

Weekly LWC Update 1-6-17

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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LEGISLATURE

BONDING PROPOSAL

Governor Dayton proposed a \$1.5B bonding bill that included numerous water projects. The proposal includes \$167M for water infrastructure projects, \$30M for the Reinvest in Minnesota Reserve program to compensate private landowners for permanent conservation easements and establishing wetlands or riparian areas on their lands (which can be used to help implement the buffer program), and \$6.5M for flood risk reduction projects in Halstad, Montevideo, the Cedar River, and the Redpath Impoundment. There was lots of press coverage about it around the state:

- Governor Dayton's Office: [Building a Better Minnesota](#) (with interactive map showing project locations) and [Governor Dayton and Lt. Governor Smith Propose Jobs Bill to Create More than 22,950 Minnesota Jobs](#)
- MN House of Representatives: [Dayton proposes \\$1.5 billion bonding bill](#)
- Pioneer Press: [Dayton proposes \\$1.5 billion in construction. This is what that would fund](#)
- Strib: [Dayton unveils \\$1.5 billion public works bill, says it would create 23,000 jobs](#) and [After construction lull, Dayton asks for \\$1.5B in projects](#)
- Lake County News Chronicle: [Dayton proposes \\$1.5 billion bonding bill for MN public works projects](#)
- Marshall Independent: [Cities want action on aid, infrastructure in 2017 session](#)
- Worthington Daily Globe: [Greater Minnesota cities want water funding](#) and [Dayton's bonding recommendations include water pipeline for Worthington](#)
- The Bemidji Pioneer: [A focus on 'the big three': Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities to focus on transportation, taxes and bonding in 2017](#)
- Grand Rapids Herald Review: [Dayton proposes \\$1.5 billion bonding bill for MN public works projects](#)
- Mesabi Daily News: [Gov. Dayton proposes \\$1.5B bonding bill](#)
- Business North: [Dayton proposes \\$1.5 billion bonding bill](#)
- Inforum: [Dayton wants \\$1.5 billion bonding bill for MN, claims projects have 'direct economic benefit'](#)

TAXES

Governor Dayton proposed the Dayton-Smith Tax Bill, authored by Rep Marquart, to provide counties and watershed districts \$10M in ongoing aid to help implement riparian buffer protection and water quality practices program (see Governor Dayton's Office: [Governor Mark Dayton and Lt. Governor Tina Smith Propose Tax Cuts for Over 450,000 Minnesotans](#) and AgriGrowth: [Statement from Perry Aasness on Dayton Administration's property tax relief proposal for Minnesota farmers](#)).

WATER BILLS

The following water related bills were introduced during the week ending 1/6/17. Click on the File # hyperlinks for more details.

House File	Committee Assignment	Senate File	Committee Assignment	Description
None	None	18	ENRP&LF	\$5M CWF to Met Council for grants/loans for local inflow/infiltration reduction programs in metro area
None	None	25	ENRP&LF	\$X GF to DNR for grant to Kohlman Lake Assoc for aquatic vegetation removal
47	ENRPF	None	None	\$6M bond proceeds to DNR for Dakota Co to improve hydro facility at Bylesby Dam on Cannon River
48	Job Growth	None	None	\$726K bond proceeds to PFA for Dennison to improve sewage lift station and pond
49	Job Growth	None	None	\$300K bond proceeds to DEED for New Trier to replace water infrastructure and add stormwater pond
74	Job Growth	None	None	Commissioner of Revenue retains, within the special revenue fund, 5% of the local government aid formula in a new water renovation account for PFA loans issued to rural municipalities for wastewater and water renovation projects , following the MPCA & MDH project priority lists
75	Job Growth	None	None	a new water renovation account is created for PFA loans to rural municipalities for wastewater and water renovation projects , following the MPCA & MDH project priority lists
78	Job Growth	None	None	the PUC must evaluate its process and develop a system to issue/deny pipeline routing permits within 150 days of application submission and report on permitting efficiency semiannually

