



REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

MARCH 2025

Pig's Eye Dump Task Force annual report

Status of coordination and planning efforts to clean up and restore the Pig's Eye Dump site and protect groundwater and nearby surface water

Legal citation: MN Laws 2022, ch. 94, Sec. 2, subd. 10j

Appropriation language: \$800,000 the second year is from the trust fund to the commissioner of the Pollution Control Agency to establish a Pig's Eye Landfill Task Force to coordinate efforts to remediate and restore the Pig's Eye Landfill Superfund site and address perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination of Battle Creek, Pig's Eye Lake, and nearby groundwater. The task force must be made up of at least the commissioner of the Pollution Control Agency, the commissioner of natural resources, the commissioner of health, a representative from the Metropolitan Council, a representative from the city of St. Paul, a representative from the city of South St. Paul, a representative from the city of Newport, a representative from Ramsey County, a representative from Dakota County, a representative from Washington County, and representatives from relevant federal agencies. The task force is subject to Minnesota Statutes, section 15.059, subdivision 6. The task force must submit an annual report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees and divisions with jurisdiction over the environment and natural resources on the status of the task force's work. The final report is due February 15, 2026. The task force expires June 30, 2026. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2026.

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Background of Pig's Eye Dump

Site history and previous remedial actions

Pig's Eye Dump is a closed waste disposal site in St. Paul, Minnesota. From 1956 to 1972, the site operated as a dump without a permit and accepted municipal, commercial, and industrial waste, making Pig's Eye Dump the largest unpermitted dump in Minnesota with a fill area encompassing over 200 acres. From 1977 to 1985, the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) disposed of wastewater treatment sludge incinerator ash on 31 acres of the site under Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Permit SW-189. The MCES placed the ash on top of existing waste and covered the ash and waste with approximately two to three feet of soil.

Various phases of environmental investigation have been conducted at the dump site, Battle Creek, and Pig's Eye Lake since the 1970s, and the MPCA placed Pig's Eye Dump on the State Superfund List in 1989. Contaminants detected in groundwater, surface water, and sediment have included per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), metals, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs), and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

From approximately 2000 to 2005, initial cleanup actions at the site were implemented and included the removal and disposal of batteries and drums containing hazardous waste, cleanup of lead-contaminated surface soil, removal/consolidation of waste, filling and grading of ponds, and installation of a two-foot soil cap over the dump's waste footprint. In addition, the cleanup included effort to limit the amount of leachate and contaminated groundwater that enters Pigs Eye Lake and Battle Creek. The strategy was to install an engineered fill material in select areas between the waste and surface water. The initial cleanup actions were a significant amount of work for modest environmental improvements, more work is needed to address contamination from the Pig's Eye Dump.

Current contaminants of concern

Since the implementation of the initial cleanup actions, some contaminants (VOCs, SVOCs, PCBs) have shown decreasing trends below surface water quality standards. Although the levels of some contaminants have decreased, there remains contamination at levels of concern at the site. The MPCA is currently investigating the following contaminants:

- Groundwater and surface water:
 - PFAS – Perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) concentrations in monitoring wells, Battle Creek, and Pig's Eye Lake have been detected above surface water quality standards developed for Pool 2 of the Mississippi River.
 - 1,4-dioxane – 1,4-dioxane was sampled for the first time and discovered in several monitoring locations at the site in 2021. Work is ongoing to determine how 1,4-dioxane will impact the remedial action objectives and remedial options for the Site.
- Sediment:
 - Metals – Metals (cadmium, copper, lead, zinc) have been detected above the applicable sediment quality targets in Pig's Eye Lake.
 - PFAS – Several PFAS have been detected above laboratory reporting limits in Pig's Eye Lake, but concentrations were below soil reference values.

Landfill gas:

- Elevated methane concentrations have been observed within the waste footprint of the site during gas monitoring events. Methane gas migration laterally off-site appears to be limited.

Site challenges and remedial objectives

The Pig's Eye Dump is located within the floodplain of the Mississippi River. Battle Creek flows through the central portion of the site and discharges to Pig's Eye Lake. The Mississippi River is located approximately 800 feet west of the site. Major flooding is estimated to occur every two years in the wetland adjacent to Battle Creek and Pig's Eye Lake.

