

Weekly LWC Update 11-11-16

Interested reader: each week, I gather general information for Legislative Water Commission members to help keep them apprised about water issues in Minnesota. It contains a roundup of easily attainable MN water news, as well as articles from beyond MN that may inform member thinking. It also includes summaries of meetings I have attended and reports I have read, as well as info about upcoming events. During the Legislative Session, it also includes updates on water-related legislation. Any errors or omissions are inadvertent.

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MN WATER NEWS

WATER ACTIONS

- St Paul Chamber of Commerce: [Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce Announces 2016 Deubener Award Winners](#); including Solution Blue, a firm that designs sustainable civil engineering and landscape architecture solutions
- Byron Review: [Mapping Our Way to Cleaner Water](#)
- Sun Focus: [State of the Waters in Ramsey County](#)
- Detroit Lakes Online: [Minnesota Energy Resources offering free water conservation kits](#)

SURFACE WATER/STORMWATER

- St Peter Herald: [Heavy rains left southern Minnesota rivers polluted. How can we fix that?](#) and MPR: [Heavy rains left southern MN rivers polluted. How can we fix that?](#) (this article has more photos)
- Rochester Post Bulletin: [Greenspace: Hear how we'll protect the Zumbro watershed's 'lobes'](#)
- DNR: [Zebra mussels confirmed in Adley Lake in Otter Tail County](#)
- St Cloud Times: [Mississippi health improving, but new threats emerge](#) and WJON: [State of the Mississippi River Report Shows Positive Trend in River Health](#)
- US Army Corps of Engineers St. Paul District announced their plan to issue 42 and revoke 10 of the 2017 nationwide permits ([Proposal to Reissue and Modify Nationwide Permits](#)) in MN and WI; comments are due 11/28/16; contact Jill Bathke, MN Policy Liaison/ Nationwide Permit Team Lead St. Paul District Army Corps of Engineers, at 651.290.5697 or 612.475.0869 for more info
- Eden Prairie News: [Eden Prairie fire station water project to bring conservation, education opportunities](#)
- Fergus Falls Daily Journal: [County considers new route for lake pipe](#)
- Minnesota Daily: [U researchers make renewable soap molecule](#); could lead to less soap use and less soap in wastewater

WATER SUPPLY

- Pioneer Press: [How safe is your drinking water? Here's how to find out](#)
- West Virginia Record: [Customer says Wal-Mart drinking water actually was window cleaner](#); a MN company, Premium Waters, bottles water for Wal-Mart store brands
- South Washington County Bulletin: [Well water watch underway in city: City to implement 10-year well monitoring program](#)

AG & WATER

- Lakefield Standard: [A chat with Danielle Evers - Area Certification Specialist with the Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Program](#)

EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

- Strib: [Lawsuit alleges lax regulation of major Minnesota taconite mine](#) and Duluth News Tribune: [Lawsuit wants Minntac discharge regulated](#)

OPINIONS

- Hutchinson Leader: [Editorial: Have any concerns about your water?](#); results from an online survey asking people what they thought about the quality and safety of their drinking water are shared

