other Native peoples, including many who presently live in the watershed. The Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission seeks to identify and integrate Native wisdom by collaborating with Indigenous peoples and communities to reduce the impacts of climate change and improve the ecosystem health for all living beings in the watershed. Acknowledging the complex past and present traumas and triumphs is a step toward healing for the land, watershed, and peoples who live in the watershed today.

Learning About Ĥaĥá Wakpádanj