

The St. Louis River and western Lake Superior watersheds are home to several small to moderately sized communities and a major metropolitan area (Duluth-Superior). There are also several different land use types found within these watersheds, including agricultural, managed forest land,



wilderness, and mining interests. Each of these land uses imparts a degree of ecological stress on the aquatic ecosystem. Currently the St. Louis River has fish consumption advisories because of PCB, dioxin, and mercury contamination caused by industrial waste pollution. Until the 1970's the St. Louis River suffered fish kills caused by the dumping of industrial and municipal waste. An excessive sediment load is also a concern in our region as it is across the nation. The Minnesota

Pollution Control Agency recently added several streams sampled by the St. Louis River – River Watch program to its list of polluted state waters. The River Watch Program enables students not only to determine the current health of the ecosystem in these areas, but also to monitor the changes in the system over time. The information gathered by students and professionals in the field associated with this project is a powerful tool in determining the future management strategies needed to adequately protect the resource. Equally valuable is the program's capacity to instill in its participants the concept that they can make a difference in protecting the watershed from a wide variety of potential impacts. The overall goal of the St. Louis River - River Watch program is to promote and inspire stewardship of natural resources throughout the entire region.



How to Use This Protocol Booklet

Our program has an enviable position among citizen monitoring groups because of our impressive baseline database. We have continuously monitored some of our sampling sites for over 10 years!

