

## Legislative Water Commission Update 04/17/2018

**ERRORS? OMISSIONS?** If found, please notify [jim.stark@lcc.leg.mn](mailto:jim.stark@lcc.leg.mn).

*This update is a roundup of Minnesota water news, as well as articles from beyond Minnesota, that may inform members. 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.*

*I look forward to continuing to work on water issues that are important to all of us.*

*Jim Stark, Director, MN Legislative Water Commission*

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- **Next meeting of the Legislative Water Commission: April 23 at 6:00 pm.**
- **The Commission met on March 26. Minutes are available at:** [www.lcc.leg.mn/lwc/](http://www.lcc.leg.mn/lwc/)
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### MINNESOTA NEWS:

White Bear Lake in the news again:

[Judge Won't Overturn White Bear Lake Decision](#)

MPR: Buffer Rule: Gov. Mark Dayton has asked the state's Board of Water and Soil Resources to withdraw a proposal that could significantly increase fines for landowners who don't comply with the state's buffer law. Visit: [The Water Main](#)

**Endangered Rivers:** A new report lists two rivers in Minnesota and one in Wisconsin as among the most endangered rivers in the United States. This year's report ranks the Kawishiwi River in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area as the third most endangered in the nation. The Mississippi from St. Anthony Falls in Minneapolis to the confluence of the Minnesota River, listed at No. 6. <https://www.americanrivers.org>

John Downing, director of Minnesota Sea Grant and professor of biology at UMD's Swenson College of Science and Engineering, has coauthored a paper, published in *Limnology and Oceanography Letters*, that is the first to show that lake size and nutrients drive the amount of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere globally from lakes.

**Wisconsin** is failing to keep farm pollution from fouling its water says the leader of a nonprofit. "Failing not because conservationists and farmers don't know what to do but because society does not expect agriculture to protect the environment," Jim VandenBrook, director of the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association, said in a recent letter discussing a landmark study the group has completed. **If you were to do everything right, if you could magically wave the wand, it will be years before we see water quality improvement,** Zimmerman said. "I'm talking 10-plus years before you truly see water quality

**improvement, and that's frustrating for not only for farmers but the general public."** Visit: [http://lacrossetribune.com/news/state-and-regional/failure-and-a-call-for-patience-amid-rising-farm-pollution/article\\_b3b83115-6498-5d28-ba3b-f212798450ee.html](http://lacrossetribune.com/news/state-and-regional/failure-and-a-call-for-patience-amid-rising-farm-pollution/article_b3b83115-6498-5d28-ba3b-f212798450ee.html)

**MPR:** How should Minnesota get to cleaner water? Jerry and Linda Jennissen have been raising dairy cows on this land just east of the North Fork of the Crow River for 35 years. The family runs a successful dairy farm and creamery that sells cheese to stores across the Midwest. Along the way, the Jennissens took steps to protect water long before anyone told them they had to. When Minnesota passed a law in 2015 requiring vegetative buffers along public waters to filter out nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen, it didn't matter much to the Jennissens. They'd already planted one — 15 years ago. Visit: [The Water Main](#)

**MPR: Plastic pollution is everywhere.** A [new study](#) even found that most bottled drinking water has been contaminated with [microplastics](#), less than 5 mm in diameter. The problem with plastics is that once they're manufactured, they mostly wind up back in the earth. Recycling is becoming less profitable, illegal dumping is becoming more common.

**[Minnesota firm tries an ancient solution to heavy metal pollution:](#)** Cleaning polluted water can be difficult and expensive. But a northern Minnesota company says it's developed a natural, cheap technology to filter heavy metal contamination, and it's literally homegrown. [The Water Main](#)

**Minnesota Water Action Day, May 2, 8-4 pm at the State Capitol.** Learn about the most important water issues facing Minnesotans today, meet legislators, or join the rally. Sponsored by Friends of the Mississippi River and other environmental organizations. Learn more on the [event page](#).

**MPR News' [Ground Level survey](#) last fall, an overwhelming majority of Minnesotans — 85 percent — said they think the state is on the right track when it comes to providing safe drinking water.** The number was almost as high, 80 percent, when respondents were asked about protecting lakes and rivers. That's higher than any other right track/wrong track topic MPR News surveyed, including health care, education and the economy.

**[2018 Clean Water Fund Performance Report](#)** Minnesota agencies released their fourth report to help Minnesotans clarify connections between Clean Water funds invested, actions taken and outcomes achieved. Measures provide a snapshot of how Clean Water Fund dollars are being spent and what progress has been made. The measures are organized into four categories: investment, surface water quality, drinking water protection, and external drivers and social measures.

**Invisible Heroes: Minnesota's Drinking Water Providers:** Do you think about how the water gets to your home? Minnesota's invisible heroes – Minnesota's drinking water providers - make it happen. Tune in to the MDH Drinking Water YouTube page (<http://bit.ly/2np5jL2>) to learn how these heroes provide safe, reliable drinking water. MDH partners with these systems to face and overcome challenges that include contamination, lack of adequate water sources, and aging infrastructure.