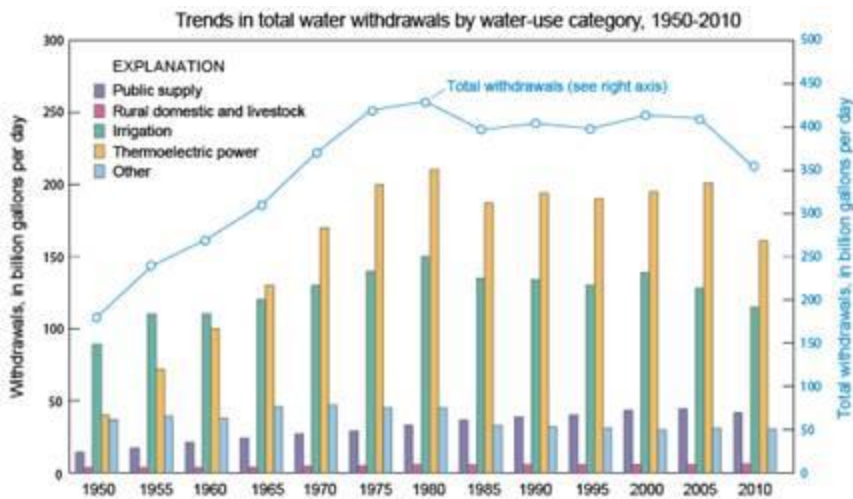
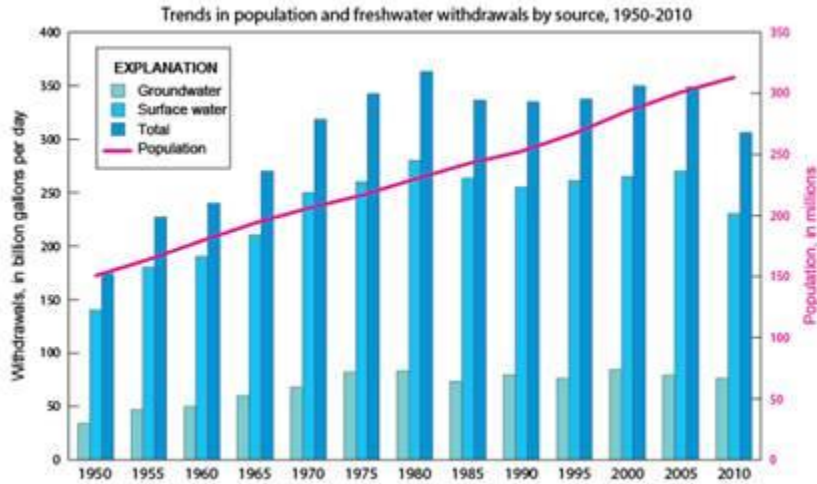
BEYOND MINNESOTA

REGIONAL

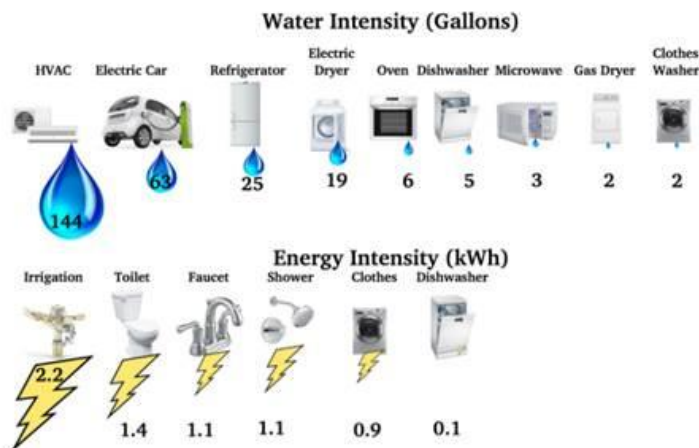
- EPA: Clean Water Act Sections [301\(h\) and \(j\)\(5\) draft waiver](#) for the Blom Point Loma Metropolitan Wastewater Treatment Plant and Ocean Outfall in San Diego, CA; if approved, the facility will be allowed to discharge treated wastewater that exceeds TSS and BOD standards for five years in return for building by 2035 advanced treatment facilities to recycle water for 1/3rd of the water needed by the city and, in turn, reduce pollution discharges to the ocean; the plan is to invest \$3B in the recycled water program and avoid a \$2B Point Loma plant upgrade and reduce the city's reliance on imported water; Congress would need to approve a permanent exemption
- NPR: [Manure Happens, Especially When Hog Farms Flood](#)
- Wisconsin Gazette: [Water quality investment pays dividends](#); a study found that environmental grants also positively impact the economy
- New Richmond News: [Roberts: Clean water technology could have global impact](#)
- Strib: [As polluted water went down Florida sinkhole, Mosaic avoided the 's-word'](#)