MN NEWS

WATER ACTIONS

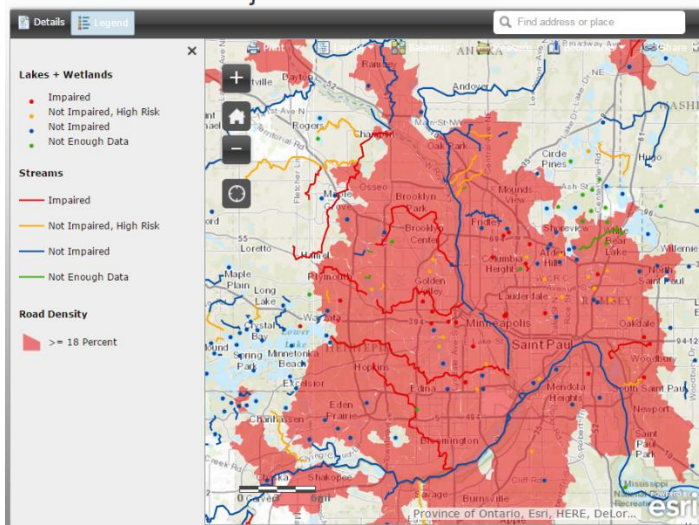
- Morris Sun Tribune: [Dayton to bring water summit to Morris](#); Governor Dayton's Office: [Governor Mark Dayton and Lt. Governor Tina Smith To Hold Town Hall Water Summit at University of Minnesota, Morris](#); MN Farm Guide: [Town Hall Water Summit at University of Minnesota, Morris](#); Grand Forks Herald: [Capitol Chatter: GOP in charge, a Senate surprise](#) (see the information and registration links in the Upcoming Events section, below)
- MN Humanities Center: [Water/Ways - Lanesboro Arts](#); Winona Daily News: [Connected through water: Acclaimed traveling exhibit opens Saturday in Lanesboro](#); Spring Grove Herald: [Traveling Smithsonian exhibit coming to Lanesboro, Jan. 7](#); Bluff Country Reader: [Traveling Smithsonian exhibition 'Water/Ways' to open in Lanesboro](#); Winona Post: [Lanesboro presents 'Currents of Change'](#); MPCA: [Water/Ways exhibit opens Jan. 7 in Lanesboro](#) (see the Water/Ways link in the Upcoming Events section, below)
- Pope County Tribune: [Pope SWCD receives 'District of the Year' award](#)
- Lake County News Chronicle: [Lake and Cook counties recognized for collaboration](#)
- The Kenyon Leader: [Local conservationist honored at state soil and water conservation district convention](#)

- Bluff Country Newspaper Group: [Conservation easement expands protected area near Lanesboro](#)
- BWSR: [Accelerating water quality improvements in Scott County](#)
- BWSR: [\\$13.4 million awarded to improve Minnesota's water quality](#) (be sure to check out the FY17 [maps](#) to see where projects were awarded)
- D-L Online: [Becker SWCD awarded \\$330,000 Legacy grant to reduce sediment on Upper Buffalo River](#)
- Echo Press: [Six scholarships available for high school juniors](#); the 2017 theme is sustainable water

