

Skokie Consolidated Drainage District IEPA MS4 Inspection Summary Report – Permit Year 23

Inspection Period: March 2025 – March 2026

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The following Items are to be upgraded in 2026 to improve data efficiency and completeness.

- Map Integration: Show inspection locations directly in the report.
- Form Updates: Add a "Notes" section and make photo uploads mandatory.
- Automation: Auto-fill the project number, client name, and subwatershed for all inspection reports.
- Issue Alerts: Set up automated email triggers to alert the relevant people when a deficiency is found.

1. Purpose and Executive Summary

The Skokie Consolidated Drainage District (SCDD) is a special purpose District created under the Illinois Drainage Code. The District manages the upper portions of the North Branch of the Chicago River in Lake County, Illinois. Specifically within SCDD management are drainage systems in the Skokie River and Middle Fork sub-watersheds. The District is responsible for the maintenance of the channels and culverts, to the extent of ensuring channel conveyance capacity is maintained or improved where the stream system becomes degraded. The district performs its work through a right-of-access drainage easement within its legally defined boundaries. While SCDD does not own the stream channels or outfalls within its jurisdiction, it monitors their condition to identify concerns that may require maintenance or remediation.

This Inspection Summary Report has been prepared to fulfill the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) inspection requirements for the current permitting cycle. The inspection period covered by this report extends from March 2025 through March 2026. Reach 5 of both the Middle Fork North Branch of the Chicago River (MFCR) and the Skokie River (SR) were covered in this permit cycle.

Streambanks:

Streambank conditions were assessed to determine whether new sloughing or increased erosion has occurred since completion of the most recent Lake County Stormwater Management Commission (SMC) Field Assessment Data and the North Branch Chicago River Watershed – Lake County Stream Inventory (2019). No new areas of new bank sloughing or failures were identified during the inspection period. Areas previously identified as severely eroded were observed to be stable, with no changes in slope noted (see Figure 5 and 6). It is worth noting that the slope along MFCR on Briargate Drive in Highland Park remains severe, and a failure of that streambank would cause damage to the road.

Outfalls:

This report also documents outfall conditions within the Skokie Consolidated Drainage District (SCDD), identifies any outfalls in need of repair, and, where feasible, notes potential ownership responsibility for those structures. Dozens of outfall pipes have been abandoned or removed since the 2019 inventory. This is mainly due to extensive drainage improvements at the Sunset Valley and Bob O' Link Golf Courses. Where there used to be numerous small drainage pipes within these golf courses, there are now consolidated, larger, single pipes. Other abandoned pipes are due to changes in private property drainage.

Debris Jams:

No debris jams were found along the Middle Fork Chicago River. Two large debris jams were found on the Skokie River between Clavey Road and Lake Cook Road within the North Shore Water Reclamation District property. The SCDD Project Coordinator and Attorney were notified the same day. The Project Coordinator subsequently obtained quotes to remove the debris jams, authorized the contractor to proceed, and the jams have been removed. Removal of these jams may have been the most valuable outcome of the 2025 inspections

Illicit Discharges:

Of the 78 outfalls inspected, one potential illicit discharge was identified at the outlet pipe from the Northmoor Country Club Pond #3, which discharges to the Skokie River. Upon further investigation, the discoloration of rainwater from this outlet pipe had dissipated. Based on these observations, it appeared that a chemical treatment may have been applied in the pond area, causing the discoloration.

Due to the quick dissipation of the discoloration, no further action was required or taken. The City of Highland Park, the SCDD Project Coordinator, and the Attorney were notified of the situation and findings.

Water Quality:

Minor, noticeable problems were observed in the Middle Fork of the Chicago River due to elevated total suspended solids (turbidity). This was less of an issue in the Skokie River. No odor, oil sheens, chemicals, or discoloring were found. There was a small amount of suds found on the Middle Fork of the Chicago River near Deerfield Road. No source of the suds was observable. Regarding water chemistry, there are documented nutrient and chloride concerns on both streams. For more details on water sampling that is being done, see the North Branch Watershed Workgroup (NBWW) Website <https://www.nbwwil.org/reports-and-data/>

2. River Reaches, Inspection Strategy and Reporting Parameters

2.a. Overview of Inspection Reaches

For purposes of the MS4 annual inspection program, the Middle Fork of the North Branch Chicago River (TABLE 1) and the Skokie River (TABLE 2) were divided into five (5) distinct reaches. These reaches are consistent with those developed for the MS4 yearly inventories and align with the Lake County Stream Inventory framework. One reach is to be inspected on each stream per year, and once the five-year cycle concludes, it will be repeated. You can see the planned progression of inspections in the tables below.

