

Legislative Water Commission Update 11-9-17

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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MN NEWS

WATER ACTIONS

- PFA: [Recent Awards](#); check out the water and wastewater infrastructure grants and loans awarded to local units of government since the 2017 session ended; nearly \$89M worth, so far
- DL-online: [A 'puzzling' new path: Man who walked all the roads in Becker County has now created a puzzle map of its wetlands](#)
- MPR: [Demystifying the complex world of water: Your questions, answered](#)
- EIN News: [Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts Appoints Emily Javens as Executive Director](#)
- TriCounty News: [Meeker SWCD names outstanding conservationist for 2017](#)
- Coulee Courier: [Caledonia farming family are finalists for state award](#)
- Pine and Lakes Echo Journal: [Crosslake: Minnesota Design Team comes back to town - Team learns about city initiatives](#)

SURFACE WATER/STORMWATER

- Mankato Free Press: [Making the Le Sueur River less muddy](#)
- Pine Journal: [Wild rice at center of sulfate debate](#); Duluth News Tribune: [PCA says wild rice rule won't bankrupt Northland](#); Bemidji Pioneer: [Judge considers wild rice protection: Some say sulfate rules could triple Duluth sewage bills, force closure of mills](#)
- Echo Press: [U.S. approves Sauk River watershed plan](#)
- Echo Press: [Mercury discovered in Lake Aaron fish](#)
- Rochester Post Bulletin: [Greenspace: Clear water is clean water, right? Not necessarily.](#)
- Echo Press: [Lake Osakis gets \\$300,000 boost](#)

WATER SUPPLY

- Pipestone County Star: [Local banks offer temporary funding for city project](#)
- West Central Tribune: [Newly completed survey maps Renville County's groundwater resources](#)
- Strib: [Deep-water wells in neighboring suburbs helped dry up White Bear Lake](#)
- Lakeshore Weekly News: [150 years of water works on display at Hennepin Gallery](#)

WASTEWATER

- Fillmore County Journal: [Fountain reviews options for rate increase](#)

AG & WATER

- Marshall Independent: [New techniques, water project questions factor into tru Shrimp hatchery move](#)
- MnCorn: [AgWater Exchange shares data on best management practices](#)
- BWSR: [The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources and the University of Minnesota launched a new healthy soils initiative](#)
- MPCA: [Chippewa 10% project: Improving water quality 1 acre at a time](#)
- AgriNews: [Minnesota farmers doing great with buffers](#)
- USDA: [Perdue Announces Farm Service Agency and Rural Development State Directors](#); Joe Martin will be the new MN Farm Services Agency Director and Brad Finstad will be the new MN Rural Development State Director
- Mankato Free Press: [Farmers think attacks misplaced](#); the U of MN urban study referenced in the article was discussed in a Strib article last spring: [What pollutes the urban Mississippi? Lawns, dogs and lots of pavement runoff](#)
- Mankato Free Press: [New drainage systems aim to hold back water, sediment](#)
- Mankato Free Press: [Precision Ag Tech tools make farmer better steward of land](#)
- Houston Engineering: [HEI Joins Field to Market](#)
- Duluth News Tribune: [Minnesota farmland buffer enforcement may not be needed](#)
- EPA: [Clean Water State Revolving Fund PISCES Recognition Program 2017 Compendium](#); Rock County received an honorable mention for their AgBMP loans that are reducing nitrates in groundwater (see p. 12)



EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

- Duluth News Tribune: [Twin Metals preparing environmental review](#) and [Emmer bill to allow Twin Metals passes House committee](#)
- The Nation: [Can These 13 Young Minnesotans Stop a Pipeline From Coming to Their State?](#)
- DNR: [AngloGold Ashanti Minnesota submitted plan to explore on state nonferrous metallic minerals leases](#) in Itasca County
- The Circle: [The politics of mining](#)

AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

- International Falls Journal: [LCCMR urges money for VNP cattail project](#)
- Strib: [Zebra mussels found in Plymouth's Medicine Lake; officials suspect 'lakewide presence'](#)
- St Cloud Times: [After 50-year battle, Lake Superior sea lampreys under control](#)

OPINIONS

- Mankato Free Press: [We can do more to enjoy our rivers](#) and [Our View: Minnesota River: Farm and city must attack pollution](#)
- Strib: [Editorial counterpoint: Let science, not politics, guide the way forward for PolyMet](#)
- Duluth News Tribune: [Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters' View: Increase prosperity — but protect Boundary Waters, too](#)
- Bemidji Pioneer: [LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Will Bemidji become 'first polluted city on the Mississippi?'](#)
- Marshall Independent: [Consider buffer strips as restitution](#)
- MinnPost: [Wild rice standard: Political meddling undermines credibility of the MPCA](#)
- Strib: [Anderson: Hunters don't deserve some farmers' ire over buffer law](#)

BEYOND MINNESOTA

REGIONAL

- New Jersey: [New Jersey Sets First Binding State Limits for Perfluorinated Chemicals in Drinking Water](#)
- Wisconsin State Journal: [Stripping wetland protections to have consequences, intended or not](#)
- Wisconsin Public Radio: [Wisconsin Senate Unanimously Passes Bill To Remove Lead Water Pipes](#)
- Duluth News Tribune: [Wisconsin lifts copper mine limits, but no project imminent](#)
- Journal Sentinel: [Milwaukee wrestles Waukesha water deal away from Oak Creek](#)
- EPA: [Clean Water State Revolving Fund PISCES Recognition Program 2017 Compendium](#); p. 6 explains how Little Rock AK is reducing private inflow/infiltration by paying homeowners up to \$2,500 after they have replaced their wastewater service line (installed by a plumber and inspected by their Utility); the program is funded with a loan from the Arkansas CWSRF combined with a fund generate by a \$1 surcharge on each customer's sewer bill
- Watertown Public Opinion: [Michigan may weaken policy on ship ballast water treatment](#)
- Las Vegas Sun: [Clark County laments sewage clog from flushable wipes](#); they've launched the [Don't be a Pain in the Drain](#) campaign to prevent this:



NATIONAL

- Circle of Blue: [U.S. Household Water Use Continues to Decline](#)
- Congress: [H.R.3387 - Drinking Water System Improvement Act of 2017](#); if passed, would provide for mandatory consolidation of water suppliers to overcome deficiencies of a failing system; increases funding for the state revolving fund and expands its uses; and requires assessments of data collection, monitoring, and reporting
- Federal Register: [Policy Statement on Establishing License Terms for Hydroelectric Projects](#); the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is adopting a 40-year default license term for original and new licenses for hydropower projects located at non-federal dams
- USGS: [Public Supply and Domestic Water Use in the United States, 2015](#); in MN, public water supply withdrawals dropped between 2019 and 2015 and per capita use rates well along with about 25% of the other states
- Successful Farming: [So far, 2018 farm bill is 'stealth' legislation](#)
- Quartz: [A new analysis of 4-year-old data shows the EPA is ignoring a lot of toxins in US drinking water](#)
- Reuters: [Business group pushes for U.S. flood insurance reform as December deadline looms](#)

GLOBAL

- Water Technology: [Wastewater treatment technology market expected to double](#)

MEETINGS

MAWSAC-LUAC

Recognizing that land use and water issues are interrelated, the Metropolitan Area Water Supply Commission and Met Council's Land Use Advisory Committee recently held a joint meeting to discuss how they could better integrate the work of each group. Land use planning and water planning are separate efforts that may not be well integrated in every community. Fundamentally, the group is interested in how they can make water a focal point of land use planning and how it can be considered earlier in the development process. Conversations ranged from identifying obstacles and opportunities for collaboration, to interest areas that overlap between the two groups, to how they can leverage resources, to specific outcomes that could emerge as joint initiatives. Once the input is digested, they will formulate a plan for moving forward together. Suggested outcome categories with potential LWC links included: balancing growth with water supply limitations, developing a unified direction on water reuse, retention, and conservation (particularly related to lawn irrigation); improving coordination of legislative initiatives, and increasing coordination across jurisdictions because water boundaries don't match jurisdictional boundaries.

CWC BOC

The Budget and Outcomes Committee of the Clean Water Council has begun the task of developing recommendations for the full CWC on whether to eliminate, sustain, increase or decrease funding for each of the major program areas for three horizons: the next biennium, 5 years and 10 years. At this point in the process, the agencies are explaining the need for the programs they administer that are funded in whole or part by Clean Water Funds, while also sharing their vision for funding levels across the 3 time horizons. Specific funding amounts are not being discussed at this time. The issue that generated the most debate is how to shift some funding from the planning, monitoring and research areas so there is more money available for implementation of practices that improve water quality and quantity.

DWG

In addition to receiving updates on several ongoing issues, the Drainage Work Group tackled these issues at this month's meeting:

- The extraordinary length of time DNR is taking to finish their “permission vs permit” guidance for public waters and drainage.
- A review of the work of a 17 member project advisory committee to identify impediments in drainage law related to compensation for ditch buffer strips and alternative buffer practices. At their first meeting, they identified 15 impediments and prioritized them. They will meet again in a week to suggest options for how to solve impediments and develop consensus recommendations, starting with the top priorities. Their final report and recommendations are due to Legislature by 2/1/18.
- A consensus DWG response to the Clean Water Council’s Policy Committee request to provide input on a possible storage and drainage policy was finalized and will be submitted to the CWC. In short, the DWG feels the development of a new policy statement may not be necessary, as it relates to drainage, because the 2016 CWC policy statement is already consistent with existing 1W1P statutes, guidance and plans to date.
- Discussing comments from Smith Partners on proposed changes to drainage law to allow for a runoff and sediment delivery charge option for drainage repair cost apportionment. The new comments were substantive and generated a lot of discussion and significant revisions to the proposed changes. The group was not able to reach consensus today and will resume the discussion at their December meeting.

REPORTS

STATE OF MN WATER

- DNR: MN Stream Flow Report – ended for the year
- National Drought Mitigation Center: [11/9/17](#)

NEW REPORTS

- DNR: [Water-Table Elevation and Depth to Water Table](#)
- DNR: [Pollution Sensitivity of Near-Surface Materials](#)
- MDA: [Agricultural Best Management Practices Loan Program: Biennial Status Report](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Nov 14: Freshwater Society Moos Family Speaker Series; Kathy Lake, MBA, Pollution Prevention Manager for the Madison WI Metropolitan Sewerage District will discuss **The Lake Effect: Protecting Water Through Innovative Collaboration**; free, but registration is required; register [here](#)
- Nov 15: MN Groundwater Association Fall Workshop “**The Effect of Agriculture on Groundwater Resources**”; \$150 members/\$200 nonmembers; U of MN St Paul Continuing Education and Conference Center (1890 Buford Ave); agenda and registration info [here](#)
- Nov 16: **Minnesota River Congress**; at the SCALE Regional Training Facility (17706 Valley View Drive, Jordan); \$20; the Networking Fair is @ 4:30 pm, dinner @ 6 and program @ 7 (Past, Present & Potential Futures for the MN River); register [here](#)
- Nov 16-18, **MN Association of Townships Annual Conference**, with a theme of Sustainable Water; Mayo Civic Center, Rochester; agenda and registration info [here](#)
- 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