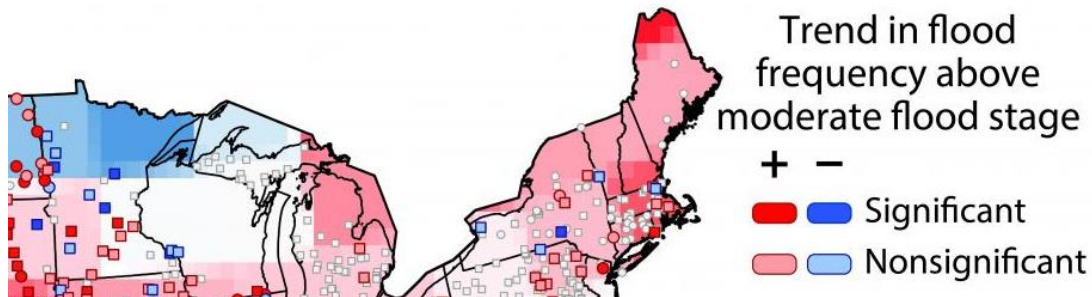
SURFACE WATER/STORMWATER

- DNR: [DNR sets protective elevation for White Bear Lake](#); Pioneer Press: [DNR sets minimum water level for White Bear Lake](#); Strib: [North/east metro briefs: State sets protective level for White Bear Lake](#)
- BWSR: [Local Road Wetland Replacement Program: Notification of Wetland Bank Service Area Closure](#) for Bank Service Area 9 – Minnesota River
- Strib: [A great river, at risk](#)
- Pioneer Press: [Campaign could lead to ban on plastic shopping bags in Duluth](#); Duluth News Tribune: [Duluth groups launch campaign to ban plastic bags](#); non-biodegradable plastic bags are perceived as litter problem on land and in water
- Prior Lake American: [Open houses to help residents understand new buffer law](#); MPR: [Seeing problems on the horizon, counties seek delay in buffer law](#); AgriNews: [BWSR, SWCDs prepare for buffer law enforcement](#); BWSR: [Farm Bill Assistance Partnership sees increased demand for conservation in 2016](#); Eden Prairie News: [Comment on Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources buffer program](#)
- MPR: [Minnesota joins lawsuit to stop Red River flood diversion project](#); Strib: [Minnesota DNR seeks to join lawsuit against flood project](#); Whapeton-Breckenridge Daily News: [DNR seeks to join lawsuit over project to divert Red River](#); DNR: [DNR seeks to join lawsuit over project to divert Red River](#); Pioneer Press: [Minnesota DNR seeks to join lawsuit against Fargo-Moorhead flood project](#)
- Sun Current: [Salt in our freshwater](#); Strib: [Low-salt diet for roads aims at keeping drinking water from tasting briny](#); Strib: [Surface water chloride assessments](#)

MPCA Chloride Project



- Strib: [Two key steps forward for Minnesota's water quality](#); DNR: [DNR completes milestone in protecting Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area](#); Pioneer Press: [What can you build along the Mississippi River? The DNR has new rules](#); KARE 11: [New year brings new Minnesota laws](#); Medical Daily: [Antibacterial Soap Ban: Minnesota Will Take Triclosan Off Shelves Before 2017, 9 Months Before FDA Ban Begins](#); Strib: [Minnesota leads way on banning anti-germ ingredient in soaps](#)
- Strib: [Scientists propose ways to measure Great Lakes water quality](#)
- BWSR: [Minnesota Approves First-Ever Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans for Yellow Medicine and Root Rivers](#); Fillmore County Journal: [Root River 1W1P final plan approved](#); Fillmore County News Leader: [Minnesota approves watershed management plans for Root River](#)
- Phys.org: [Flood threats changing across US: Study finds flood risk growing in the North, declining in the South](#)



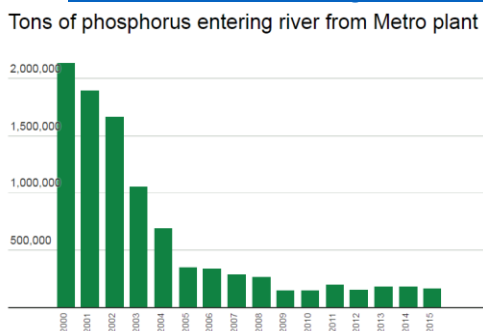
- Midwest Energy News: [Solar, energy efficiency part of Minnesota National Guard push for net zero](#), in addition to water use reduction goals
- KIMT: Year in Review: [Floods take NI and Southern MN by storm](#)
- BWSR: [One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants](#) - FY 2017 Request for Proposal
- Pioneer Press: [22 million pounds of plastics enter Great Lakes annually, study calculates](#)
- Superior Telegram: [Miller Hill Mall adds trees to protect trout](#) by cooling runoff

WATER SUPPLY

- St Louis Park Patch: [St. Louis Park Just Shut Down a Water Treatment Plan. Why?](#); Strib: [Water pressure: St. Louis Park to close problematic water treatment plant](#)
- Worthington Daily Globe: [Year in Review: Luverne gets Lewis & Clark water; Worthington waits](#)
- Atlas Obscura: [Washburn Park Water Tower](#)

WASTEWATER

- Pioneer Press: [Met Council task force studies controversial sewer fees](#)
- Strib: [Aging, corroded regional sewers get multi-million dollar repairs](#)
- Strib: [The data behind flushing – what wastewater tells us about the Twin Cities](#)