TABLE 1

Middle Fork North Branch Chicago River - MS4 Inspection Reaches and Outfalls										
Reach#	MFCR Outfall#		#Found	% of Outfalls	Point of Geographical Reference		57,000 Approx Distance	=Total Stream Length % of Length	Inspection Year	Program Yr
	US	DS			US	DS				
1	1	24		18%	Atkinson Flood Facility	US Face Metra Tracks S of 176 (42.268, - 87.893)	12,100	21%	2029	27
2	25	44		15%	DS Face Metra Tracks S of 176 (42.268, - 87.893)	Melody Road (Extended) (Crossing of MFCR)	11,600	20%	2028	26
3	44	75		24%	Melody Road (Extended) (Crossing of MFCR)	Old Elm Road (Crossing of MFCR)	10500	18%	2027	25
4	75	95		15%	Old Elm Road (Crossing of MFCR)	Deerfield High School North Property Line	11900	21%	2026	24
5	95	131A	38	28%	Deerfield High School North Property Line	Deerfield Road DS Face	10900	19%	2025	23
				100%			57,000	100%		

TABLE 2

Skokie River - MS4 Inspection Reaches and Outfalls										
Reach#	SR Outfall#		% of Outfalls	#Found	Point of Geographical Reference		69,000 Approx Distance *	=Total (FT) Stream Length % of Length	Inspection Year	MS4 Program Yr
	US	DS			US	DS				
1	1	78	23%		Washington Street**	Oriole Grove Trail** (Witchwood Extended)	20,600	30%	2029	27
2	78	156	23%		Oriole Grove Trail (Witchwood Extended)	Onwentsia Road	12,600	18%	2028	26
3	156	234	22%		Onwentsia Road	Old Elm	8000	12%	2027	25
4	234	295	18%		Old Elm	Fredrickson Place	15700	23%	2026	24
5	295	331	13%	40	Fredrickson Place	Lake Cook Road	12100	18%	2025	23
			100%				69,000	100%		

