

## Weekly LWC Update 12-9-16

*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.*

Barb Huberty, Director, MN Legislative Water Commission  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., 65 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
Phone: 651/284-6431  
Email: [barb.huberty@lcc.leg.mn](mailto:barb.huberty@lcc.leg.mn)

Web site: [www.lcc.leg.mn/lwc/](http://www.lcc.leg.mn/lwc/)

**The LWC will have its last meeting of the 2015/2016 biennium on Wednesday, December 14th, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. in Rm 200 of the State Office Building. Representatives of local units of government will be explaining their water infrastructure needs.**

### MN NEWS

#### WATER ACTIONS

- La Crosse Tribune: [Griffins honored at state soil and water convention](#)
- Brainerd Dispatch: [Barrick named Soil and Water employee of the year](#) and BWSR's 2016 Outstanding Watershed Employee of the Year is [Myron Jesme](#), Red Lake Watershed District
- Echo Press: [Winter grazing of cover crops is subject of workshop](#) in Starbuck on 12/13
- MinnPost: [Private land conservation surges in U.S., with the help of nonprofit trusts](#)
- MEP: [Minnesota's People, Communities, Businesses to Benefit from Water Bill that supports Great Lakes Restoration](#)

#### SURFACE WATER/STORMWATER

- Pioneer Press: [White Bear Lake wants answers about low water level, despite recent rise](#)
- Hutchinson Leader: [DNR updates Minnesota buffer map; implementation continues](#)
- MPR: [Red River diversion group seeks to have legal hurdle removed](#)
- Strib: [Lake associations, local governments boost spending against aquatic invaders](#)
- West Central Tribune: [Corps to increase flows from Lac qui Parle Dam](#)
- Lake County News Chronicle: [Program works to preserve, enhance Lake Superior coast](#)
- Duluth News Tribune: [Algae growth is first documented biological impact of warmer Lake Superior](#)
- Strib: [Residents on Edina's Lake Cornelia seek solution to toxic algae](#)
- DNR: [Zebra mussel larvae confirmed in Leech Lake](#) [with map of study areas]; [Brainerd Dispatch: DNR finds zebra mussels in Leech Lake](#); [Kare 11: Leech Lake has zebra mussel larvae](#); [MPR: Minnesota DNR finds evidence of zebra mussels in Leech Lake](#); [Pioneer Press: Zebra mussel larvae found in Leech Lake, Minnesota DNR says](#)
- Inforum: [Your fleece jacket might be polluting the Mississippi River](#) and [Pioneer Press: Your fleece jacket might be polluting the Mississippi River – and your beer](#)
- MinnPost: [Rain as a resource: St. Paul innovates shared, sustainable stormwater management](#)

## WATER SUPPLY

- Kare11: [St. Paul addresses lead in drinking water](#); related: St Paul Regional Water Services' [Reducing Your Exposure To Lead In Drinking Water](#) video

## AG & WATER

- Mesabi Daily News: [USDA Invests \\$33 Million to Improve Water Quality in High-Priority Watersheds](#); 3 watersheds in MN are in the Natural Resource Conservation Service's National Water Quality Initiative 2016 program: Gilchrist Lake-East Branch Chippewa River, Sevenmile Creek, and Big Twin Lake-Elm Creek
- BWSR: [How Healthy is your Soil?](#)
- BWSR: [No-Till/Soil Health Program at work in Clearwater County](#)

## EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

- La Crosse Tribune: [Winona County approves frac sand ban; vote comes amid final fight, legal threat](#)
- MPR: [EPA proposes rule requiring mines to cover clean-up costs](#)
- Duluth News Tribune: [Lawsuit over Minntac permit dismissed](#); Star Tribune: [Environmental groups settle lawsuit against MPCA over Minntac's long-expired water permit](#); Pioneer Press: [Environmentalists drop lawsuit over expired Minntac permit](#); Mesabi Daily News: [MCEA Drops Suit Over Minntac Pit](#)

## OPINIONS

- Forest Lake Times: [Business partnerships can save water](#)

## BEYOND MINNESOTA

### REGIONAL

- MyAJC: [Georgia, Florida await decision as water war trial concludes](#); “Ralph Lancaster Jr., the special master appointed by the U.S. Supreme Court to settle the intractable interstate dispute, will now determine whether Atlanta will get by on less water or southwest Georgia farmers will irrigate fewer acres of cotton and peanuts. Or he may simply decide that Florida didn’t prove its case.”
- KPCC: [Water conservation rules could get a lot more complicated under new proposal](#); “Under the new proposal, water agencies would have to meet customized water targets that factor in their local climate, how much outdoor landscaping is in their service area, and how efficiently local residents use water inside and out.” Some worry that such a data intensive approach is too complicated and expensive to implement.
- Strib: [Washington state suing agrochemical giant over PCB pollution](#)

### NATIONAL

- The Hill: [Congress moves closer to finalizing water bill](#)
- Real Estate Rama: [Sen. Franken: “Buy America” Iron and Steel Provision for Water Infrastructure Projects Must be Made Permanent](#)
- Climate Central: [Warming U.S. Could See Extreme Rains Increase Fivefold](#); but only a 100% increase in parts of MN
- USDA: [USDA Announces New Conservation Opportunities to Improve Water Quality and Restore Wildlife Habitat](#); including new CRP practices to protect water quality and adding 1.1 million more acres