One of the main cleanup goals for the Pig's Eye Dump includes reducing the migration of PFAS contamination into Battle Creek and Pig's Eye Lake. The previous cleanup work conducted between 2000 and 2005 was implemented prior to the sampling and detection of PFAS and 1,4-dioxane. In addition, recent evaluations have identified several data gaps at the site that need further investigation, such as the need to further define flow patterns, upgradient contaminant sources, and risks, prior to selecting and implementing additional cleanup actions.

Pig's Eye Neighborhood

Pig's Eye Dump and its surrounding area consists of several important shared uses, including different communities, businesses, and projects. According to the City of St. Paul's website for the Pig's Eye Regional Park (<https://www.stpaul.gov/facilities/pigs-eye-regional-park>), the Pig's Eye Regional Park is part of the East Side River District, which is an area of the Mississippi River that has many shared uses, including Dakota homeland and sacred sites, industry, parks and recreation, and natural areas that serve as a bird migration route. Some of the current uses and projects directly on or adjacent to Pig's Eye Dump include the following:

- City of St. Paul – Pig's Eye Park
 - The Pig's Eye Park features trails and bird watching areas.
- MCES – Metropolitan Wastewater Treatment Plant
 - The MCES wastewater treatment plant is located adjacent to Pig's Eye Dump to the southwest. As stated previously, MCES was also permitted to dispose of wastewater treatment sludge incinerator ash on 31 acres of the Site between 1977 to 1985.
 - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Ramsey County Habitat Restoration Project.

Figure 1: Pig's Eye Dump with city and county boundaries.



- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in partnership with Ramsey County, is conducting a habitat restoration project on Pig's Eye Lake. The project consists of reusing dredged material to build islands within the lake with the goal of restoring backwater habitat and improving water quality (<https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/parks-recreation/planning-construction/restoration/pigs-eye-lake-island-building-project>).
- Railroad properties
 - A railroad switching yard is located adjacent to the Pig's Eye Dump to the north/northeast. Part of the previous remedial actions from 2000-2005 included waste removal from railroad property and grading along the waste interface with the railroad drainage ditch.
- Department of Natural Resources – Pig's Eye Island Heron Rookery Scientific and Natural Area
 - The southern portion of Pig's Eye Lake is home to a Scientific and Natural Area (SNA), where native plants and animals flourish, rare species are protected, and natural features are studied. The area has one of the largest urban heron and egret rookeries in the Midwest.

Pig's Eye Dump Task Force

During the 2022 Legislative Session, the Minnesota Legislature passed a law that directs the MPCA to establish a task force to coordinate efforts to remediate and restore Pig's Eye Dump and address PFAS contamination of Battle Creek, Pig's Eye Lake, and nearby groundwater. The Legislature appropriated \$800,000 to the MPCA using the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF).

The Task Force must be made of at least the following:

- The Commissioner of the Pollution Control Agency
- The Commissioner of Natural Resources
- The Commissioner of Health
- A representative from the Metropolitan Council
- A representative from the City of St. Paul
- A representative from the City of South St. Paul
- A representative from the City of Newport
- A representative from Ramsey County
- A representative from Dakota County
- A representative from Washington County
- Representatives from relevant federal agencies

The Task Force must also submit an annual report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees and divisions with jurisdiction over the environment and natural resources on the status of the Task Force's work. A final report is due February 15, 2026, and the Task Force expires on June 30, 2026.

Figure 2: Cleanup and restoration options are being explored to benefit the environment and communities.



Pig's Eye Dump Task Force work plan

Work plan development and approval

For the funds to be appropriated, the MPCA developed a work plan for the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR), the commission that makes funding recommendations to the Minnesota State Legislature for special environment and natural resource projects primarily from the ENRTF.

The MPCA submitted its Pig's Eye Task Force work plan on August 12, 2022, and presented it to the LCCMR on August 16, 2022. The LCCMR approved the work plan the same day.

Task Force work progress scorecard

The MPCA's Pig's Eye Task Force work plan consists of three main activities with the following milestones:

1. Hire the Pig's Eye Task Force coordinator

The Pig's Eye Task Force coordinator began employment at the MPCA on March 15, 2023. The coordinator was instrumental in the early work of the Task Force including getting the Task Force launched. The coordinator moved on to a new job opportunity in May 2024. Rather than pause the Task Force work to fill the vacant coordinator position the coordinator duties will be fulfilled by increasing contractor support for the project as well as increasing existing MPCA staff involvement for the remainder of the project.