NATIONAL

- The White House: [Opportunities to Enhance the Nation's Resilience to Climate Change](#); recognizing the many threats associated with climate change, including the reliability of water supplies, this White House paper identifies opportunities for the federal government to improve US resilience, with actions categorized into 3 themes:
 - Theme 1: Advancing and applying science-based information, technology, and tools to address climate risk
 - Theme 2: Integrating climate resilience into Federal agency missions, operations, and culture
 - Theme 3: Supporting community efforts to enhance climate resilience
- USGS: [Trends, 1950-2010](#)



- Seattle Times: [Environmentalists sue BNSF to cover coal trains, prevent water pollution](#)
- Bloomberg BNA: [EPA on Notice for Not Regulating Some Tap Water Contaminants](#)
- Wisconsin Ag Connection: [More Ag Groups Urge Court to Throw Out WOTUS Rule](#)
- Environmental Defense Fund: [Home Is Where the Smart Is: First-of-its-Kind Study Reveals Importance of Smart Technology and Low-Water Clean Energy](#)



- US Bureau of Reclamation: [The Knowledge Stream - Research and Development Office Magazine; Fall 2016-04 - Advanced Water Treatment](#)
- GreenBiz: [Why General Mills aims to harvest the \\$50 billion benefits of healthy soil](#), one of which is improved water holding capacity



MEETINGS

RED WING WATER SUMMIT

Despite the gorgeous weather, over 40 people attended last Saturday's Red Wing Water Summit, which was held as part of the Smithsonian Water/Ways exhibit hosted by the Goodhue County Historical Society. Fourteen local and state organizations with an interest in water had table-top exhibits and staff to converse with attendees about the missions of their groups. Six student "science fair" type displays also told water stories. Three speakers gave in-depth presentations and an opportunity to get answers to their questions.

Randy Ellingboe, MN Dept of Health, gave an overview of Minnesota's drinking water sources, who uses them, how they are regulated, and what natural and artificial contamination is present in MN drinking water. Concerns were raised about how well MN is addressing groundwater pumping that is happening faster than recharge, along with groundwater quality issues; how well MN is regulating agricultural irrigation wells; what effect the Prairie Island Nuclear Plant emissions have on groundwater quality; how PFC contamination in Hastings is affecting downstream users; and whether MDH is getting adequate funding to do their work.

Megan Moore, Mn Dept of Natural Resources, explained the river restoration activities being undertaken by the US Geological Survey, the Army Corps of Engineers and various state agencies (like the DNR) in the Upper Mississippi River (from Lock and Dam #3 just upstream of Red Wing to Cairo, IL). She then focused the on the relationship between turbidity, aquatic vegetation, and fish populations in Pool 4 (from Red Wing to Alma, WI). DNR has a long record of turbidity readings at various locations in the river channel and has learned that 78% of turbidity entering Lake Pepin remains there. A drier period (due to less precipitation) occurred from 2004 - 2009, during which time they observed a decline

in TSS values and a corresponding increase in clarity, along with a decline in river levels. This situation increased light penetration, which resulted in a rebound of healthy aquatic vegetation and aquatic life. DNR believes increased clarity promoted more vegetation and that as vegetation increases, water is slowed, allowing more sediment to drop out, which further increases light penetration and fish populations. Although these findings were associated with natural changes, the results give insight into possible management strategies to sustain the restored conditions (e.g., establishing a discharge management plan for the lock and dams and for controlling sediment discharges higher in the watershed). During the question and answer period, participants learned that the next drawdown being discussed for the river is in upper pool #3 and that the species that improved with increased clarity returned without reintroduction. The latest sedimentation figures for Lake Pepin indicate that the upper part will fill in within 100 years, while the lower portion will fill in within 300 years. Lake Pepin absorbs floods well and, because of its steeper slope, the Red Wing pool sees more fluctuation than the pool above Alma.

