

Weekly LWC Update 8-26-16

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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There will not be a weekly update on 9/2 or 9/9; the next weekly update will be on 9/16.

MN NEWS

WATER ACTIONS

- St Peter Herald: [Legislators get deep dive on water quality issues](#)

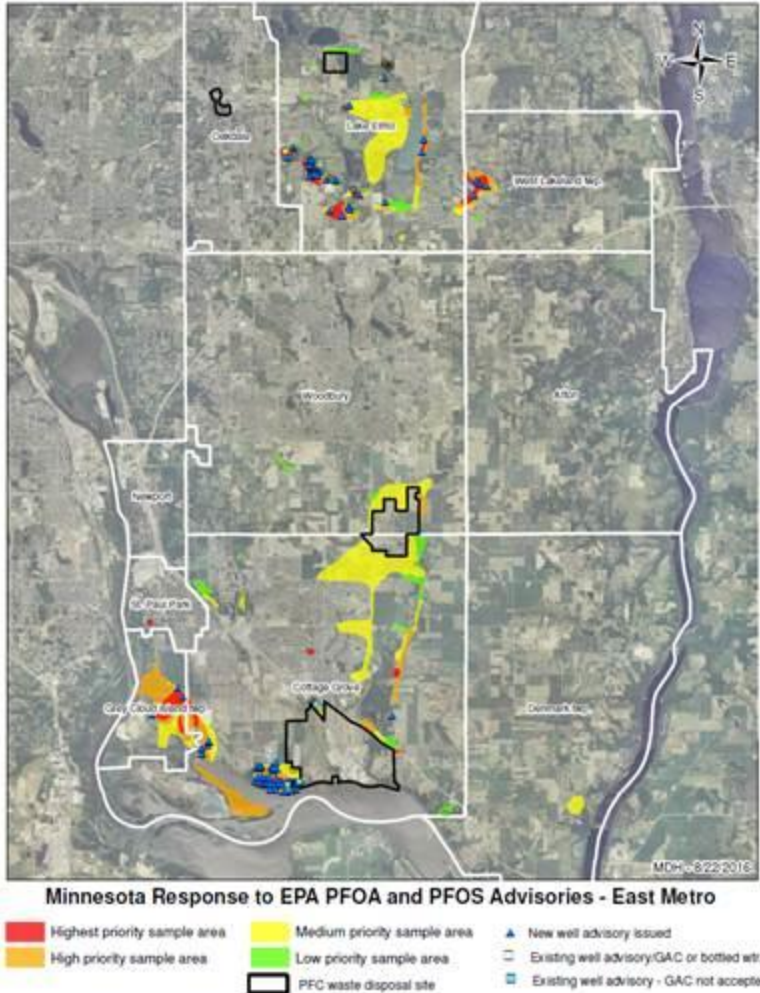


- Gov Dayton's Office: [A Year of Water Action in MN](#); MPCA: [Governor kicks off Year of Water Action](#)
- Brainerd Dispatch: [Crow Wing County: Public agrees with disbanding watershed district](#)
- St Peter Herald: [Nicollet County Historical Society hosts water events](#)
- MPCA: [Financial assistance for nonpoint source water pollution projects: Clean Water Partnership and Section 319 Programs](#)
- DNR: Proposes expedited rules to make technical corrections to the designations of designated trout lakes and streams designated in Minnesota Rules, part 6264.0050; comments are due by 4:30 p.m. on 10/3/16; learn more [here](#)
- Austin Daily Herald: [CRWD initiates water-quality project levy; Board OKs plan for contributing up to 12 percent of \\$8.4 million CIP cost](#)

- Mankato Free Press: [Mankato flood wall mural dedicated](#)
- Southwest Journal: [Wanted: innovative environmentalists](#)

