

Priority Waters List

Emily Resseger, Water Resources

2050 WRPP Advisory Group: December 10, 2021



What is the Priority Waters List?

A tool to help Council leaders and staff effectively distribute resources and make decisions.



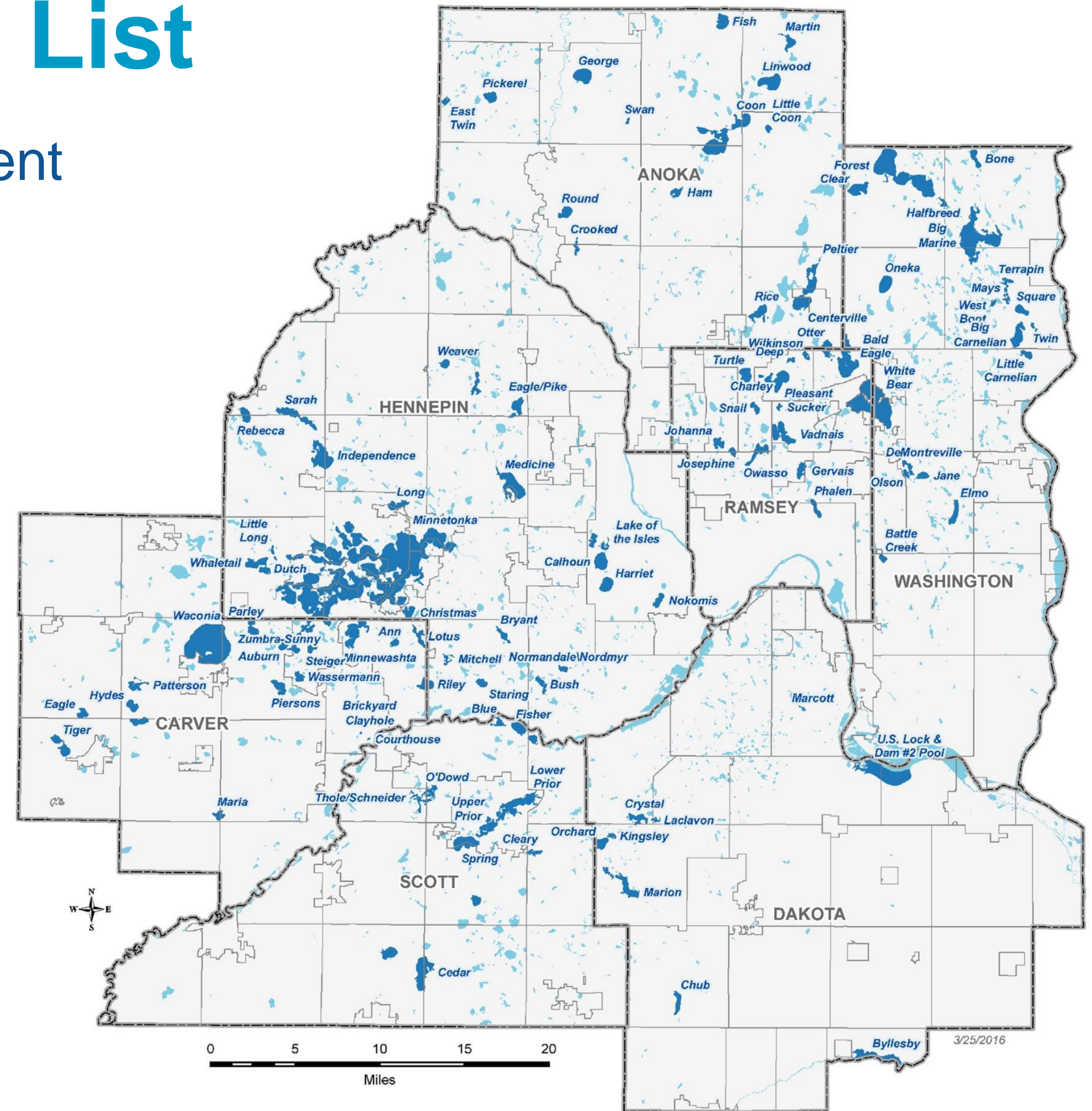
Why Do We Need to Prioritize?

