

Q1: What are the indicators of healthy waterbodies?

Wildlife and Plants

1. Abundant and diverse wildlife in and around water
2. Abundant birds, wading birds and waterfowl present, including swans
3. Abundant and diverse vegetation
4. Little or no aquatic vegetation (weeds in water)
5. Healthy fishery, including minnows; that provides good fishing opportunities
6. Natural shoreline with good wildlife habitat
7. Amphibians present
8. Macroinvertebrates (bugs) present
9. No Eurasian watermilfoil or other invasive species present
10. Native species thrive

Water Quality

1. Lack of algae; not slimy
2. No odor
3. Unpolluted
4. Good water clarity
5. Good water temperatures (not too warm)
6. Nice water color
7. Non-oily or greasy
8. Fishable and swimmable (meeting standards)

Physical Aspects of Waterbodies

1. Not clogged with leaves
2. Bottom is not mucky
3. Deep
4. No trash in or along water
5. Nice aesthetics
6. Less streambank or shoreline erosion; shorelines are vegetated
7. No sedimentation
8. No direct stormwater runoff reaching waterbody
9. Not as much flooding
10. No stagnant water, streams are flowing
11. Less flashy
12. Stable water levels in lakes
13. Good oxygen levels in water

Public Enjoyment and Practices

1. Visible public use
2. People enjoying swimming; good swimming beach
3. Includes access for walking and hiking
4. Peaceful
5. Sustainably used by people
6. Residents keep yard fertilizers out of lake
7. Year-round access to lakes (due to consistent water levels)

Q2: What concerns do you have regarding the waterbodies in your community?

Effects of Individuals

1. Too much trash
2. Too many motorboats
3. Too much pet waste
4. Runoff from yards and streets
5. Too much groundwater consumption
6. Lack of infiltration or diversion in lawns
7. Lack of sense of responsibility and respect/lack of attention from residents and businesses

Development/Infrastructure

1. Salt use
2. Lightrail – encroachment in wetlands
3. Stormwater runoff without filtration or treatment, more treatment ponds needed
4. Concentration of impervious surfaces
5. Chemical and pollutant inputs from runoff
6. Modifications to waterbodies due to development
7. Runoff from older commercial/industrial areas
8. Construction site erosion
9. Effects of housing developments
10. Leaks and spills from railroads
11. Aging infrastructure
12. Effects of dredging

Biology

1. Too many weeds
2. Non-natural shorelines
3. Aquatic invasive species, including rough fish
4. Terrestrial invasive species
5. Too much algae
6. Too many geese
7. Lack of wildlife diversity
8. Lack of buffers
9. Fish consumption advisories
10. Loss of thousands of ash trees in watershed

Physical/Chemical Aspects of Waterbodies

1. Lack of public access and well maintained access
2. Non-consistent water levels
3. Sediment build-up
4. Streambank erosion
5. Increased rainfall events
6. Too much total phosphorus, including internal loading
7. Low water clarity
8. Low water levels on Medicine Lake
9. Bassett Creek south of Glenwood is “terrible”
10. Flooding
11. Groundwater quality and quantity in wells in Medicine Lake
12. Abundance of cattails in ponds resulting in flooding problems

Q2: What concerns do you have regarding the waterbodies in your community?

Funding/Governance/Societal

1. Lack of funding
2. Commitment from all 9 cities
3. Lack of education
4. Not enough benefit to not enough people (projects?)
5. Need better prioritization of projects
6. Apathy of public; need to change behavior, actions, habitats of residents
7. Not enough projects in Northwood Lake subwatershed
8. Lack of city-implemented projects like raingardens
9. Need better sources of information
10. Need more tax incentives for better projects
11. Expectations that water quality problems can be solved quickly with a silver bullet
12. Need more land acquisition for flood easements
13. Balance management of recreational lakes vs. scenic ponds
14. Pond management before lake management
15. Balancing habitat with recreation
16. Need to fully study effects of Medicine Lake's possible water level manipulation on the floodplain, water quality, water temperatures, and overall lake health

Q3: What are the barriers to improving water quality?

Physical

1. Poorly drained soils
2. Flooding
3. Lack of space for water quality projects
4. Zebra mussels
5. Too many weeds

Government

1. Lack of funding and resources
2. Lack of education and knowledge
3. Time
4. Lower priority for decision makers
5. Science of water quality is still young
6. Lack of consensus and common ground on what it takes to improve water quality
7. Government inefficiency
8. Inability to identify the problem and install correct project in correct location
9. Push for development
10. Government agency restrictions
11. Not being willing to dredge

Public

1. Too many motorboats
2. Angry residents
3. Unwillingness to change, self interests
4. Disconnection of public from natural resources
5. Property rights
6. Stigma of environmental issues, in general
7. Public unwilling to give more funding

Q4: How can we address the barriers to improving water quality?

Information and Education

1. More education, information, outreach to residents
2. Education of children; involve schools
3. Educational signage
4. Public service announcements
5. Neighborhood outreach
6. Sponsorship by companies that make water-related products (boats, motors, etc)
7. Newsletters
8. City celebrations
9. Citizen monitoring programs (CAMP, WHEP)
10. National Night Out as a venue for education and outreach
11. Consistent message among watershed organizations
12. Labeling stormdrains
13. Focused volunteer efforts; organize stakeholder volunteer group
14. City Park and Rec programs focused on water; summer camps
15. Coordinated clean ups among all cities
16. Use natural constituencies and existing groups
17. All 9 cities working together on education and outreach
18. Sponsor events linking water quality to water use
19. Show visual impacts
20. Install paths near projects
21. More trails along creek
22. Start Bassett Creek Farmers Market near creek

Government

1. Streamline permitting; more uniform regulations
2. Be a watershed management organization; not a watershed district
3. Transparency of actual costs
4. Look regionally vs. jurisdictionally
5. Need more scientific proof of negative impacts
6. Reward good behavior
7. Provide small grants