WATER SUPPLY

- Moody's Investors Service: [Moody's Assigns MIG 1 to MN Rural Water Fin. Auth.'s Pub. Proj. Construction Notes](#)
- Fillmore County Journal: [Ostrander's infrastructure project](#); even when funding assistance is available, there are financing challenges that communities face - this is a great dialogue that describes that web
- Worthington Daily Globe: [Water usage up; well levels still above average](#)
- Strib: [Turf war: Overwatering our lawns is sucking up our water supply](#)
- Rochester Post Bulletin: [Answer Man: Do restaurants have to serve free water?](#)
- MPR: [Ode to a Minnesota water tower](#)
- Pioneer Press: [Lead tests find 233 St. Paul school water fixtures over EPA limit](#)
- MDH: [Health officials move to protect more well owners in east metro from exposure to PFOS, PFOA](#); EPA has issued new lifetime drinking water health advisory guidance for perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) of 70 parts per trillion each or 70 ppt, combined. These two compounds are within the family of perfluorochemicals (PFCs). The new guidance is lower than EPA's previous interim advisory values of 200 ppt (PFOS) and 400 ppt (PFOA). As a result, MDH and MPCA will be conducting additional testing of private wells within the priority areas noted on the following map. Where exceedences of the new limit are found, bottled water and granular activated carbon filters are options to replace or treat the water used for cooking or drinking. No public community water supplies in these areas have exceedences of the new limits in their finished water. For more information, go to: [MDH Response to EPA Health Advisory for PFOS and PFOA](#). Media coverage:
 - KARE 11: [More well contamination in east metro](#)
 - Strib: [80 homes in Washington County will get bottled water as state reviews new pollution standards](#)
 - MPR: [Bottled water for 80 Wash. County homes after contamination alert](#)
 - Pioneer Press: [Well water at 80 Washington County homes now dangerous, EPA says](#)
 - Bring Me The News: [Water bottles given to 80 MN homes with contaminated water](#)
 - MPCA: [Drinking water advisory in southern Washington County](#)
 - WCCO: [Washington County Residents Get Bottled Water After Well Concerns](#)
 - Fox 9: [Water bottles given to 80 Washington Co. homes with contaminated water](#)



It is important to understand that the source of the PFCs has been addressed via a number of activities through MPCA's Superfund program. 3M removed PFC-contaminated soil from each of their disposal sites in Oakdale, Woodbury and Cottage Grove and disposed of it in a lined containment cell at the SKB Landfill in Rosemount. Groundwater that was contaminated prior to the removal of the PFC-laden soil is now contained on-site by a set of groundwater pump-out wells. Groundwater that is pumped out at the Oakdale site is treated with carbon prior to its discharge to the sanitary sewer. At the Woodbury and Cottage Grove disposal sites, the pumped groundwater is used at 3M's Cottage Grove plant and then it goes through 3M's wastewater treatment plant prior to being discharged to the Mississippi River. PFCs present in the remnant groundwater plume beyond the disposal areas were transported prior to the onset of the Superfund activities.

SURFACE WATER/STORMWATER

- DNR: [Zebra mussels confirmed on Lake Minnewashta in Carver County](#); Inforum: [Finding just one zebra mussel in a lake doesn't mean they aren't there](#); California Blog: [Rapid spread of zebra mussels in lakes can be prevented by cleaning watercraft, say officials](#); MPR: [Zebra mussels found in popular Carver County lake](#)
- Inforum: [Water district's eminent domain attempt for F-M diversion stalls, but case not dismissed](#)

- BWSR: [BWSR issues \\$2 million in flood relief grants](#); click [here](#) for a list of the counties receiving grants and the amount each is being awarded; Albert Lea Tribune: [Freeborn County and 14 others awarded grant funds](#)
- KIMT: [Minnesota leaders take pride in their water quality](#)
- La Crosse Tribune: [Public hearings set for Root River 1W1P](#)
- DNR: [Starry stonewort confirmed in Upper Red Lake, Cass Lake](#); MPR: [Invasive algae found in two more Minnesota lakes](#); DNR: [Aggressive treatment of Turtle Lake starry stonewort begins](#); Brainerd Dispatch: [Starry stonewort confirmed in Upper Red Lake, Cass Lake](#)
- MPCA: [Stop & smell the flowers](#) in the raingardens by the Eco Experience Building at the State Fair
- MPCA: [Flooding first responders: MPCA natural disaster toolkit](#)
- Inforum: [Minnesota buffer law information released](#)
- Northfield News: [Buffer Field Day addresses questions of implementation](#)
- Brownfield Ag News for America: [Buffer Law Getting Better, But “Not There Yet”](#)
- Mankato Free Press: [Lake Hallett paddle demonstrates MPCA water monitoring](#)
- MN Soybean Research and Promotion Council: [WRAPS Handbook](#)
- Indian Country News: [EPA Meeting may be new chance for Cass Lake](#)

WASTEWATER

- Pioneer Press: [Work on controversial Afton sewer project set to begin next month](#)

EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

- Duluth News Tribune: [PolyMet opponents want law judge hearings](#)
- MPR: [Duluth citizens seek evidence-based hearings before PolyMet decision](#)

AG & WATER

- BWSR: [BWSR receives \\$1M in federal funding to support wetlands](#) ; ag wetland mitigation banking uses a market-based approach to restore high quality wetlands that can be used to compensate for impacts to other degraded wetlands; NRCS: [USDA to Fund Agricultural Wetland Mitigation Banks in 10 States](#)
- Patagonia Provisions: [Unbroken Ground](#) film trailer features Intermediate Wheatgrass/Kernza™
- Renewing the Countryside: [Announcing the 2016 Healthy Local Food Exhibit: Forever Green!](#) at the state fair