2. Establish the Pig's Eye Task Force and convene regular meetings

The Task Force consists of the following representatives:

State Agency, Local Unit of Government, or Federal Agency	Representative
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	Kirk Koudelka (Assistant Commissioner)
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Dan Scollan (Hydrologist)
Minnesota Department of Health	Dave Bell (Research Scientist)
Metropolitan Council	Sam Paske (Assistant General Manager)
City of St. Paul	Melanie McMahon (Executive Project Lead)
City of South St. Paul	Jimmy Francis (Mayor)
City of Newport	Bill Sumner (Councilmember)
Ramsey County	Victoria Reinhardt (Task Force Representative)
Dakota County	Dave Magnuson (Supervisor)
Washington County	Caleb Johnson (Senior Manager)
United States Army Corps of Engineers	Nathan Wallerstedt (Chief)

The activity includes work to prepare for task force meetings.

Milestones	Planned completion date	Actual completion date
Contact federal, state, and local entities	February 28, 2023	February 15, 2023
Federal, state, and local entities select task force representatives	February 28, 2023	March 13, 2023
Submit 2023 annual report to the legislature	March 31, 2023	March 31, 2023
East Side River District Convening-stakeholder meeting	December 14, 2023	December 14, 2023
Task Force Meeting #1- introductions, review charter, goals, timelines.	March 31, 2023	September 25, 2023
Task Force Meeting #2- site history, contaminants of concern, remedial investigation update.	January 12, 2024	January 12, 2024
Task Force Meeting #3- superfund process timeline, remediation options, feasibility of remedial strategies.	March 8, 2024	March 8, 2024
Art in The Hollow Event- share information, progress and how to get/stay involved with the task force.	June 1, 2024	June 1, 2024
Task Force Meeting #4- review remedial options, public engagement updates, task force input on public engagement.	June 7, 2024	June 7, 2024
Task Force Meeting #5- engagement update, case studies presented.	July 18, 2024	July 18, 2024
Pollinator Festival- share information, progress and how to get/stay involved with the task force.	August 11, 2024	August 11, 2024
On the Road Again, South St. Paul- share information, progress and how to get/stay involved with the task force.	October 5, 2024	October 5, 2024
Pigs Eye Dump Walking Tour- Partnered with Pig's Eye Park Friends to host the public tour to discuss the site's future.	September 10, 2024	September 10, 2024
Virtual Community Meeting- Presentation and discussion about the site's future and community involvement.	September 12, 2024	September 12, 2024
In Person Community Meeting- a facilitated discussion on the future of the site.	September 16, 2024	September 16, 2024
Task Force Meeting #6- guest speakers from Doyme Park and Big Marsh, MPCA state funding overview.	September 2024	September 23, 2024
Task Force Meeting #7- public engagement update/next steps, remediation vs. restoration goals, bring remediation and reuse strategies together.	November 2024	December 6, 2024
Task Force Meeting #8- guest presentations: Cuyahoga National Park, Met Council, City of St. Paul, Ramsey County.	January 2025	February 13, 2025
Community Survey	January 2025	March 7, 2025
Submit 2024 annual report to the legislature	March 31, 2025	
Task Force Meeting #9- review survey results, discuss remedial options.	April 17, 2025	
Task Force Meeting #10	June 2025	
Task Force Meeting #11	August 2025	
Task Force Meeting #12	October 2025	

Detailed recaps of Task Force meeting held during 2024 and 2025:

Task Force Meeting Date	Topics Covered	Outcomes/Discussion Topics
January 12, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site History/Background • Contaminants of Concern • Regulatory Framework • Remedial Investigation Update • Superfund Process/Timeline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site background • What contaminants are sampled • Considerations for nearby properties (fish hatchery, wastewater treatment plant, etc.) • Public access to Task Force meetings
March 8, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superfund process timeline • Remediation options to address contamination • Feasibility of remediation strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading with remediation vs. restoration • How to get the public involved (add a virtual option) • Infrastructure feasibility due to floodplain • Interest in possible future uses
June 7, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-cap of remedial options • Public engagement update • Task Force input on public engagement efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task Force priorities for engagement (remediation options and restoration future uses) • Interest in types of engagement activities (public meetings, individual small group meetings) • Stakeholders/community groups to reach out to
July 18, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public engagement update • Case studies (Washington County Landfill, WDE Landfill Andover, Doyne Park Milwaukee, Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Puente Hills Landfill Park, Big Marsh Park Chicago) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in hearing funding opportunities and sources available • Considerations for neighboring properties • Uniqueness of Pig's Eye Dump site • Waste disposal and impact to Metro landfills
September 23, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doyne Park guest speakers • Big Marsh guest speakers • MPCA state funding overview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on other funding options that may be available for remediation or restoration (federal sources, lottery dollars, settlement funds, etc.) • How Pig's Eye Dump compares to case studies and specific challenges (floodplain, amount of waste, cost, etc.)
December 6, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public engagement update and next steps • Remediation vs. restoration goals • Bringing remediation and reuse strategies together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task Force interest in getting public input on both remediation and restoration, not just future use. • Potential for federal dollars if backfill is needed • Concern for available space in permitted landfills and the cost • Utilizing legislature to gather funding • Report development and including multiple options • Interest in hearing more input from the public on remediation and restoration options
February 13, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations from Cuyahoga National Park, Met Council, City of St. Paul, Ramsey County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task Force discussion on community survey, discussion on remedial options and potential costs.