Rebecca Flood, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, shared that MN has more water than any of the other lower 48 states and as the headwaters state for the Lake Superior, Red River and Mississippi River basins, MN has a responsibility to deliver clean water to its downstream neighbors. She noted Dayton's Year of Water Action and explained MPCA's monitoring, assessment and WRAPS processes, attributing largest remaining source of pollution to agricultural inputs. She acknowledged the progress being made with local partners on buffers and wastewater treatment and highlighted the selection of the Cannon River Watershed as 1 of the next 7 to prepare One Watershed One Plans to develop locally driven solutions. A point was made that all the watersheds in the MN River Basin should have been early starts for the WRAPS process since that area is contributing so much sediment. In response to a comment about Red Wing's participation in a lawsuit opposing MPCA's new river eutrophication phosphorus standards, she explained that wastewater facility operators are not "for dirty water" and that they've made significant investments in clean water; the lawsuit is more about MPCA's process for setting the standards and the disproportional cost incurred by point sources, while nonpoint sources are unregulated. She was asked to simplify the complex Clean Water Act, which she did as follows: states must decide for each water body what uses they want them to provide, then set standards that will provide for those uses; then states monitor to see if those standards are being met; where they aren't, TMDLs are set to identify who is responsible for excess pollutant loads and WRAPS identify what restoration activities should be undertaken. Future rounds of monitoring will identify if improvements are being made. The last question of the day was why doesn't the state know where drain tiles outlet since they are point sources. She clarified that agriculture is exempt under the Clean Water Act and that drainage is managed at the County level.

REPORTS

STATE OF MN WATER

- DNR: Stream Flow Report – discontinued until spring
- National Drought Mitigation Center: [11/8 Drought Monitor](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Nov 16: **MN Groundwater Association Fall Conference** "Modern Advances in Groundwater"; 8:00 to 4:30; \$145 (members)/\$195 (non-members); agenda and registration links [here](#)
- Nov 16-18: **MN Association of Floodplain Managers 2016 Annual Conference**; \$160; Kelly Inn, St Cloud; brochure [here](#); register [here](#)
- Nov 17: **MN's Water Reuse Stakeholder Meeting** (open to the public); 1:30 – 4:30; MPCA Board Room

- Nov 17: **MN River Congress** meeting; Kato Ballroom in Mankato; networking fair @ 4:30 & meeting @ 7:30; for more info contact Scott Sparlin @ sesparlin@gmail.com, 507-276-2280; register [here](#)
- Nov 18: President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology **webcast to discuss a study of drinking water technology**; 9 am – 12 pm EDT; register [here](#)
- Nov 19-Jan 1: **Smithsonian Water/Ways Exhibit** at the [Audubon Center of the Northwoods](#) in Sandstone
- Dec 1-3: **MN Association of Watershed Districts Annual Meeting & Trade Show**; Arrowwood Conference Center, Alexandria; Drainage workshop on 12/1; conference agenda, costs, and registration [here](#)
- Dec 4-6: **MN Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Annual Meeting & Trade Show**; \$145 to \$220 (depending on days participating); Double Tree Hotel – Bloomington; details [here](#)
- Dec 5-6: **Association of MN Counties Annual Conference**; Hyatt Regency Minneapolis; \$375 before 11/4 & \$400 after; schedule [here](#); registration [here](#)
- Jan 17-19: 34th Annual **Red River Basin Land & Water International Summit Conference** “Passport to Progress: Thinking Beyond Our Boundaries”; \$225, Ramada Plaza Hotel in Fargo; more info [here](#)
- Jan 23-24: **MN Water Well Association’s 95th Annual Trade Show and Convention**; Minneapolis Marriott NW; more info to come [here](#)
- Feb 7: **Nutrient Management Conference**, St. Cloud; details to be announced
- Feb 16: U of MN Extension’s **Nitrogen: Minnesota's Grand Challenge and Compelling Opportunity**; Verizon Wireless Center (1 Civic Center Plaza, Mankato); details to come [here](#)
- Mar 7-9: 33rd Annual **MN Rural Water Association Water & Wastewater Technical Conference**; St Cloud; details to come [here](#)
- Apr 17: **MN Water Technology Export Roundtable: The Water Energy Nexus**, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. @ Aeration Industries (4100 Peavey Road, Chaska) \$30 (includes lunch)
- May 9: Minnesota Day at the **National Climate Adaptation Forum**; registration can be found [here](#)