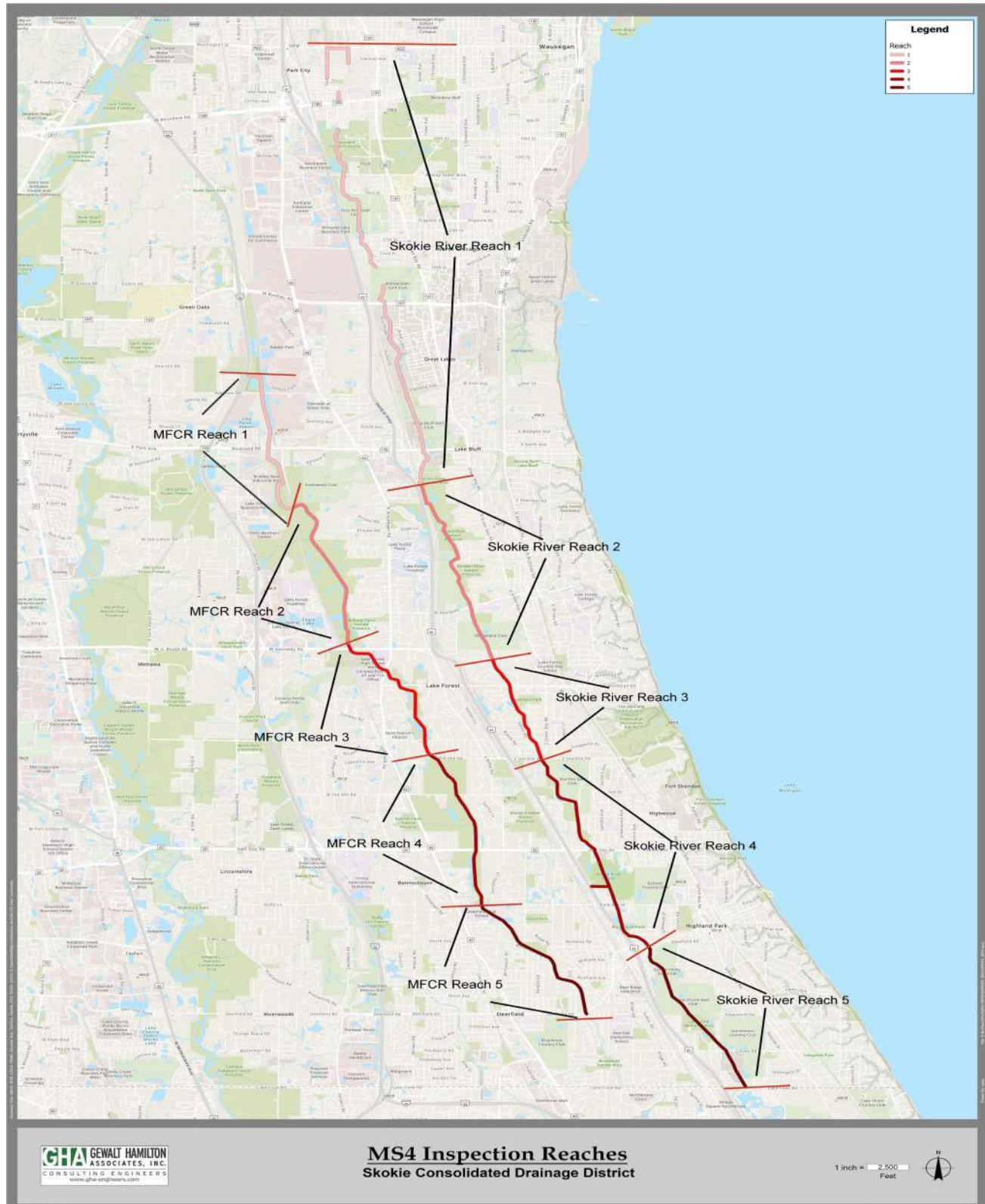
*Minus enclosed conduit sections under the Navy Willow Glen Golf Course and Park City from Rt 120 to Greenbelt

*Minus the channel section within the Naval Station Great Lakes

2.b. Overall Reach Map

Figure 1 below is the overall reach map depicting the five inspection reaches for both the Middle Fork of the North Branch Chicago River and the Skokie River. The map provides a watershed-wide context for the inspection program.

FIGURE 1



2.c. Inspection Process and Strategy

2025 Inspections were done by canoe. This proved to be a very efficient method and less strenuous than walking the entire reach. Reach 4 in 2026 will be attempted by canoe; however, this method will eventually become impossible as inspections move upstream due to a lack of flow in the upper watershed. An ARCGIS application called Fieldmaps was preloaded on two iPads, one for each inspector. The baseline data from LCSMC's 2019 stream inventory was also loaded into the GIS application. The third staff member steered the canoe and stopped it during data collection. The iPads were also used to take pictures of the outfalls, and post-processing combined the reports with pictures for each outfall.

2.d. Reporting Parameters

The following (Figure 2) is a sample outfall report detailing the data collected. In total, 40 outfalls were found on the Skokie River and 38 on the Middle Fork Chicago River. All the outfall reports can be found at the following link: [2025 SCDD Outfall Inspection Reports](#)

Figure 2 Sample Outfall Report

MS4 Outfall Inspection Report

Client: SCDD
Project Number: 6005.001 MS4



Section A – Background Data	
Inspector Information	
Inspector(s): NR NW MW	Outfall ID: SR-298
Date: July 29, 2025	Time: 7:48 am
Subwatershed: Skokie River	

Section B – Outfall Description			
Storm Sewer (Closed Pipe)			
Material: RCP	Shape: Circular	# of Barrels: 1	Dimensions (in): 18
Submerged in Water?: No		Submerged in Sediment?: No	
Other:			
Open Drainage (Swale/Ditch)			
Material:		Shape:	
Depth (in):	Top Width (in):	Bottom Width (in):	

