

## Weekly LWC Update 9-23-16

*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 NEWS**

#### **WATER ACTIONS**

- AgWeek: ['Habitattitude Surrender' offers alternative for disposing of unwanted pet fish](#)
- WebWire: [Exosite CTO Mark Benson to Co-Present at the 2016 Minnesota Water Technology Summit](#)
- MPR: [Once nearly wiped out by pollution, wild rice is coming back to northern MN](#); Crookston Times: [Agencies work to restore wild rice in northern Minnesota](#); Pioneer Press: [Tribe, agencies work to restore wild rice in St. Louis River](#)
- Mankato Free Press: [Nicollet County Historical Society hosts discussion about Minnesota River](#)
- Minnesota Daily: [Two University startups present to Congress](#)

#### **WATER SUPPLY**

- Duluth News Tribune: [Duluth water taps out; St. Cloud earns Best in Glass distinction](#); St Cloud Times: [Contest: St. Cloud has best tasting water in state](#); Pioneer Press: [And the award for best-tasting city water in Minnesota goes to ...](#)
- ABC 10/13: [DECC Bubbles Over With Water Professionals](#) and Fox 21: [American Water Works Association of Minnesota Celebrates 100th Anniversary](#) (watch the water pipe repair contests)
- Met Council: [Council Study Provides Data for Stormwater Reuse in Rice Creek Watershed District](#) (the Rice Creek Watershed District is developing a district-wide, GIS-based [Stormwater Reuse Irrigation Assessment Planning Tool](#) to find feasible locations for stormwater-based irrigation to reduce reliance on groundwater; this effort is a practical application of ideas presented in the May 2016 [Regional Groundwater Recharge and Stormwater Capture and Reuse Study North and East Metro Study Area](#) report)
- Met Council: [Cities in Dakota County Explore Water Conservation and Stormwater Reuse](#) since water ignores city boundaries
- Power: [U.S. Water's PhosZero™ Chemistry Named Finalist in R&D 100 Awards](#)

#### **SURFACE WATER/STORMWATER**

- MPR: Report: [Plastics, road salt and farm runoff threaten Mississippi](#); MinnPost: [Report on metro Mississippi River health shows progress, new concerns](#); KARE 11: [Mississippi River healthier, but threats loom](#); Strib: [Report: Mississippi River improving but protections needed](#) ;

FMR & MNRR: [State of the River; report; policy guide; stewardship guide; teacher's guide](#) (a digestion of the report to come in a future weekly update)

- Strib: [Report finds a new pollutant — tiny bits of plastics and fiber — building up in the Mississippi](#) and MinnPost: [Rivers feeding the Great Lakes carry lots of plastic, especially tiny fibers](#)
- Duluth News Tribune: [Duluth gets serious about St. Louis River estuary cleanup](#)
- Strib: [Edina urges people, pets to stay away from Lake Cornelia](#)
- DNR: [DNR conducting aggressive treatment of Rice Lake starry stonewort](#)
- Pioneer Press: [Zebra mussel discovery means Minnesota River now affected](#); KXRA: [Zebra mussels confirmed in 4 Minnesota lakes](#); Inforum: [Zebra mussels found in two more popular western Minnesota lakes](#); Echo Press: [Zebra mussels found in Lake Andrew](#); West Central Tribune: [Zebra mussels confirmed in Lac qui Parle Lake](#); DNR: [Zebra mussels confirmed in 4 Minnesota lakes](#) (photo source below: DNR)



## WASTEWATER

- Mankato Free Press: [St. Clair tries to hold back rising river](#) and [Photos: Southern Minnesota walloped by water](#) (see photo 1)
- MPCA: [July flooding caused damage to city of Willow River wastewater ponds, repairs to be made](#) (Below: aerial photo showing large bubbles that damaged the pond after flooding last July; source – MPCA)