OPINIONS

- Mankato Free Press: [Our View: Buffers State must help buffer law work](#)

BEYOND MINNESOTA

- The Washington Post: [What we’re doing to the environment may be costing us our drinking water](#)
- Public News Service: [Cover-Cropping: Making Money While Practicing Conservation](#)
- Water Online: [Applying The Airbnb Model To Water Crisis](#); a new tech startup, [Sustainable Water and Innovative Irrigation Management](#), has come up with a way to let western farmers with water rights lease their extra water
- mlive.com: [Great Lakes mayors plan legal challenge to Waukesha water approval](#); a coalition of over 120 U.S. and Canadian cities want a formal hearing to challenge the recent decision that

allows Waukesha to use Lake Michigan as a water supply source; Watertown Public Opinion: [Mayors seek hearing on Waukesha water withdrawal decision](#); Duluth News Tribune: [Great Lakes mayors look to divert Waukesha's water diversion plan](#)

- National Geographic: [A Market-Based Strategy for Sustainable Water Management](#); The Nature Conservancy: [Investing Our Way Out of the Global Water Crisis - How finance, farming and freshwater conservation are becoming increasingly connected](#); and The Nature Conservancy: [Water Share- Using water markets and impact investment to drive sustainability](#)
- National Science Foundation: [What's good for crops not always good for the environment](#); scientists can calculate the age of nitrogen in corn and soybean fields in an effort to improve fertilizer application techniques that promote crop growth and reduce leaching; they learned that soybeans uptake the old nitrogen

MEETINGS

LWC FIELD TOUR

Members of the Legislative Water Commission ventured into the Minnesota River Basin on 8/17 to view a wide range of urban and rural water issues between Mapleton and Blakely. For more details, peruse the itinerary and field tour packet that are posted on the LWC website.

BUFFERS

Staff from the Department of Natural Resources and the Board of Water and Soil Resources have nearly completed their statewide tour of buffer meetings. At their meeting in Arden Hills, they spoke to a full room of local practitioners who still had many mapping and implementation questions. One watershed district administrator said that there has been a lot of progress made in the last six months, but questions still linger.

STORMWATER REUSE PERMITTING

The Department of Natural Resources issues appropriation permits to entities that construct and operate stormwater use projects. In an effort to promote the capture and use of stormwater for irrigation, DNR staff are contemplating using a general permit process to streamline the permitting process. Reporting stormwater use through their MPARS online permitting system is a key goal of DNR, as they work to track water conservation successes in the state. DNR is considering testing the general permit approach within the N & E Metro Groundwater Management Area as a pilot project. Representatives from cities and watershed districts within the N&E GWMA, while appreciative of DNR's efforts to improve efficiencies, suggested that a statutory change might be a better approach to eliminate the permitting burden as a more effective way to incentivize stormwater use in order to decrease dependency on groundwater for landscape irrigation.

LSOHC

The Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council met for two days this past week to hear proposal presentations for FY17/18. Many of the proposed projects provide water quality and water quantity benefits in addition to the primary goal of providing wildlife habitat. Many presenters were asked how they plan to prevent future pollution problems from recurring after the habitat restoration was completed. Over the next two weeks, each member will decide which projects should get how much money and after their recommendations are compiled, they will meet again to decide on their final funding recommendations.

BWSR FIELD TOUR AND BOARD MEETING

The Board of Water and Soil Resources held their annual tour in the Red River Valley this year. Some observations from the tour:

- Clay County still has a fair amount of crop diversity in place; we saw fields of potatoes, wheat, corn, soybeans, alfalfa, sunflowers, navy beans, pinto beans, and sugar beets on very large farms (3,000 acres on average); livestock farming is almost entirely absent
- A majority of drainage ditches are adjacent to roads and they have very little slope and slow flow, making the need for removal of vegetation almost as important as removal of sediment buildup; because of the large farm size, ditch projects can generate some very large assessments (one project created an \$85,000 bill for one farmer)
- There is a trend toward multi-benefit projects that merge flood reduction, water quality, conveyance, and wildlife habitat benefits
- A distributed drainage detention study for the Red River Basin resulted in a recommendation for a 20% reduction in flows; despite the increase of large impoundment projects, the local units of government are finding this to be a difficult target to meet
- The Red Lake River Watershed District was one of the One Watershed One Plan pilot areas; this large watershed covers parts or all of 10 counties; years of flooding created a strong bond for conservation action among the many local partners that will be involved with 1W1P implementation (their 1W1P Plan is now out for public comment) and they have established clear roles for each of the organization to contribute to its success

Media coverage of the tour: BWSR: [BWSR Board tours northwest Minnesota on annual tour](#); Crookston Times: [West Polk Soil and Water Conservation Manager and Governor Dayton discuss water quality enhancements](#)

Myron Jesme, Red Lake River Watershed District Administrator, explains how a 1905 cut-off ditch connecting the Grand Marais River to the Red River of the North catalyzed decades of soil loss; it cost ~\$1M to stabilize the ditch and another \$6M to restore the meandering channel the cut off ditch had circumvented.



