

Legislative Water Commission Update 11-17-17

ERRORS? OMISSIONS? If found, please notify barb.huberty@lcc.leg.mn.

Interested reader: each week, I gather general information for Legislative Water Commission members to help keep them apprised about water issues in Minnesota. This update 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 monitored and reports I have read, as well as information about upcoming events. During the Legislative Session, updates on water-related legislation and committee activities are added. Any errors or omissions are inadvertent.

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NOTICE: There will not be an LWC Update Thanksgiving week.

MN NEWS

WATER ACTIONS

- The Brookings Institute: [How the Land of 10,000 Lakes is planning and paying for cleaner water](#)
- DNR: [Sherburne County Geologic Atlas](#) Part B (hydrogeology) released
- Fergus Falls Daily Journal: [New prairie restoration guides available to Minnesota landowners and managers](#); TNC: [Guides to Prairie Restoration in Minnesota](#)

SURFACE WATER/STORMWATER

- KARE 11: [Eden Prairie Fire Station recycles water](#)
- The Dickenson Press: [F-M flood diversion task force options look a lot like current plan](#); Bismark Tribune: [Five different F-M flood diversion plans and a massive ring dike studied](#)
- Echo Press: [Lake Osakis gets \\$300,000 boost](#)
- Pilot Independent: [Future of County Ditch 9 still uncertain; public hearing coming up Nov. 21](#)
- City Pages: [Fight over access to Black Lake comes down to a 116-year-old document](#)

GREAT LAKES

- KDAL: [Lake Superior Water Levels Continue To Rise](#)
- WPR: [Lake Superior's History Offers Learning Opportunity For Future Conservation Efforts](#)
- NOAA: [St. Louis River Estuary Habitat Focus Area](#)
- InfoSuperior: [Superior Almost One Foot Above Average](#)

WATER SUPPLY

- DNR: [DNR releases draft Little Rock Creek Area plan for public review](#); Morrison County Record: [DNR releases draft Little Rock Creek Area plan for public review](#)

WASTEWATER

- Granite Falls Advocate Tribune: [Wastewater challenges in small Minnesota communities](#)

- Met Council: [Council launches innovative program with local companies to improve water quality, save money](#); the Council approved financing agreements with Michael Foods (Chaska) & Kemps dairy (Rosemount) to incentivize them to pretreat high-strength industrial wastewater before it's released in the regional wastewater treatment system
- DL Online: [DL council approves \\$28.6 million bid for new wastewater treatment plant](#); lower than the engineer's estimate and supported by a \$17M grant from PFA

AG & WATER

- Post Bulletin: [Greenspace: Better soil, better farms — that's the aim of new program](#); BWSR: [The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources and the University of Minnesota launched a new healthy soils initiative](#); BWSR/UMN-WRC: [Minnesota Office of Soil Health: "Building Common Ground for Water Quality and Agricultural Production"](#)
- Pope County Tribune: [Conservation in the glacial hills](#) and [Starbuck farmers named finalists for statewide conservation award](#)
- Crookston Times: [Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts - Tiedemanns to be recognized for conservation efforts](#)
- Fergus Falls Daily Journal: [Rich Jibben Farm now water quality certified](#)
- MPCA: [Hog facility planned in Traverse County; environmental review underway](#)
- BWSR: [Sign up for MN CREP continues despite Federal CRP Continuous Signup suspension](#)

EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

- US News and World Report: [Judge Weighs Motion to Dismiss Twin Metals Mining Lawsuit](#)
- DNR: [Minerals Exploration Plan on State Nonferrous Metallic Minerals Leases Submitted by AngloGold Ashanti Minnesota](#) in Itasca and St Louis counties
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AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

- Lakeshore Weekly News: [Zebra mussels confirmed in Medicine Lake in Hennepin County](#)
- Duluth News Tribune: [Minnesota DNR ends invasive-species grants](#)

OPINIONS

- Duluth News Tribune: [Local View: Line 3 route threatens our water, lake properties, jobs](#); St Cloud Times: [Enbridge misleads on its priorities](#); Duluth News Tribune: [Reader's View: Shut down Line 3, reschedule hearings](#); St Cloud Times: [Safety demands saying no to pipeline](#)
- Strib: [Editorial counterpoint: How the PolyMet mine violates Minnesota regulations](#)
- The Berkshire Edge: [Water protector Winona LaDuke speaks on 'cannibal economics,' courage and fighting pipelines](#)
- White Bear Press: [The path forward on White Bear Lake](#)

BEYOND MINNESOTA

REGIONAL

- US News and World Report: [Michigan Lawmakers OK Ballast Water Bill Opposed by Snyder](#)
- Wisconsin State Farmer: [Kewaunee County OKs manure irrigation ordinance](#)
- Union of Concerned Scientists: [Local Management Plans May Not Protect California Groundwater from Climate Change Risk](#)

