

**Bridging Troubled Waters** by *Greg Lecker*  
Watercolor paintings, water-based ink block prints

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## **Bridging Troubled Waters** by *Greg Lecker*

Works in the Exhibition

*Gallery Imaginé; #183 Northrup King Building*

1500 Jackson Street NE; Minneapolis, MN 55413

November 7, 2024 – December 5, 2024

Watercolor paintings, water-based ink block prints, 8" x 10"

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### **1. Buoyancy**

Tires, Styrofoam, coolers and the occasional refrigerator door and canoe can be found floating in the creek.

### **2. Mystery Seep**

Seeps with oily sheen are evidence of organic substances of unknown origin.

### **3. Tic-Tac-Toe: Snow Flow**

Road salt, sand and other impurities like leaves and vehicle fluids run off streets and parking lots during rainfall and snow melt. Reducing the amount of impervious surfaces would reduce stormwater runoff that leads to erosion and flooding.

### **4. CSO - Combined Sewer Outflow**

When heavy rainfall overwhelms municipal wastewater facilities, raw sewage is discharged into water bodies (civilizations original sewage system). The City of Minneapolis has been working to eliminate CSO since the 1960s. Minneapolis and St. Paul worked to separate sanitary and storm sewers between 1986 and 1995. Now, the only remaining connections are those deemed most expensive to separate.

### **5. Waters With Borders**

A waterway like Bassett Creek naturally undulates and overflows its banks into a floodplain. Sheet metal piling, stone and concrete retaining walls and bridge abutments constrain Bassett Creek to narrow channels that increase forces on the few natural banks leading to erosion.

Rivers and creeks often naturally form floodplains or oxbows in shallow gradients. Older waterways cut deeper valleys and even gorges. Younger waterways or those with minimal gradient overflow their banks in times of heavy rains. This allows for greater capacity for floodwaters and allows floodwaters to seep into the soil and recharge underground aquifers.

### **6. Garbage Collection**

Each spring on the Saturday nearest to Earth Day (April 22), Minneapolis residents and friends spend a morning collecting trash from parks. In Harrison and Bryn Mawr neighborhoods, we focus our efforts on Bassett Creek. Much refuse blows or flows to the lowest point in the landscape – the creek. There, it is snagged by branches dangling and fallen in the creek. Illegal dumping also contributes to the garbage we find in the creek.

### **7. If Not For The Railroad**

This spur rail line has not been used in some time, as evidenced by the volunteer trees that have grown amidst railroad ties and between the rails themselves. This creek crossing, a connection between woodland paths, would not exist if not for the Railroad.

### **8. Underwater Travels**

Bicycles and tires are among the largest items discarded in the creek.

### **9. Forgotten Branch**

Faulty engineering design resulted in culverts being installed at an incorrect elevations or slopes. Consequently, the backwaters of the north branch of Bassett Creek have a fraction of the water flow compared with the main branch. What could be floodwater storage is a stagnant pool with algal blooms.

### **10. Shop Till You Drop - All My Worldly Possessions**

Without a permanent home to store clothes, sleeping bag and food; homeless rely on small wire-framed carts, wheeled luggage or grocery carts to carry everything. A \$200 cost to stores, shopping carts are a life raft - allowing a person to hold onto the reminders of a time before they ended up on the streets.

### **11. Hide and Seek Creek**

On the western edge of downtown Minneapolis, Bassett Creek enters one of two tunnels that burrow under skyscrapers toward their junction with the Mississippi River. At the largest, a sturdy grating catches brush and trash.

### **12. Private Profit: Public Pain**

The site of the former Precision Plating - designated a Superfund site, is encircled by chain link fencing. Inside, unknown substances are stored in 55-gallon drums. The 55-gallon drum was originally designed for transporting crude oil. It's a popular shape and size of container because it's the largest package that can be easily moved by one person, while still being able to hold a lot. The drum is strong, durable and can be rolled into place or put on a pallet for a forklift.

### **13. Creekside Mill Ruins**

Fruen Mill built in the 1890s, rises next to Bassett Creek near Theodore Wirth Park on the city's west side. The mill's owner was one of the first manufacturers of table cereals in Minneapolis. After it was sold to ConAgra in 1971, the mill was closed and fenced off. Trespassers, self-named urban explorers, have been injured while investigating the six-story concrete building, and at least one person killed while exploring the crumbling mill.

### **14. Creekside Graffiti Gallery**

Numerous roadway bridges cross the creek: Glenwood Avenue, Penn Avenue, Cedar Lake Road, and Van White Memorial Parkway. Some of the finest graffiti can be found on the bridge abutments.

### **15. Urban Underground**

The creek's path is straightened to follow property lines of industrial property including the Minneapolis vehicle impound lot, just out of view to the right side of the power transmission lines in this view. "Out of sight; out of mind" describes this part of the creek.