



# Natural Resources

## Rivers and Streams

There are over 300 miles of streams and rivers in Rice County. Much of the county utilizes the watershed of the Cannon River and its tributaries, including the Straight River and Prairie Creek. A small portion of southeastern Rice County flows into the North Branch of the Zumbro River, and the northwestern corner of the county lies in the Lower Minnesota River watershed (Shakopee).

**River:** Natural stream of water that flows in a channel with, more or less, defined banks. Rivers are a fundamental link in the hydrologic cycle, and they play a major role in shaping the surface features of the Earth. River flow is sustained by the difference between water input and output. (Source Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

Rivers play a vital role in the economy, ecology, and social fabric of communities. They provide invaluable benefits to everyone - clean water, food, energy, as well many other benefits that support economies and livelihood. Communities derive considerable benefit from healthy rivers and pay considerable cost when conditions decline.

Healthy river systems contribute to:

- A healthier environment to live, work, and play (swim and relax);
- High quality water for homes, farms and businesses;
- Diverse ecological systems;
- Recreational tourism and commercial fishing opportunities;
- An attractive and enjoyable destination for industry, family and tourists.



Source: Community Design Assistance Center- Virginia Tech