- We have over 950 lakes and hundreds of miles of rivers and streams.
- Future Council initiatives may ask which waters to:
 - Target for monitoring and assessment?
 - Offer technical assistance on?
 - Target grants to?
 - Protect during construction projects?
 - Focus education around?

We need priorities for plan-making and plan implementation

Current Priority Lakes List

- Used to set monitoring and assessment priorities.
- Lakes prioritized based on:
 - High regional recreational value
 - Water supply provider
 - Good water quality
 - Wildlife significance



Goals of the New Priority Waters List

- Build on successes of the existing Priority Lakes List.
- Add priority rivers and streams.
- Be used for resource (grant and system investment) decisions.
- Be a key lens for policies and activities included in the 2050 Water Resources Policy Plan.
- Offer insights to other organizations as they prioritize projects and spend their valued resources.



Prioritization Approach

The Priority Waters List is those waters the Council has determined to be regionally significant based on their uses and benefits.

Method: Quantitative assessment using regional scale datasets.



Scoring Categories



Drinking Water Protection



Equity



Recreation and Tourism



Industry and Utility



Healthy Habitat



Science and Education



Tranquil Connection



Result: Priority Waters List

- Waters qualify based on top overall and/or category scores
- Separate lakes list and rivers and streams list



Project Status

- Preliminary draft list was finalized in early November.
 - Internal review completed in November.
- External outreach to local and regional partners in January.



The Ask

- Receive email requesting feedback in January
 - Review the website and draft list
 - Provide feedback through the form on the site
 - Forward the information on to others

The screenshot shows the Metropolitan Council website's navigation menu with categories: COMMUNITIES, PARKS, TRANSPORTATION, WASTEWATER & WATER, HOUSING, and PLANNING. The 'WASTEWATER & WATER' section is expanded to show sub-items: Projects, Capital Program 2021-2026, Energy & Sustainability, Priority Waters List (highlighted), Metro Solids, and Sewer Planning & Construction Updates.

PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON THE PRIORITY WATERS LIST

Shape the next Priority Waters List. We invite you to offer feedback on the Metropolitan Council's approach to developing the Priority Waters List and our preliminary results. The new list builds on the success of our Priority Lakes List, last updated in 2015, and now includes rivers and streams.

With more than 950 lakes and hundreds of miles of rivers and streams in the seven-county metro area, the Priority Waters List will support the region in effective management of our waterbodies. It will:

- Guide how the Met Council allocates limited resources to monitor, assess, plan for, and improve the region's waterbodies.
- Provide a key lens for developing policies and activities to include in the 2050 Water Resources Policy Plan. It will inform how the Met Council can align with the priorities of local, regional, and state partners, and provide value for those partners.
- Offer insights to other organizations as they prioritize projects and spend their valued resources.

For the purposes of this page, "waterbody" is defined as a lake, river, or stream.

The Met Council has had a version of a Priority Waters List since 1982; it was previously called the Priority Lakes List. We updated our Priority Lakes List in 2015 as part of the Water Resources Policy Plan Update. This new version includes rivers and streams as well as lakes. With more than 950 lakes and hundreds of miles of rivers and streams in the region, waterbodies needed to be prioritized to adequately dedicate staff and financial resources.

★ Tips on providing feedback

- Understand how to interpret the list. Please review the *Priority Waters List Approach*, *Water History and Context*, and *Scoring Categories* sections.
- Review the list itself in the *Draft Priority Waters List* section.
- Interested in a deep dive? Review the *Data and Methods* section for analysis details.
- Tell us what you think — what resonates and what to improve. Go to *Provide Feedback* to answer questions designed to help us finalize our approach to creating the Priority Waters list.

- PRIORITY WATERS LIST APPROACH
- WATER HISTORY AND CONTEXT
- SCORING CATEGORIES
- DRAFT PRIORITY WATERS LIST
- DATA AND METHODS
- PROVIDE FEEDBACK

Contact us

Emily Resseger
Project Manager
651-802-1033
Emily.Resseger@metc.state.mn.us

Questions?

Emily Resseger
Environmental Analyst
emily.resseger@metc.state.mn.us
651-602-1033

