



Working with citizens to conserve and manage the state's natural resources, to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and to provide for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that

Report to the Legislature

Definitions and Thresholds for Negative Impacts to Surface Waters

THE REQUEST

The 2015 Legislature has directed the Department of Natural Resources to consult with interested stakeholders and submit a report by December 15, 2015. The specifics of the directive are:

Sec. 143. NEGATIVE SURFACE WATER IMPACTS; RECOMMENDATIONS.

By December 15, 2015, the commissioner of natural resources shall consult with interested stakeholders and submit a report to the Legislative Water Commission and the chairs and ranking minority members of the house of representatives and senate committees and divisions with jurisdiction over the environment and natural resources policy and finance on recommendations for statutory or rule definitions and thresholds for negative impacts to surface waters as described in Minnesota Statutes, sections 103G.285 and 103G.287, subdivision 2. Stakeholders must include but are not limited to agricultural interests; environmental interests; businesses; community water suppliers; state, federal, and local agencies; universities; and other interested stakeholders.

The DNR recognizes that writing this report is an excellent opportunity to engage a wide range of individuals and organizations in a discussion of an important natural resource challenge: long-term sustainable use of groundwater for drinking water, irrigation, livestock, and industry.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The DNR established a Project Stakeholder Advisory Group that includes representatives of interests identified in the legislation. The following organizations are participating:

- American Water Works Association – MN Section
- Association of Minnesota Counties
- Clean Water Action (for MN Environmental Partnership)
- Coalition of Lake Associations
- Ducks Unlimited
- Freshwater Society
- Irrigators Association of Minnesota
- Izaak Walton League
- League of Minnesota Cities
- MN Ag Water Resources Center
- MN Area II Potato Growers Council
- MN Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- MN Association of Watershed Districts
- MN Cattlemen's Association
- MN Corn Growers Association
- MN Golf Course Superintendents' Association
- MN Lakes and Rivers Association
- MN Municipal Utilities Association
- MN Rural Water Association
- MN Soybean Growers Association
- MN Water Well Association
- MN Waterfowl Association
- MN Well Drillers Association
- Northern Plains potato Growers
- The Nature Conservancy
- Trout Unlimited



Working with citizens to conserve and manage the state's natural resources, to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and to provide for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that

The Advisory Group is our most structured way of engaging stakeholders in our process. However, we recognize that interest in the project will extend well beyond those with the opportunity and capacity to participate directly on the Advisory Group. Therefore, as described below we are using a variety of communications tools to inform interested parties about the project and seek their input as we develop the required report.

PROJECT COMMUNICATIONS

The DNR has established a webpage for the project, so interested citizens and organizations can understand the project and its progress. We are also using GovDelivery to promote Advisory Team meetings to a wide range of stakeholders and provide other information about the project.

THE PROJECT TECHNICAL TEAMS

The DNR has established four technical work groups focused on stream systems, lake systems, wetland systems, and policy and procedures. The technical teams consist primarily of staff from multiple DNR divisions, but also include experts from the University of Minnesota, other state and federal agencies, and the private sector.

- Streams/Trout Streams
- Lakes
- Wetlands/Fens
- Policy/Procedures

The Project Stakeholder Advisory Team is meeting five times over five months. Team meetings are open to the public, and are being held in the western suburbs of the Twin Cities. Project team leaders are also in direct contact with individual stakeholders (both Advisory Team members and others), for one-on-one discussions, seeking advice and insight, throughout the project.

PROJECT MEETING SCHEDULE

Meeting 1 – August 26: orientation to the project; advice on project issues, focus, design, and participation.

Meeting 2 –September 30: overview of technical team analysis and draft products.

Meeting 3 –October 21: stakeholder perspectives about technical team draft products.

Meeting 4 – November 12: review and advice on first draft of the report.

Meeting 5 – December 10: presentation of the final report and advice on where else to present the findings