Section C – Physical Indicators	
General	
Outfall Damage: None	Comment:
Deposits/Stains: Flow Line	Comment:
Abnormal Vegetation: None	Comment:
Pool Quality: None	Pipe Algae/Growth: None
Clarity: Good	Settled Solids: None
Do physical indicators suggest an illicit discharge is present? No	
Non-illicit discharge concerns (e.g. trash, infrastructure repair): None	
Flow	
Flow Present? No	Flow Description:
Odor Description:	Severity:
Color Description:	Severity:
Floatables Description:	Severity:
Turbidity Severity:	
Do flow indicators suggest an illicit discharge is present? No	

MS4 Outfall Inspection Report

Client: SCDD
Project Number: 6005.001 MS4



Images:



3. Middle Fork North Branch Chicago River Reach 5

3.a. Description and Summary

The Middle Fork Chicago River Reach 5 (See Figure 3) upstream extent is at the northern boundary of Deerfield High School property. The downstream extent is approximately 380 feet downstream of Deerfield Road. In total, it is approximately 10,900 feet (2.06 miles) in length with 38 found outfalls. This comprises about 18% of the stream length and 28% of the outfalls within the district. This reach has 21,800 feet of streambank, with 7% Forest Preserve, 16% school (DHS), 7% religious institution, and the vast majority (70%) private residential properties.