- Strib: [EPA to require mines to offer cleanup assurances](#) and EPA: [Financial Responsibility Requirements under CERCLA § 108\(b\) for Classes of Facilities in the Hardrock Mining Industry](#)
- MPR: [Trump's pick for EPA head is a climate skeptic, has repeatedly sued agency](#)
- New York Times: [House Approves Bill on Calif. Drought, Flint Water](#); in Congress, the House passed a \$10B water resources bill; similar passage in the Senate is not assured
- Circle of Blue: [After Flint Failure, EPA Refocuses Federal Drinking Water Role](#); see report link below

## GLOBAL

- Toledo Globe: [Canada sets in motion microbeads prohibition](#)

## MEETINGS

### LCCMR

The Legislative Citizens Commission on MN Resources has concluded its processes for 2016: grant recommendations or 2017 have been made, the draft RFP has been approved and the 2017 schedule has been set. For more information go [here](#).

## REPORTS

### STATE OF MN WATER

- DNR: Stream Flow Report – discontinued until spring
- National Drought Mitigation Center: [12/6 Drought Monitor](#)

### MN WATER REPORT CARD

- At their next 21 meeting, the Environmental Quality Board will be asked to adopt the 2017 Minnesota Environment and Energy Report Card. The *draft* report can be previewed in the EQB's 12/21 meeting [packet](#). Regarding the water section of the draft Report Card, 3 water indicators have been selected and the trend for each is about the same (level arrow); overall water quality and water use getting an ok status (yellow), but nitrate gets a poor status (red):

Water	<p><b>Lake and River Water Quality:</b> Minnesota has abundant water resources overall, but quality issues threaten our future. Water concerns touch on human health, ecosystems, and our responsibility to downstream neighbors. Criteria are based on Minnesota's progress toward state and national goals for the Clean Water Act to have all waters be fishable and swimmable (100%).</p>	→
	<p><b>Water Use – What is Sustainable?</b> Minnesota is at risk of overusing water in several areas of the state. We must protect our public health, economy, ecosystems, and the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Criteria are based on the trend of the 3-year moving average of reported water use: public water supply, industrial, irrigation and other, divided by Minnesota's state population.</p>	→
	<p><b>Nitrate:</b> Nitrate is one of the most common water pollutants in MN groundwater. In areas with vulnerable groundwater, a large number of wells have elevated nitrate. Elevated nitrate in drinking water can be harmful to health, specifically to the health of infants. Criteria are based on monitoring of private well networks in two vulnerable areas of the state (southeast and central Minnesota) to determine nitrate concentrations and trends.</p>	→

## ONE WATER

The US Water Alliance has published the [One Water Roadmap](#) to make the case for the One Water approach by suggesting key strategies and offering examples where organizations are integrating their management of all water resources in an inclusive and sustainable manner for a prosperous future, with a focus on achieving economic, environmental, and social benefits.



## EPA REGROUPS AFTER FLINT

EPA has released its [Drinking Water Action Plan](#) with 6 priority action areas:

1. Build Capacity for Drinking Water Infrastructure Financing and Management in Low-Income, Small and Environmental Justice Communities
2. Next Generation Oversight of the Safe Drinking Water Act
3. Strengthen Source Water Protection and Resilience of Drinking Water Supplies
4. Proactive Strategy to Address Unregulated Contaminants
5. Strengthen Transparency, Public Information, and Risk Communication
6. Reducing Lead Risks through the Lead and Copper Rule

On a related note, the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology published this 18 page executive summary of their [Report to the President: Science and Technology to Ensure the Safety of the Nation's Drinking Water](#) with 8 recommendations for action.

## FLAME RETARDANTS

The International Joint Commission (US and Canada) designated Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers (used in fire retardants) as chemicals of mutual concern in May 2016 and agreed to develop a binational strategy (e.g., research, monitoring, surveillance, pollution prevention and control, etc.) to address them. This report, [Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers \(PBDEs\) in the Great Lakes Basin: Reducing Risks to Human Health and the Environment](#), includes recommendation to advance those goals.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Nov 19-Jan 1: **Smithsonian Water/Ways Exhibit** at the [Audubon Center of the Northwoods](#) in Sandstone
- **Dec 14: LWC Meeting, Room 200, State Office Building, 9:30 – 11:30 am**
- 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](#)
- Jan 31-Feb 2: **MN Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Annual Conference and Trade Show**; 1 Day fee-\$170 member/\$200 Nonmember or 2 Day fee-\$330 member/\$390 nonmember; Verizon Wireless Center in Mankato; schedule [here](#); register [here](#)
- Feb 3: **Minnesota Environmental Congress** (includes a water track); free; 8 am to 6 pm; U of MN Continuing Education and Conference Center (1890 Buford Avenue, St. Paul); more info [here](#)
- Feb 7: **Nutrient Management Conference**, St. Cloud; details to be announced
- Feb 9: **Water Technology Export Roundtable: Opportunities in Water Reuse**; 9:30AM – 1PM; \$30 includes lunch; @ Dow Water & Process Solutions, 7600 Metro Boulevard, Edina; register [here](#)
- Feb 13: Rinke Noonan Annual **Drainage and Wetland Conference**; River’s Edge Conference Center in St Cloud, details to come
- 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: 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual **MN Rural Water Association Water & Wastewater Technical Conference**; St Cloud; details to come [here](#)
- Apr 18: **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](#)