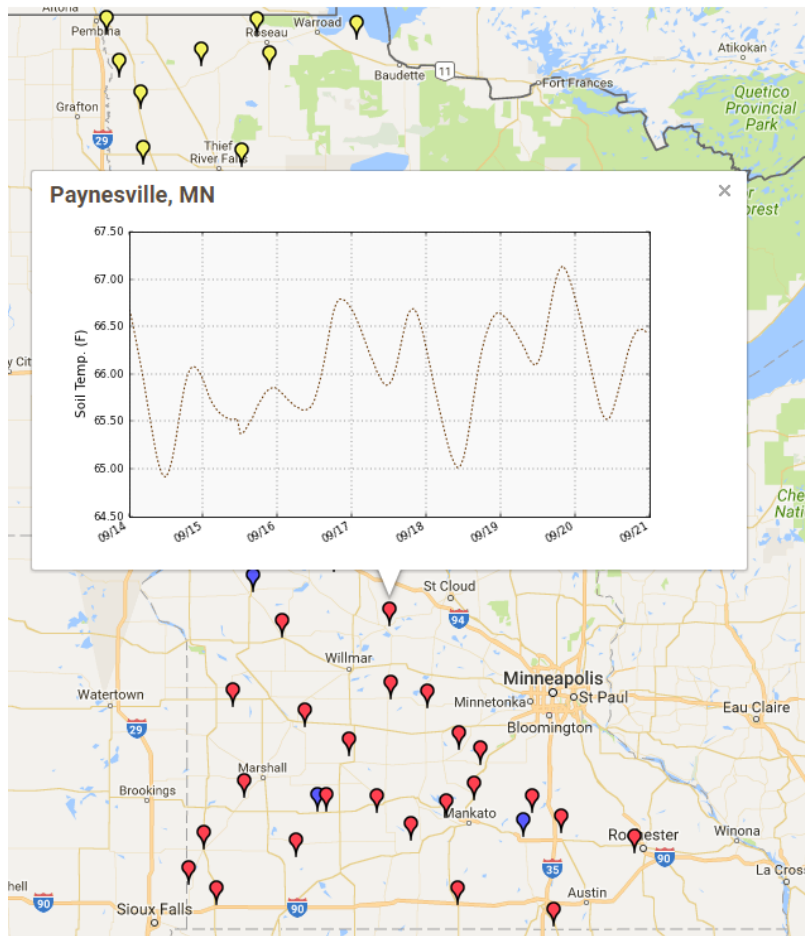
- The Water Environment Federation and other water sector partners have a [Utility of the Future Today](#) recognition program. In the first year of this program, the Met Council Environmental Services will be one of 61 recipients from across the US, Canada & Denmark who will be honored in recognition of their forward-looking progress and performance and their innovative business model.

## EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

- Strib: [Water-quality concerns scuttle gravel mine in Scott County](#)

## AG & WATER

- MFB: [Minnesota Agriculture and Water Profiles by County](#)
- Mankato Free Press: [Water program offers hope, but not solution to problems](#)
- MPR: [Agribusiness hopes shrimp is Minnesota's newest crop](#)
- Mankato Free Press: [Conservation entities, organizations must continue to help with buffer implementation](#)
- MPCA: [Crops, environment benefit from proper application of livestock manure on harvested fields](#)
- MDA: [MDA adds to real-time soil temperature monitoring sites to aid farmers in fall fertilizer application](#); farmers and fertilizer applicators can check a soil temperature [map](#) before fall application of ammonium-based nitrogen fertilizers to insure soil temperatures at 6" depth are staying below 50°F