Figure 3 – MFCR Reach 5 Map and Streambank Condition



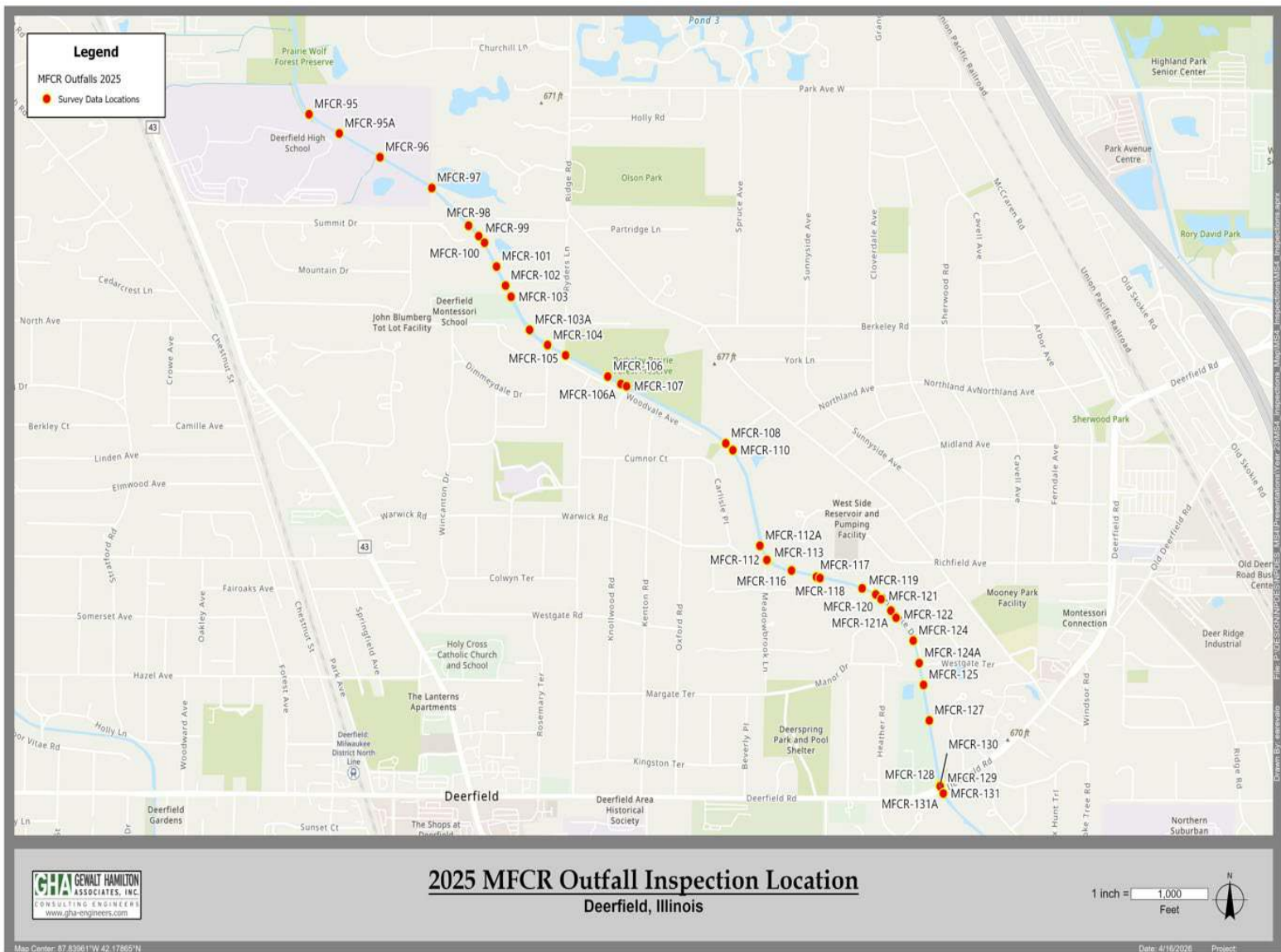
3.b. Outfalls

38 outfalls were inspected (See Figure 4 below). Many outfalls appeared to be abandoned, as noted on the inspection forms. These were all on private properties. The MFCR outfall reports can be found here: [MFCR Outfalls](#)

i. Illicit Discharges

No illicit discharges were found on the Middle Fork North Branch Chicago River

Figure 4 Middle Fork Chicago River Outfall Locations



3.c. Streambanks

Streambank conditions were evaluated during field inspections and compared against the Lake County SMC Field Assessment Data and the North Branch Chicago River Watershed – Lake County Stream Inventory (2019).

No new areas of bank sloughing were identified. No reaches exhibited increasing erosion relative to prior documented conditions. Of the 21,800 feet of streambank, 16% exhibit severe erosion (high), including the streambank along Briargate Drive; 22% have moderate erosion; and the remaining majority (62%) is in a low-erosion condition.