At their meeting following the tour, the Board adopted the 7 buffer policies, among their other actions.

NE METRO WATER SUMMIT

Elected officials from the “Tier 2” area around White Bear Lake met this week to get updates from DNR, Met Council, and the Rice Creek Watershed District on their progress addressing the issues underlying White Bear Lake’s lower water levels. Whether or not the WBL lawsuit will be stayed will be decided on Sept 8th. The group is contemplating whether or not to formally join forces so that they can speak with a unified voice to the court, agencies, and the legislature on water concerns. They are all anxiously awaiting the publication of the USGS study in that area to learn the how much of an impact the Tier 2 cities have on White Bear Lake. The USGS study is now expected to be released in two parts on 9/30 and 12/31 this year.

REPORTS

STATE OF MN WATER

- 8/22 [Stream Flow Report](#)
- 8/23 [Drought Monitor](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Aug 31: **NEMO Workshop on the Lower MN River**, focusing on sediment pollution; no cost, but registration is required before 8/22 at z.umn.edu/nemominnesotariver
- Sept 7-9: **International Drainage Symposium**, \$400, The Commons Hotel (615 Washington Ave SE, Minneapolis), registration [here](#)
- Sept 14: **NEMO on the St. Croix River Workshop**, focusing on the National Scenic Riverway rules and policies and adopting Minimum Impact Design Standards by the riverside communities; registration info to come
- Sept 17: **Buffer Field Trip** (in conjunction with the U of MN Buffer Science and Design Symposium on 9/16); registration link to come [here](#)
- Sept 20: **Water Technology Summit**; 8 am to 4 pm; highlighting key topics in water technology including water's use in agriculture, food and beverage, national and local perspectives of water, and opportunities to accelerate technology adoption; US Bank Stadium; \$100 before 8/26 & \$135 afterwards; agenda to come; register [here](#) (I will attend)
- Sept 20-23: **American Water Works Association – Minnesota Section Annual Conference** (their 100th anniversary); Duluth; details [here](#)
- Sept 22: **Clean Water Summit - Green Infrastructure for Clean Water - Rethinking Redevelopment and Retrofits**; MN Landscape Arboretum; \$80; 9 am to 4:30 pm; info & registration [here](#)
- **Sept 26: Legislative Water Commission meeting**; 9-11 am, (room to be determined); topic – aging water infrastructure
- Sept 26: **MN’s Water Reuse Stakeholder Meeting** (open to the public); 1:30 – 4:30; MPCA Board Room (I will attend)
- Sept 29: **NEMO Lessons Across the Landscape Workshop**; land-based tour focused on urban stormwater practices in Minneapolis, led by the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization; registration info to come
- Oct 1 – Nov 13: **Smithsonian Water/Ways exhibit** at the Goodhue County Historical Society (1166 Oak Street, Red Wing); after the opening, join the **WaterTalks** at the Saint James Hotel (more info on WaterTalks [here](#); no cost, but registration is required); Red Wing has planned many Water/Ways activities; go [here](#) to see the full list
- Oct 5-6: **Aquatic Invaders Summit II**; River’s Edge Convention Center (10 4th Ave. S, St. Cloud); \$165 (early)/\$180 (late) registration; register [here](#)

- Oct 5-6: **Minnesota Coastal Conference 2016**; Two Harbors; registration and agenda to come [here](#)
- Oct 18-19: **MN Water Resources Conference**; agenda [here](#); cost before 9/22 is \$245 2 days/\$170 1 day (\$265/\$190 after 9/22); registration link [here](#) (I will attend)
- Oct 24-26: **BWSR Training Academy**; Cragun's in Brainerd; agenda and registration details can be found [here](#)
- Nov 17: **MN's Water Reuse Stakeholder Meeting** (open to the public); 1:30 – 4:30; MPCA Board Room
- Jan 23-24, 2017: **MN Water Well Association's 95th Annual Trade Show and Convention**; Minneapolis Marriott NW; more info to come [here](#)