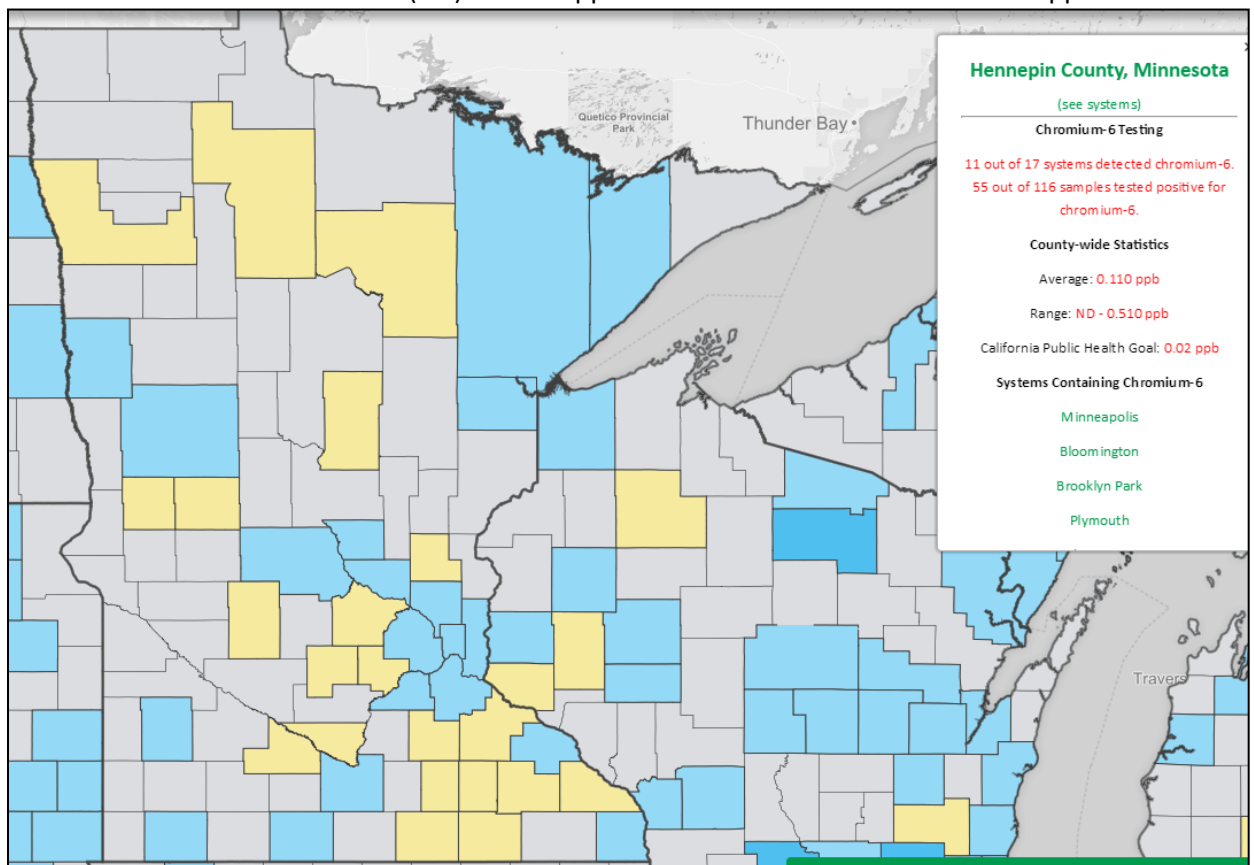
## OPINIONS

- Strib: Editorial: [Our working river: Keep it in working order](#)
- Strib: [Lead water lines: a home inspector's perspective](#)
- Strib: [Feel-good solutions won't solve climate change](#)

## BEYOND MINNESOTA

### REGIONAL

- Reuters: [ExxonMobil to pay \\$12 million in Montana oil spill settlement](#)
- MinnPost: [Why the Dakota Access pipeline fight may be a turning point in U.S. environmental politics](#)
- Strib: [Pipeline will soon reopen, carrying gasoline to 5 states](#)
- Strib: [Company offers free well testing after fertilizer plant leak](#)
- CNN: [New report finds 'Erin Brockovich' chemical in US drinking water](#); Environmental Working Group: ['Erin Brockovich' Carcinogen in Tap Water of More than 200 Million Americans](#); [EWG Interactive Map](#); keep in mind that detections don't necessarily translate to an exceedance of the federal maximum contaminant level for total chromium (which includes chromium-3 and chromium-6), which is 100 ppb; as you can see in the example of Hennepin Co below, the range of Cr-6 detections is no detection (ND) to 0.510 ppb – far below the federal MCL of 100 ppb



### NATIONAL

- Circle of Blue: [America's Spreading Septic Threat](#); [Septic System Pollution Contributes to Disease Outbreaks](#); [America's Septic System Failures Can be Fixed](#)

- Bloomberg BNA Daily Environment Report: [Emerging Contaminants: An Analysis of Inconsistent U.S. Regulations](#)
- NPR: [Watching Our Water: Absent Regulations, Farmers Dabble In Voluntary Measures To Stop Harmful Runoff](#)

## **MEETINGS**

### **CWC**

At their last meeting, after months of program evaluations and consideration of stakeholder input, the Clean Water Council has adopted its funding and policy recommendations for FY17/18. Expect them to be posted [here](#) shortly.