AG & WATER

- Business Wire: [Farmers Edge Partners with Great Plains Precision Ag, Inc to Empower More U.S. Growers with Comprehensive Precision Data](#)
- USDA: [USDA Announces Conservation Reserve Program Investments in Minnesota](#); MN Farm Guide: [USDA Announces Conservation Reserve Program Investments in Minnesota](#)
- MN Corn: [MCGA and Great River Greening partner on water quality](#)
- Strib: [Farm by farm, working toward a cleaner river in western Minnesota](#); article related to the Land Stewardship Project's [Chippewa 10% Project](#)
- MDA: [Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Program Certifies 300th Farm](#); the 306 certified farms represent over 175,000 acres of working lands (0.7% of total); together, they have added 531 new BMPs that are annual retaining 14.7M lbs of soil on the land and keeping 9.7M lbs of sediment and 6,086 lbs of phosphorous from entering MN waters
- U of MN: [U of M Extension launches new soil management and health website](#); that offers research-based resources to help producers improve soil and crop productivity, while minimizing environmental risks
- AgriNews: [Funding gives boost to SWCDs](#)
- Minnesota Farm Guide: [Minnesota Farm Bureau lists focus areas for 2017](#)
- BWSR: [Balancing Production and Resource Needs](#)
- Strib: [Waste flows downhill, and that's what worries folks in Hendricks, Minn.](#)
- USDA: [USDA Invests \\$225 Million in Innovative Conservation Partnerships](#); the Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape [Regional Conservation Partnership Program Project](#) has been added to 6 other RCPP projects in MN
- AgWeek: [Only one thing stands between farmers and non-farmers](#)

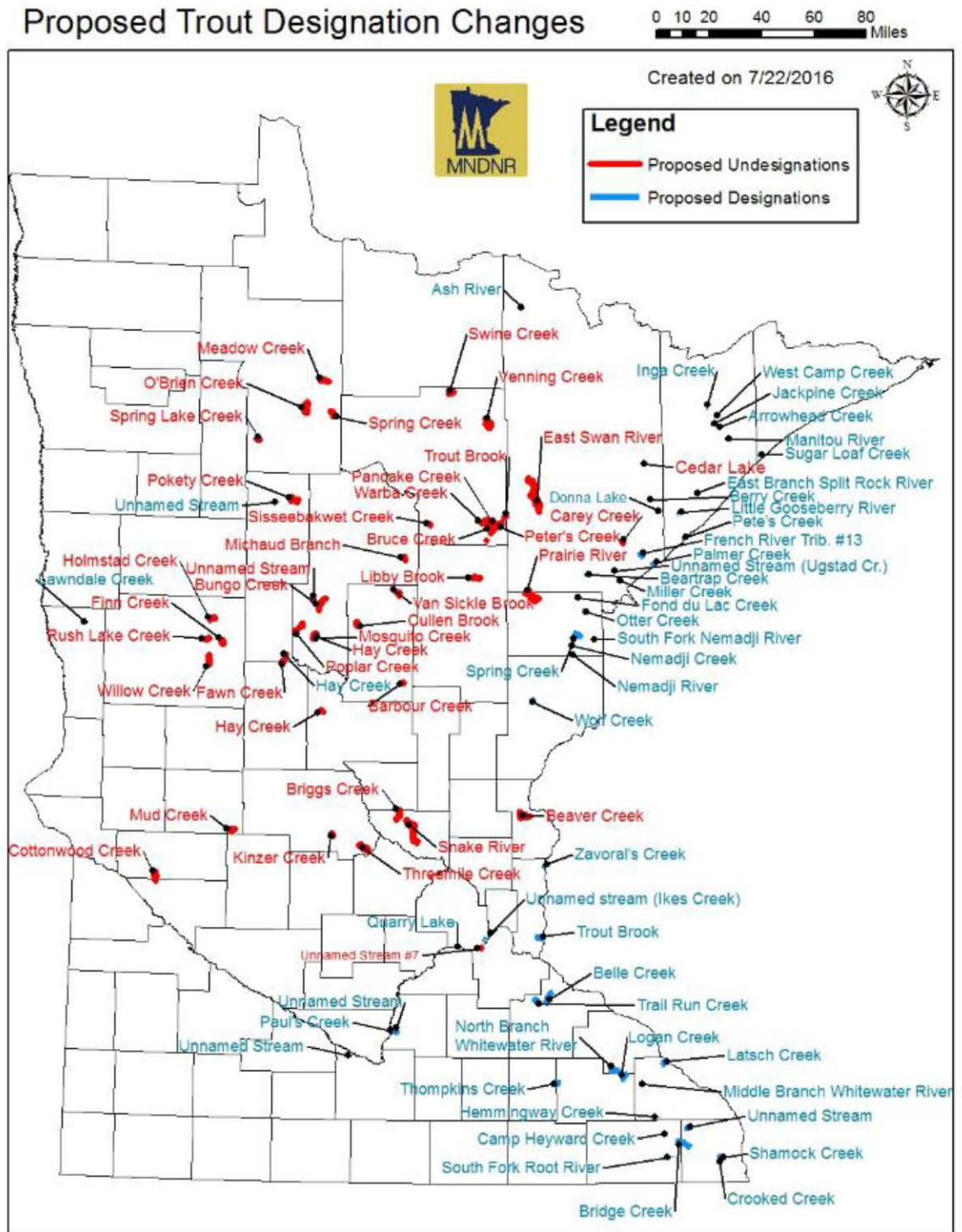
EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