NATIONAL

- American Geophysical Union: [Groundwater depletion could be a significant source of atmospheric carbon dioxide](#)
- Homeland Security Newswire: [Aging water systems in U.S. pose threats to health](#)
- Reveal: [Trump's budget kills funds for clean tap water in struggling small towns](#); \$0 in Trump's 2018 budget for USDA's Rural Utilities Service, which awards water and sewer loans and grants to towns under 10,000 (compared to \$498M in the 2017 budget)
- New York Times: [\\$300 Billion War Beneath the Street: Fighting to Replace America's Water Pipes](#)
- MSNBC: [How Much Has the EPA Changed One Year Since the Election?](#)
- BBC News: [The man helping Americans access safe drinking water](#)
- National Center for Atmospheric Research: [New Climate Forecasts for Watersheds – and the Water Sector](#); their interactive maps forecasts temperature and precipitation anomalies for each major watershed basin across several timescales
- Circle of Blue: [Risks Grow for Deadliest U.S. Drinking Water Hazard](#)
- Science Daily: [Low dose, constant drip: Pharmaceutical, personal care pollution impacts aquatic life](#); criteria for assessing toxicity of common chemicals ignore ecological side effects

GLOBAL

- Phys.org: [Easing the soil's temperature: Cover crops shield soil from extreme temps](#)
- US Dept of State: [U.S. Government Global Water Strategy](#); "Water may be the most important issue we face for the next generation." - Donald J. Trump, POTUS
- Beaumont Enterprise: [UN says better protections needed from mine water disasters](#)
- Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: [China taps MMSD and The Water Council's expertise for help in creating 'sponge cities'](#) to control stormwater runoff in 30 mega-cities; they also have a goal of re-using 70% of all rainwater

MEETINGS

PREDICTIVE TOOLS FOR NO₃ LOSSES FROM CROP PRODUCTION

In order to help MN reaching its 20% nutrient reduction goal by 2025, Dr David Mulla (U of MN) is developing ways to predict how much nitrate is lost from various crop production scenarios, taking into account multiple combinations of cover crops and fertilizer rate, timing, and type. He is looking for that sweet spot where yield is not significantly affected and water quality improvements can be achieved in 3 areas where groundwater is most vulnerable: SE MN's karst region, the central sand plains, and the tile drained area of southern MN. He is also studying various irrigation scheduling scenarios to determine how they affect percolation, leaching and nitrogen uptake (in addition to saving water). The ultimate goal of this research is to develop regional guidance for producers (keeping in mind that different regions of the state have substantially different soils and hydrology) that will suggest which BMPs perform best in each area. Two take-aways: cover crops seem to be quite effective at reducing nitrogen losses and today's nitrate in groundwater was applied to crops 20-40 years ago.

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Kathy Lake, the Pollution Prevention Coordinator for the Madison Wisconsin Metropolitan Sewerage District, was in St Paul this week to share MMSD's experience with a new "adaptive management" (AM) approach they, and other point source dischargers, are taking to reduce phosphorus discharges to surface waters in the Yahara watershed. Participants in the program, [Yahara WINS](#), pay into a fund that is used to reduce phosphorus in nonpoint source runoff using more cost-effective practices. They are working with two "brokers" to distribute the funding, validate the practices and monitor the success: the Dane County Land

Conservation Department works on implementing traditional practices and [Yahara Pride Farms](#) (a farmer led group) tests new practices. The YPF [2016 annual report](#) outlines their successes. MMSD's [AM plan](#) explains the nuts and bolts of the operation. WI is the first state to receive EPA approval for adaptive management and MMSD is the first entity to put their statute to the test.

EQB

At this month's meeting, the Environmental Quality Board members heard a report on sustainability accomplishments in state government in the areas of fleet management, procurement, waste management, and reductions in greenhouse gas production, and energy and water use. Since 2016, MN has had an Office of Enterprise Sustainability to help insure that state agencies and their 35,000 employees implement sustainable practices. Their mission is to find socially and environmentally responsible solutions that save money. Assessing that water use by state government is in on an upward trend, a water reduction goal has been set to reduce water use by 15% by 2025, relative to a 2017 baseline.

The EQB also learned about the efforts of the MN Sustainable Growth Coalition (MSGC), a business-led, 32 member organization that is helping businesses adopt the circular economy concept where, like nature, businesses waste nothing. Amy Skoczlas Cole, Managing Director of American Public Media's (APM) "The Water Main: initiative and co-chair of the MSGC, explained that MN businesses have sustainability leaders that are already collaborative and who understand that collective action is needed to solve problems. Although led by small and large businesses, the MSGC also have government and nonprofit members. One of their visions is related to water and they have been working to define a role for MN businesses, even though they may not have any immediate water issues or solutions and lack a business case to address water. They are in the process of developing a roadmap of how business can be influential on their own properties, as well as by being involved by providing a collective voice and collective actions for water stewardship at their business "home".