3. Task Force final report to the legislature)

The activity budget covers contracting services required to prepare the report.

Milestones	Planned completion date	Actual completion date
Compile history of the Pig's Eye Dump site	September 30, 2023	January 12, 2024
Outline remedial action options	October 31, 2025	
Itemize restoration activities or projects to be considered	October 31, 2025	
Identify infrastructure needs and potential funding sources	October 31, 2025	
Recommend necessary legislative actions	October 31, 2025	
Task force reviews and approves final report	January 31, 2026	
Submit final report to the legislature	February 28, 2026	

Stakeholder engagement

The MPCA maintains a project website for the Task Force (<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/local-sites-and-projects/st-paul-pigs-eye-dump-task-force>), which includes the Site history, the background of the Task Force, and information on the Task Force meetings. All Task Force meetings are open to the public and recorded, and all meeting materials (agenda, recording, and notes) are posted to the project website. A project-specific email address (Pig's.Eye.Dump.Task.Force.Mailbox.MPCA@state.mn.us) was also created to ensure a consistent repository for public questions was available.

In 2024, the project team focused on raising public awareness of Pig's Eye Dump Task Force through attending pop-ups and hosting events to facilitate deeper stakeholder conversations. The team held pop-ups at three community events to share information about the site, the Task Force, and opportunities to attend meetings and get involved. In September 2024, Zan Associates (MPCA's contracted engagement/outreach consultants) and MPCA staff set up three stakeholder events to engage the public and targeted stakeholder groups. The three events included a walking tour of Pig's Eye Park/ Dump coordinated with Pig's Eye Park Friends, a virtual presentation and discussion from 6pm-7pm to allow for people to join after their workday was over, and an in-person coffee meeting at Swede Hollow Café on the Eastside with coffee hosted by MPCA. A summary of each event is shown below:

- 1. Pop-ups (3)** – Project staff attended three community events throughout the year to share information on the site history, Task Force efforts, how to attend meetings, and other opportunities to stay involved. Pop-ups were hosted at the following events:
 - a. Art in the Hollow in St. Paul's Swede Hollow neighborhood on June 1, 2024
 - b. Wakan Tipi Pollinator Festival in Lake Phalen on August 11, 2024
 - c. On the Road Again in South Saint Paul on October 5, 2024
- 2. Pig's Eye Dump Tour** – Community tour of Pig's Eye Park and Dump site that was open to the public and discuss the site's future. Partnered with Pig's Eye Park Friends to host the tour during their usually scheduled weekly walking time, with them as tour guides.

3. **Virtual Community Meeting** – A virtual meeting was held at night for community members to join. The project team shared an overview and background information on Pig’s Eye Dump, the task force, engagement plan, and discussed the future of the site and attendees’ visions. Attendees shared that they would like to see increased accessibility and awareness of the park, a focus on biodiversity, and restoring the site as a wetland.
4. **In-person Community Coffee Discussion** – Provided background information on Pig’s Eye Dump and facilitated a discussion on the future of the site. Attendees shared their visions for the dump at a neutral location away from the MPCA. Attendees shared that they would like to see the sites history preserved, opportunities for youth involvement, and full remediation and restoration of the site.
5. **Community survey** – Outlines potential future uses for the site and the possible steps to achieve them. The results of this survey will not determine the future use, but will help guide Task Force recommendations to the legislature.

Task Force final report to the Legislature

The Task Force final report to the Legislature is due on February 25, 2026. The MPCA has compiled the history of the Pig's Eye Dump Site and continues to gather information to support development of remedial strategies and restoration plans by the Task Force.