

ABOUT THE MAYOR'S BIG SIOUX RIVER WATER SUMMIT



Mayor Huether addressing event participants at the question and answer portion of the 2013 Mayor's Big Sioux River Water Summit.

The Mayor's Big Sioux River Water Summit represents a cornerstone of the City of Sioux Falls' water quality initiatives as it creates an opportunity to bring watershed stakeholders together to work to improve and conserve the Big Sioux River as a natural resource. The first annual Mayor's Big Sioux River Water Quality Summit took place on September 9, 2013. Approximately 135 watershed professionals and citizens collaborated on how to improve the Big Sioux River. The Summit helps to ensure transparency between the public and the City and allows the public to be involved in the various water quality improvement projects.

The second annual Mayor's Big Sioux River Water Quality Summit will take place on September 4, 2014, at the Hilton Garden Inn located in downtown Sioux Falls along the Big Sioux River. This year's event will feature a keynote speaker and four presentation tracks that will focus on such issues as storm water and urban environments, agriculture, recreation, and water quality initiatives throughout the region. The event will conclude with a question and answer session with the Mayor and a panel of watershed professionals. This event is free and open to the public.

WATER QUALITY INITIATIVES

The Big Sioux River is a small watershed with some significant stressors from agriculture, industry, and urbanized sources. Previously, the state of South Dakota has listed the segments of the Big Sioux River near Sioux Falls as impaired for multiple pollutants such as dissolved oxygen, ammonia, sediment, and bacteria. Currently, the state of South Dakota has indicated that the Big Sioux River is only impaired for two pollutants: sediment and bacteria.



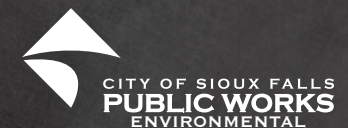
The sediment levels in the Big Sioux River are not consistently meeting water quality standards for fisheries and bacteria levels are not consistently meeting water quality standards for public health and immersion recreation. Significant improvements have been achieved over the past 40 years since the Clean Water Act but there is still room for improvement in order for the Big Sioux River to meet all designated uses. The City of Sioux Falls Public Works Environmental Division has established four main initiatives in an effort to improve water quality standards for the Big Sioux River Watershed. These strategies aim to encourage partnerships, increase public education, invest in public welfare, and protect taxpayer's dollars.

"We need the river and the river needs us!"
—Mayor Mike Huether



City of Sioux Falls' Big Sioux River WATER QUALITY PROSPERITY PLAN

City of Sioux Falls Public Works Environmental
1017 East Chambers Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57104



INVESTING IN PUBLIC WELFARE

2014 Big Sioux River Greenway Cleanup

On May 10, 2014, the City of Sioux Falls worked with seven partnering organizations across eight parks along the bike trail system near the Big Sioux River to remove 4,000 pounds of trash and 260 pounds of recyclable material during the 2014 Big Sioux River Greenway Cleanup. Over 180 volunteers participated in the three-hour event and helped to make the event a tremendous success.



Investments in Infrastructure

The City of Sioux Falls has invested over \$45 million in wastewater infrastructure improvements in the past three years as well as \$6 million in building new storm water regional treatment ponds in the past 5 years and \$1.2 million in retrofitting old flood control ponds within the City of Sioux Falls to improve water quality before the water gets to the Big Sioux River.

PROTECTING TAXPAYER DOLLARS

Drinking Water

The Big Sioux River is currently one of the sources of municipal drinking water for the City of Sioux Falls. Maintaining water quality of the river helps to lower costs needed to meet drinking water quality standards.



Local students painted 50 gallon rain barrels that were given away at the 2014 Sioux Falls Lawn and Garden Show.

Water Conservation Incentives

The City of Sioux Falls developed the Water Conservation Program in 2003 to help ensure water quantity meets demand for the fast growing population. The program offers a variety of ways to encourage the public to use water resources wisely to ensure sustainable water use and lower water bills for Sioux Falls citizens. Some of the programs include:

- ▶ Indoor and Outdoor Plumbing Rebate Programs
- ▶ Excessive Use Water Rates
- ▶ Rain Barrel Giveaways
- ▶ Lawn Watering Restrictions
- ▶ Free Water Conservation Devices

ENCOURAGING PARTNERSHIPS

Central Big Sioux River Watershed Coalition

The City of Sioux Falls is one of the key financial partners for this partnership of watershed professionals. Moody County Conservation District is the project lead for this coalition. Other partnering organizations include conservation districts within the region, East Dakota Water Development District, South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and Natural Resources Conservation Services. One of the first accomplishments of this coalition was to create a Water Quality Master Plan to guide limited resources wisely for water quality improvements.



Project AWARE

Project AWARE, which stands for A Watershed Awareness River Expedition, is the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) annual volunteer river cleanup event. In addition to cleaning trash out of the river, participants learn about watersheds, water quality, recycling, and other natural resource topics. 2014 marked the 12th year of Project AWARE and it offered a unique opportunity for a South Dakota/Iowa partnership as it was focused on cleaning up 91 miles of the Big Sioux River starting just south of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. A total of 388 participants helped to remove 28.8 tons of trash from the Big Sioux River during the week-long event with 95 percent of the trash recycled. More than 75 partnering organizations worked to make the event a success and the City of Sioux Falls was recognized as a Platinum Paddle sponsor for the event.



Volunteers pulled out a pig feeder from the Big Sioux River during Project AWARE

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Pet Waste Program

The City of Sioux Falls secured a 319 I&E MiniGrant in 2014 that is focused on watershed information and education projects in South Dakota from the South Dakota Discovery Center. The grant helped educate citizens about the devastating water quality effects of pet waste in local waterways and to encouraged citizens to clean up after their pets.



Only Rain to Drain

This campaign is focused on educating the public that the storm sewer system is separate from the wastewater system and the water is therefore treated differently. The campaign encourages the public to only allow storm water down the storm drains and allows citizens to report illicit discharge of pollutants. As part of the effort to prevent illicit discharge of contaminants into storm drains, educational curb markers on storm drains are also used to indicate where storm drains are located.



Local area boy scouts help to install curb markers on storm drains.

Green Pledge Program

The Green Pledge Program is a free, incentivized educational tool that allows citizens to sign up to receive information about ways to live sustainably in Sioux Falls and the surrounding areas. One of the main focus areas of the program is Water Resources and the program provides information on ways to improve water quality and increase water conservation.