Amy also spoke about The Water Main, a project whereby MPR is convening conversations about why water is important for a thriving MN and how they can help Minnesotans think about water at a basin level, within a hydrologic cycle, and considering quality and quantity. In their July 2016 MPR survey, 80% of Minnesotans said water is an issue elsewhere, but not in MN. The 2023 goals for "The Water Main" are to increase the Minnesotan's Water IQ (i.e., improve understanding of key water issues and possible solutions) and their Water EQ (i.e., an affinity and personal connection to water). MPR will focus their work in 4 areas: understanding (research), informing (journalism), connecting (conversations), and engaging (experiential & digital). Both MPR and MSGC envision a paradigm shift to working collectively.

WE ARE WATER MN

When the Smithsonian's Water/Ways exhibit toured MN during the last biennium, a 2nd exhibit called "We Are Water MN" was produced to tell MN's water stories. At the close of the Smithsonian tour, plans were made to insure that the MN exhibit would continue to provide educational value. Right now, it is installed at Whitewater State Park (home to clear and cold, groundwater-fed trout streams), but from Jan 10 – March 16, 2018, it will be housed at the Capitol! Expect to hear more about the location and associated events when it is in St Paul. Once it leaves, it will tour the state, going to: the U of MN, Crookston, Fond du Lac, Austin, Northfield, Grand Rapids, Bemidji and Mille Lacs. When dates, locations and sponsors at each town become available, they'll be listed in the Upcoming Events section.

WORKING LANDS

The Board of Soil and Water Resources received an appropriation from the legislature last session to complete a study to determine the feasibility of a watershed-scale "working lands" approach, where farmers receive incentives to plant perennial and cover crops to improve water quality. There are several moving parts to this work: selecting potential watersheds that could become pilot areas, determining social factors that would

propel production shifts, evaluating the economics that could drive different crop scenarios, modeling the effectiveness of various crop scenarios on improving water quality. Stakeholders participating in this effort include state agencies, agricultural and resource conservation interests, commodity groups, watershed districts, soil and water conservation districts, the biofuels industry, landowners, and U of MN researchers. The October project update and interim report are posted on BWSR's [Working Lands Watershed Restoration Program](#) website. Their next meeting will be to develop preliminary recommendations, followed by a Bio-Economy forum on 12/15.

REPORTS

STATE OF MN WATER

- DNR: MN Stream Flow Report – ended for the year
- National Drought Mitigation Center: [11/16/17](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Nov 21: **LWC Meeting – Wastewater Roundtable #2**, 9:30 – 12:30, MN Senate Building 2412
- Nov 28: **DEED Workshop on the Greater Minnesota Business Development Public Infrastructure Grant Program**; 9:30-11:00 am; South Central Service Cooperative, 2075 Lookout Drive, North Mankato; no RSVP required
- Nov 30: **DEED Workshop on the Greater Minnesota Business Development Public Infrastructure Grant Program**; 12:30 – 2:00 pm; Brainerd Library, 416 S. 5th Street; no RSVP required
- Nov 30 – Dec 2: **MAWD 2017 Annual Meeting & Trade Show**; \$200; Arrowwood Resort, Alexandria; agenda and registration info [here](#)
- Dec 1: **DEED Workshop on the Greater Minnesota Business Development Public Infrastructure Grant Program**; 9:30-11:00 am; NW MN Foundation, 201 3rd Street NW, Bemidji; no RSVP required
- Dec 3-5: **MASWCD 27th Annual Trade Show & Conservation Information Fair**; Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Bloomington-Minneapolis South; info [here](#)
- Dec 19: **LWC Meeting – Wastewater Roundtable #3**, 9:30 – 12:30, MN Senate Building 2412
- Jan 18, 2018: Water Technology Roundtable: Issues in Groundwater Resources; contact Steve.Riedel@state.mn.us for more info
- Feb 8, 2018: Freshwater Society's **17th Annual Road Salt Symposium**; details to come
- Feb 15: Rinke Noonan Wetland and Drainage Seminar; St Cloud; info to come
- Mar 6-8: **MRWA Water & Wastewater Technical Conference**; St Cloud; more info to come
- Mar 19-20: DNR's **The Science of Healthy Waters: The Ditching Dilemma** workshop; Blue Earth, more info to come [here](#)
- April 12-14, 2018: Freshwater Society's **The State of Water Conference**; details to come
- May 1-3: MN-ND-SD AWWA **Surface Water Treatment Workshop**; Courtyard by Marriott in Moorhead; info to come @ www.AWWAND.org
- May 10, 2018: **Smart Water Technology Roundtable: Workshop for IOT Solutions in Water Treatment**; Uponor, 5925 148th St W, Apple Valley; contact Steve.Riedel@state.mn.us for more info
- June 3-7, 2018: American Society of Civil Engineers **World Environmental and Water Resources Congress**; details to come at www.ewricongress.org
- July 10-12, 2018: US Water Alliance's **One Water Summit** will be at the Hyatt hotel in downtown Minneapolis; details to come