Figure 5 Middle Fork Chicago River Streambank Conditions



3.d. Debris and Debris Jams

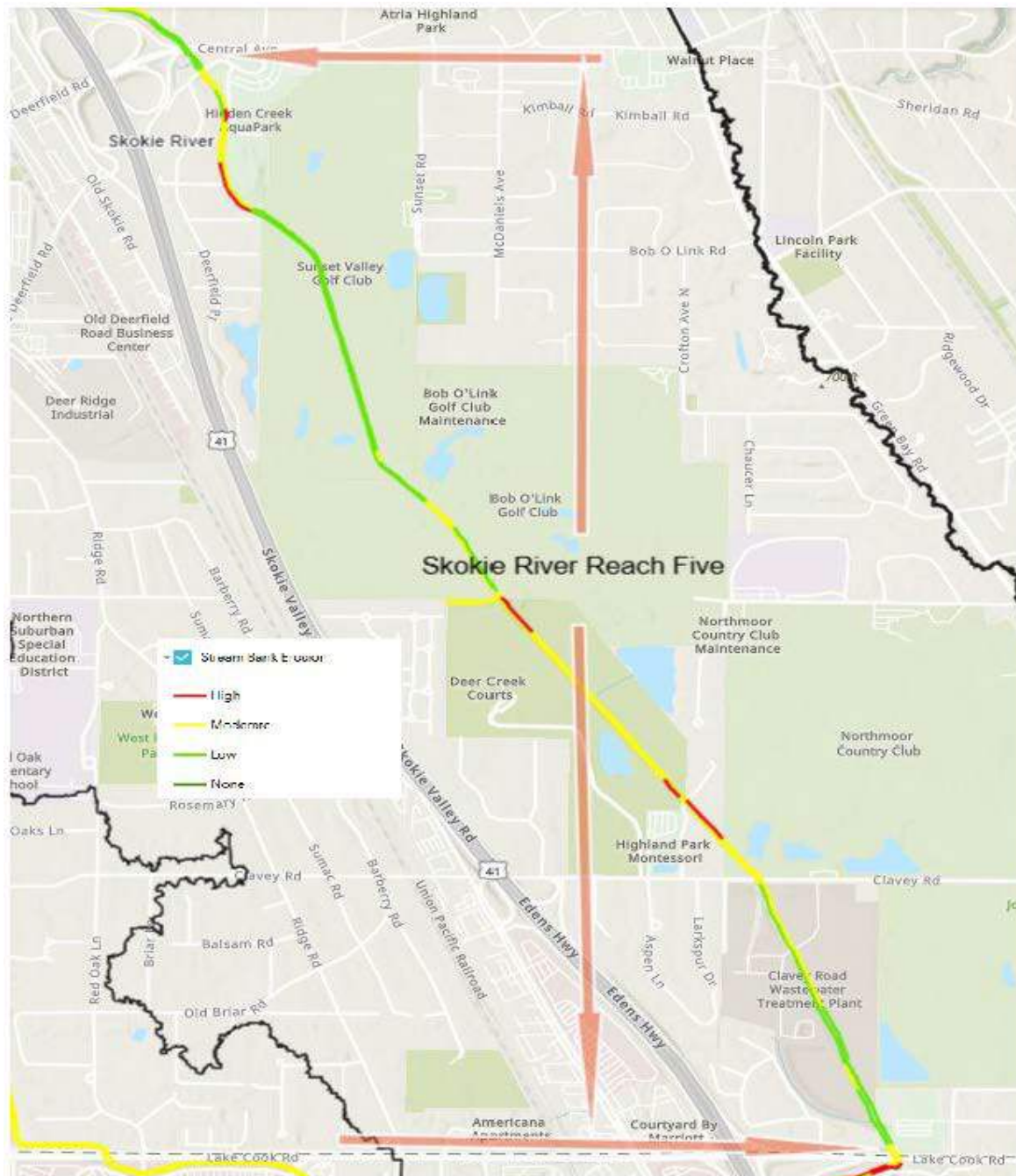
Very little debris was present on the Middle Fork Chicago River. Occasionally, a single downed tree limb was noted, but no debris jams were observed forming near the few random limbs found.

4. Skokie River Reach 5

4.a. Description and Summary

The Skokie River Reach 5 upstream extent is at Fredrickson Place just south of Central Avenue in Highland Park. The downstream extent is the upstream side of Lake-Cook Road near the Chicago Botanic Gardens. In total, it is approximately 12,100 feet (2.3 miles) in length with 40 found outfalls. This comprises about 18% of the stream length and 13% of the outfalls within the district. This reach has 24,200 feet of streambank, with 7% private golf courses (Bob O'Link/Northmoor), 21% Government (NSWRD), and comprising half of this (50%) is park district (PDHP), and the remaining amount (22%) is private residential properties.