- DNR: [State Nonferrous Metallic Mineral Leasing Negotiated Lease Request](#); DNR is considering a request by Kennecott Exploration Company for negotiated metallic mineral leases in Aitkin and Carlton Counties
- MinnPost: [Defeat of mining near Boundary Waters is a rare victory for the value of place](#) and [A look at some of the biggest subjects shaping environmental news in 2017](#)
- Strib: [Federal environmental review will measure mining risks to wilderness](#)
- Winona Daily News: [Dayton not ready to declare Twin Metals copper mine dead yet](#); Pioneer Press: [Gov. Dayton not ready to declare Twin Metals copper mine dead yet](#); Strib: [Dayton not ready to declare Twin Metals copper mine dead yet](#)
- USDA: [Obama Administration Takes Steps to Protect Watershed of the Boundary Waters Canoe Wilderness Area](#); Capitol Report: [Federal agencies deny Minnesota mine leases](#); Minneapolis-St Paul Business Journal: [Feds block copper mine near Boundary Waters](#); WCCO: [Minnesota Mining Company Will Fight Lease Denial](#)
- Water Online: [Minnesota Looks To Tighten Mining Wastewater Regulations](#)

OPINIONS

- Grand Rapids Herald Review: [Sportsmen: protect Boundary Waters from sulfide mining](#)
- Echo Press: [LETTER: Should raise water quality standards](#)
- Post Bulletin: [Jeffrey D. Rome: We must work to protect the Boundary Waters](#)
- Owatonna People's Press: [Paul Austin: What 2017 holds for Minnesota](#)
- Duluth News Tribune: [Statewide View: The Boundary Waters works for everyone](#)

- Mankato Free Press: [Monson column: DNR considering changes to some trout designations](#); this column relates to DNR's Aug 2016 announcement that it will be updating its [Trout Stream Designations](#) (note that the un-designations do not include Cold Spring Creek in Stearns County)



BEYOND MINNESOTA

REGIONAL

- Pioneer Press: [Emergency managers charged over Flint's lead-tainted water](#); MPR: [Emergency managers charged over Flint's lead-tainted water](#); Strib: [Emergency managers charged over Flint's lead-tainted water](#)
- Strib: [Work to begin on replacing lead pipelines in Milwaukee](#)
- Strib: [Hydroelectric engineers find potential in centuries-old mine](#)
- San Francisco Chronicle: [Water guzzlers face more fines, public shaming under new state law](#)
- Des Moines Register: ['Iowa Nice Guy' makes case for corn growers](#); watch the video showing chemical and water needs for urban lawns and cornfields
- Reuters: [U.S. jury orders DuPont to pay \\$10.5 mln over leaked chemical](#)
- Environment 360: [New Look at Rivers Reveals The Toll of Human Activity](#)
- Strib: [Report finds improvements in Chesapeake Bay's overall health](#)
- Reuters: [Water conservation push could put California utilities in a tough spot: Fitch](#)

NATIONAL

- Strib: [EPA doesn't have to set water limits for 2 fertilizers](#); a federal judge has given the EPA more time to work with states on limiting phosphorus and nitrogen
- The Hill: [Trump's infrastructure plans will hamper access to clean water](#)
- Curiosity.com: [There Are 2,000 Gallons Of Water In Your Jeans, Sort Of](#)
- Farm and Dairy: [Nutrient field studies starting to show results](#)
- Circle of Blue: [Price of Water 2016: Up 5 Percent in 30 Major U.S. Cities; 48 Percent Increase Since 2010](#)

GLOBAL

- MPR: [For some, climate change cuts off access to clean water](#); innovative solutions India and Israel are employing to address pressing water problems (listen, 53 min)