### **EQB**

Two items on this month's Environmental Quality Board agenda hold some water interest. First, the EQB is considering modifying its environmental review processes to incorporate climate change. This consideration comes after EPA's Council on Environmental Quality guidance to consider climate mitigation (the potential effects of a proposed action on climate change as indicated by its greenhouse gas emissions) and adaptation (the implications of climate change for the environmental effects of a proposed action).

Second, there was an item to receive updates and testimony on North Dakota Pipeline Company's Sandpiper Pipeline and Enbridge Energy's Line 3 Replacement Pipeline. The Dept of Commerce/Public Utilities Commission (the responsible governmental unit for these types of projects) reported that the Sandpiper Pipeline EAW has been withdrawn. They also reported that the EIS Scoping Document for Line 3 is scheduled for publishing on 9/21. The scoping document will include a review of alternate routes and will evaluate truck, rail and no build alternatives. DNR and MPCA staff reported on their August meetings with representatives of several groups concerned about pipelines to learn more about their concerns and ideas. The take away messages from those meetings, which are not unique to this process, included:

- citizens are concerned about the environmental review process, which can be confusing and opaque
- citizens don't know how or when to effectively engage
- citizens want a predictable two-way communication process with agencies so they can be informed and provide timely input
- citizens are concerned about how and when information is made available
- citizens want to understand the practical implications of technically complex data
- citizens are uncertain about the scientific and procedural integrity of the process
- citizen resources are imbalanced compared to project proposer's resources

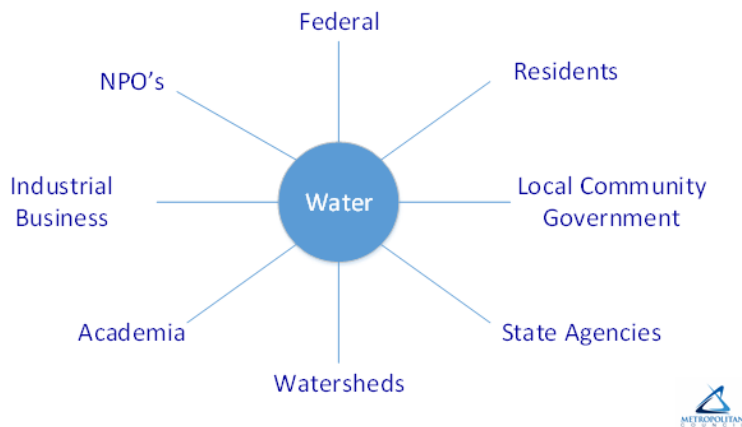
Dept of Commerce staff clarified that they have had formal consultation with 3 tribes, to date, and are scheduled to engage with the others in accordance with their formal process. There is considerable citizen engagement around this project and seven testifiers present their concerns about the proposed project and the process.

### **WATER TECH SUMMIT**

The 2016 Water Technology Summit was held this past Tuesday. Over 100 attendees from business, academia, and government were immersed in over 8 hours of presentations, discussions, and networking. The discourse showed that the water tech industry is rapidly advancing engineering, technology, and nontraditional thinking to provide many types of water solutions for their local and

global customers. In cliff note fashion, the key points generated during the day have been synthesized, as follows:

1. Growing water and energy demands will create conflicts and drive changes (energy efficiency/conservation/capture will result in water conservation); be prepared!
2. Advancement is all about a clear vision with broad thinking, willing leadership, and strong collaborations (across citizens, government, academic, and business sectors) to develop low risk, cost-effective solutions.
3. Long-range: the separate operational/regulatory approaches currently used for water supply, wastewater and stormwater should be integrated into a One Water approach; changes in regulations and governance structures will be needed to facilitate this (thinking jointly about water uses is not the same as the need to think about water challenges in the local context).
4. Change is slow (the technology commercialization time frame alone can range from 10 to 30 years), but it can be faster if policy/regulatory groups get engaged in future thinking about how industry's advancements can apply to agency work and how policy/regulatory groups can promote change by supporting One Water, new technologies, Internet of Things, etc. (in many cases, industry is developing applications for new technologies well before regulators/legislators are engaged in the process).
5. Regulations need to fit the purpose of water use (not everything needs to be treated to drinking water standards; public health risks are not the same across all water uses).
6. When it comes to improvements, customer demand and cost-effectiveness are stronger drivers than regulations, but environmental regulations can be both a barrier to and breeder of innovation.
7. Pro-active planning/saving is needed to address long-lived infrastructure needs (short-term vs long-term decisions); make the money pot bigger (beyond rate increases) by:
  - a. extending infrastructure life (and deferring the cost of replacing it) with ongoing maintenance/upgrades
  - b. developing non-traditional, utility revenue streams (e.g., selling services, developing intellectual capital, leveraging existing capital assets); staff/partners not assigned to daily service delivery are needed for this
  - c. increasing the tax base by regionalizing
  - d. privatizing
  - e. thinking like a business – not just a public service
  - f. returning sales profits back into research and development
8. Protect the high quality source water we have
9. Seek federal participation (funding, policy/regulatory changes)
10. Improve water literacy beyond the realm of water professionals
11. Identify locations of long term & seasonal water availability and stress (both availability and pollution); then optimize water-intensive production processes where it is plentiful & improve water efficiencies/treatment where it is constrained
12. The revolution that is around the corner is real time data collection, management, analysis and decision delivery; get on board the IoT train!
13. Water users cross all sectors!



## REPORTS

### STATE OF MN WATER

- 9/18 [Stream Flow Report](#)
- 9/20 [Drought Monitor](#)

### WATER REUSE

The first Water Reuse Stakeholder meeting will be 9/26 from 1:30 to 4:30 pm in the MPCA board room. The Working Group has produced a report outlining their progress from Jan through June 2016: [Water Reuse Interagency Workgroup: July 2016 Project Update](#); go to the [project website](#) for more information and future opportunities to provide input

### WI SHIFTING CURRENTS

The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters has just released a new report, [Shifting Currents: Progress, Setbacks, and Shifts in Policy and Practice](#). It provides an overview of gains and setbacks in WI water policy and practice since they published their first Waters of Wisconsin report in 2003. It also outlines some unresolved water concerns identified in that first report and recommends nine actions, many of which are themes being expressed as MN needs, as well:

1. Develop an Integrated Water Management Framework
2. Safeguard Drinking Water
3. Control Nutrient Pollution
4. Apply Watershed-Scale Strategies
5. Plan for Climate Change
6. Manage Invasive Species
7. Modernize Water Infrastructure
8. Commit to Transparency and Public Participation
9. Invest in Water Literacy

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Sept 26: Legislative Water Commission meeting; 9-11 am, Room 10 State Office Building, St Paul; topic – aging water infrastructure**
- **Sept 26: MN's Water Reuse Stakeholder Meeting** (open to the public); 1:30 – 4:30; MPCA Board Room

- Sept 26: **MnDRIVE Mine Water Bioremediation Symposium**; research highlights, MN challenges, & opportunities for industry/academia synergy; U of MN's Digital Technology Center – 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Walter Library; 8 am to 5 pm; lunch provided – but registration closes M 9/19; register [here](#)
- Sept 28: **Partnering for Successful Downtown Street Reconstruction Projects**; learn how to leverage road projects to advance water infrastructure repairs; free League of Minnesota Cities webinar; 1-2 pm; to learn more & to register, go [here](#)
- 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 4-6: **Great Lakes Public Forum**; Toronto, Ontario, Canada; agenda [here](#); it will be live streamed [here](#)
- 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 14: **Mississippi River Forum Workshop**; 8:30 am to 12:30 pm; Science Museum of Minnesota; topics: Getting to Clean Water: How Do the Economics of Cropping Systems Measure Up? - Ecosystem Services: Putting People and Land into Water Management - Water: Right or Commodity; RSVP to: lark\_weller@nps.gov
- 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](#)
- Oct 24-26: **BWSR Training Academy**; Cragun's in Brainerd; agenda and registration details can be found [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: **Minnesota River Congress** meeting; Mankato; details to come
- Dec 5-6: Association of MN Counties Annual Conference; Hyatt Regency Minneapolis; \$375 before 11/4 & \$400 after; schedule [here](#); registration [here](#)
- Jan 23-24, 2017: **MN Water Well Association's 95th Annual Trade Show and Convention**; Minneapolis Marriott NW; more info to come [here](#)