Figure 6 Skokie River Reach 5



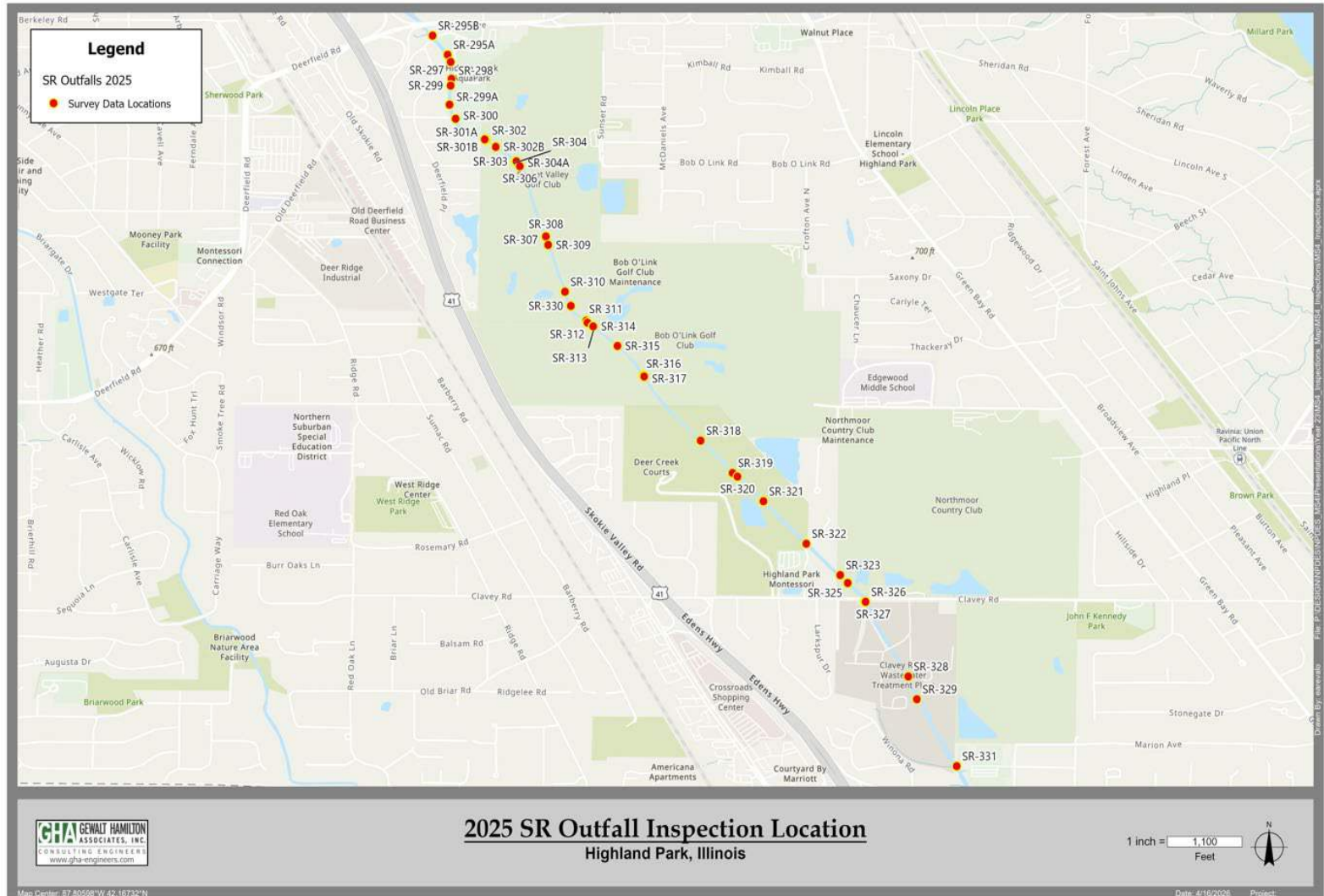
4.b. Outfalls

40 outfalls were inspected (see location map below). There was a significant amount of pipe removals from the 2019 inventory due to drainage changes at Sunset Valley and Bob O' Link golf courses. Many outfalls appeared to be abandoned, and that was noted on the inspection forms. The SR outfall reports can be found here: [Skokie Outfalls](#)

i. Illicit Discharges

Of the 78 outfalls inspected, one potential illicit discharge was identified at the outlet pipe from the Northmoor Country Club Pond #3, which discharges to the Skokie River. Upon further investigation, the discoloration of rainwater from this outlet pipe had dissipated. Based on these observations, it appeared that a chemical treatment may have been applied in the pond area, causing the discoloration. Due to the quick dissipation of the discoloration, no further action was required or taken.