REPORTS

STATE OF MN WATER

- DNR: Stream Flow Report – discontinued until spring
- National Drought Mitigation Center: [1/3/17 Drought Monitor](#)

2016 SUMMIT FINDINGS

The Governor's Office has posted its 24 page [Governor's Water Summit Report 2016](#), which summarizes input from the 2/16 Summit into these needs:

- Broaden and strengthen Minnesota's water ethic
- Strengthen Minnesota water governance
- Promote efficient water use
- Reduce nitrate contamination in water resources and citizens' exposure to nitrate-contaminated water
- Treat runoff as a resource, not a waste
- Ensure sustained and targeted investment to address critical water needs

COST OF WATER SERVICES

At the end of 2015, Steve Woods (Executive Director of the Freshwater Society) tallied his household costs to see just how inexpensive his water is. He repeated that exercise at the end of 2016 to demonstrate the comparative value we place on household services and water was again near the bottom of the list. In the table Steve published in Freshwater Facets, he only emphasized the cost of his water supply. Replicating his data below, I have highlighted his costs for all 3 water-related utilities: water, wastewater (sanitary sewer) and stormwater (City stormwater fee), so you can compare the relative cost of each. Steve lives in Shoreview, a metro suburb of about 26,000 people. Shoreview extracts groundwater to supply the needs of its residents and businesses; in November 2016, their new [water treatment facility](#) began operating to treat iron and manganese. Not surprisingly, the even more highly engineered process to treat wastewater is over twice as expensive as obtaining treated water. It may be surprising for some people to learn that the cost of conveying and treating stormwater is approaching the cost for receiving drinking water. It is also interesting to note that Shoreview raised rates for all three water utilities from 2015 to 2016, but the cost for all 3 utilities is still only 4.4% of Steve’s household services budget.

2015-2016 Annual Costs for a Shoreview Home		
<i>(3-BR, 2.5 occupants, semi-wooded, 0.3 acre lot on sandy soils)</i>		
	2015	2016
Property tax	\$4,890	\$4,610
Cell phone (2 lines)	\$2,470	\$2,520
Homeowner insurance	\$1,320	\$1,171
Electricity	\$880	\$831
Natural gas	\$820	\$568
Internet	\$710	\$818
Landline/long distance	\$620	\$0
Garbage/recycle	\$330	\$325
Sanitary sewer	\$280	\$284
Basic cable	\$270	\$252
Water	\$130	\$135
City stormwater fee	\$90	\$101
Composting service	\$70	\$85
Street lighting fee	\$40	\$43
TOTAL	\$12,920	\$11,743
water, wastewater, stormwater:	\$500	\$520
as a % of household costs:	3.9	4.4

SUSTAINABLE AG

The Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture has released their Field to Market National Indicators Report. Data on [Water Quality Indices](#) for MN can be found for the Upper Mississippi River Basin (UMRB) and the Great Lakes Region (GLR). The report notes that “in-stream water quality measurements have not notably improved in recent years. We find encouragement in recent research that has found that continued adoption of conservation practices holds promise to improve water quality outcomes over the long term.”

NAT'L ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Water Resources and Climate Change Workgroup: [Looking Forward: Priorities for Managing Freshwater Resources in a Changing Climate](#) (Nov 2016); this plan is a guide for “sustained and coordinated action among federal agencies to further climate resilience efforts and to empower communities to continue to work with federal agencies on shared resilience priorities”.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Jan 7-Feb 19: **Smithsonian Water/Ways and We Are Water MN Exhibits** in the Events Hall of the Commonwealth Theater in Lanesboro, with companion exhibits “Currents of Change” in the Lanesboro Arts Gallery, “Water Brings People Together Over Time” at the Lanesboro Museum, and “Water in Ritual: Baptismal Gown Display” at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church; this group is also hosting many other activities, from stage performances to dinners to lectures; read all the details [here](#) (they span several web pages)
- 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 27: Governor’s Town Hall Water Summit, U of MN Morris, 9:45 am to 4 pm; registration opens 1/6; more info [here](#); register [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 and registration 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**; \$20, 9:00 – 3:30; Verizon Wireless Center (1 Civic Center Plaza, Mankato); information and registration [here](#)
- Mar 7-9: 33rd Annual **MN Rural Water Association Water & Wastewater Technical Conference**; River's Edge Convention Center in St Cloud; \$280 early registration/\$305 on-site registration; agenda and registration [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](#)