Figure 7 Skokie River Outfall Locations

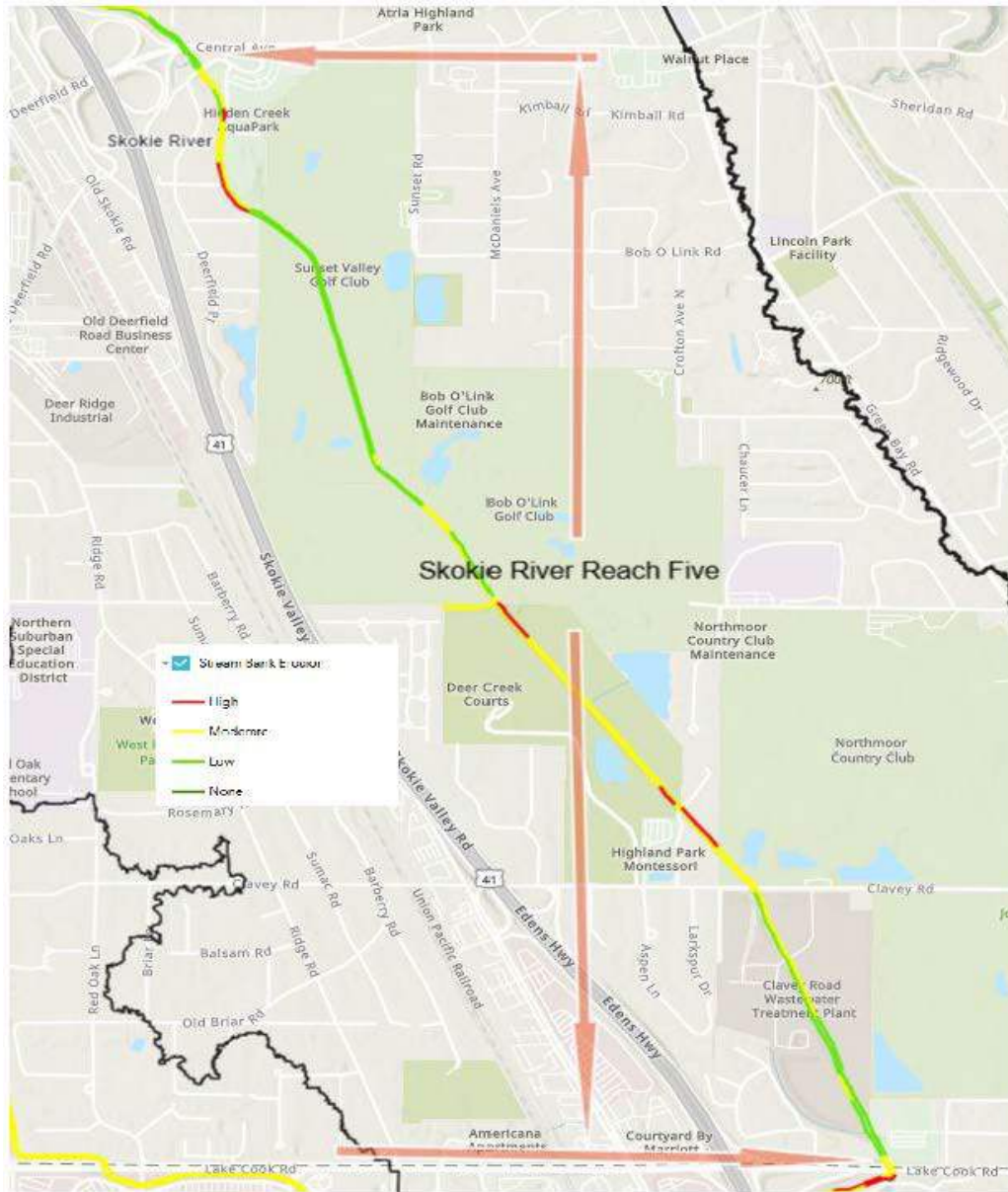


4.c. Streambanks

Streambank conditions were evaluated during field inspections and compared against the Lake County SMC Field Assessment Data and the North Branch Chicago River Watershed – Lake County Stream Inventory (2019).

No new areas of bank sloughing were identified. No reaches exhibited increased erosion relative to documented conditions in 2019. 7% of the streambanks are experiencing severe erosion (high), 57% have moderate erosion, and the remaining (36%) of the streambanks are in a low erosion condition.

Figure 8 Middle Fork Chicago River Streambank Conditions



4.e. Debris and Debris Jams

Two large debris jams were found on the Skokie River between Clavey Road and Lake Cook Road within the North Shore Water Reclamation District property. Both jams were completely blocking the river, necessitating portaging the canoe around them. The SCDD Project Coordinator and Attorney were notified the same day. The Project Coordinator subsequently obtained quotes to remove the debris jams, authorized the contractor to proceed, and the jams have been removed. Removal of these jams may have been the most valuable outcome of the 2025 inspections.

Figure 10 Skokie River Debris Jam Photos