**Clean water is essential** for ensuring public health, creating recreation opportunities and sustaining economic development. However, the value of clean water remains largely invisible to many. Most households and communities are not actually aware of risks to water quality and often take for granted the benefits of safe and abundant clean water. In support of this work and as a researcher with the Natural Capital Project developed a story map called [The True Value of Water: Drinking Water Protection in Minnesota](#). This interactive website aims to build a deeper understanding of the complexity of drinking water

issues in Minnesota. The interdisciplinary and collaborative approach took into account both biophysical threats to drinking water quality and socioeconomic factors that have an impact on community capacity for drinking water protection.

Conservation Minnesota and Freshwater Society sponsored the: State of Water Conference on April 13-14 at the Breezy Point Resort. The meeting focused on lake and river restoration efforts throughout the state.

### **WATER ACTIONS**

**Clean Water Council:** The Clean Water Council met on April 16. Meeting highlights included updates by state agencies on the programs being funded by the Clean Water Fund. Contact Deepa deAlwis (651) 757-2572

### **GROUNDWATER**

**Viruses in Groundwater:** On April 12, Jim Walsh (MDH) described a cooperative study with the USGS and the U. S. Department of Agriculture to a group at the Minnesota Geological Survey. The team is finding widespread detections of virus indicators in groundwater throughout the state. Some of these viruses have the potential to cause gastrointestinal illnesses in drinking water. It appears that these are related to precipitation events, vertical fractures in geologic materials, or to poor well construction. Contact: james.f.walsh@mn.state.us

### **SURFACE WATER/STORMWATER**

#### **WATER AND AGRICULTURE**

Freshwater Society has a new report about the impacts of agriculture on groundwater. The report urges State support to encourage new practices in order to transition to a more sustainable agricultural system. Visit: [https://freshwater.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/GW3\\_Final.pdf](https://freshwater.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/GW3_Final.pdf)

#### **Floods and Droughts**

**National Flood Forecast Center, North Central Region:** The snowpack around the region is widespread and has increased due to recent snowfall. There are some areas where the potential for flooding is increasing. For details, visit: [www.weather.gov/ncrfc](http://www.weather.gov/ncrfc)

### **SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA**

Researchers at the University of Minnesota are studying winter food supply of trout in southeast Minnesota. University of Minnesota University of Minnesota Prof. Len Ferrington and his students are looking into why trout grow quickly in some streams in winter and lose weight in others. Funds for the last part of the study, assuming it's approved, would come from the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources. When completed in a few years, Ferrington said, he expects it will be used to determine which trout streams are the best targets for conservation measures. Star Tribune, March 25, 2018

### **GREAT LAKES**

**Great Lakes- St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact Annual Water Conservation and Efficiency Assessment**

**US and Canada Have Been Slow to Address Chemical Pollution : International Joint Commission:** Although water quality in the Great Lakes is generally good, Canada and the US still lag behind in meeting goals to meet human health and adversely affect drinking water quality. **Read More**

**(ANN ARBOR, MI):** Michigan Governor Rick Snyder announced that the U.S. Coast Guard confirmed that a vessel anchor strike caused the recent spill of insulating mineral oil from transmission lines crossing the Straits of Mackinac, and that the same anchor may have caused three dents in Enbridge's Line 5 oil pipeline, which also crosses the Straits. Governor Snyder's statement also stated that "Assuming studies show a tunnel is physically possible and construction would not cause significant environmental damage, the Governor will move to require Enbridge to construct the tunnel and decommission the existing Line 5 that runs under the Straits of Mackinac." The Governor's full statement is available here: <https://www.michigan.gov/snyder/0,4668,7-277-57577-466094--,00.html>.

## **WATER SUPPLY**

**MPR:** [Minn. cities want a break as they face costly sewer work, new rules](#)

**A Water Efficiency and Conservation State Scorecard was recently released.** Various state agency staff were responsible for completing the national survey. Minnesota received a "B" grade of water conservation laws... The scorecards is based on work for the Alliance for Efficiency. Visit: <http://www.allianceforwaterefficiency.org/Resource-Library-2017StateScorecard.aspx>

## **WASTEWATER**

**MPR:** [Minn. cities want a break as they face costly sewer work, new rules](#)

## **AGRICULTURE AND WATER**

**Minnesota's plans to reduce nitrates:** Gov. Mark Dayton and agriculture commissioner Dave Frederickson outlined a [proposal years in the making](#) : The proposal would create a system of voluntary and mandatory measures on farmland and in public water supplies.

## **OPINIONS**

## **REGIONAL and NATIONAL**

**USDA:** [USDA Highlights \\$40 Million in Infrastructure Investments in Rural Communities](#)

## **MEETINGS**

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Minnesota Groundwater Conference: Groundwater Past, Present, and Future:** April 26, 2018, St Paul. What were hydrogeologists worried about 30 years ago? What came of those worries? What did they foresee and what couldn't be forecast? Most of all: what can we learn from their experience? As we face the retirement of the baby boomers (the generation that led the cleanup of Superfund sites and made computerized groundwater modeling widely available and accessible) we also risk losing hard-won knowledge and perspective. For conference registration information contact WRI by phone at (651)705-6464 or email: [office@mgwa.org](mailto:office@mgwa.org)

May 1-3: **The 2018 Surface Water Treatment Workshop** is scheduled for May 1-3, at the Courtyard by Marriot in Moorhead, MN. The event is put on by the ND, MN, and SD sections of the American Water Works Association (AWWA) every other year. The conference provides current regulatory, technical, process, and operational information to around 200 engineers, scientists, municipalities, and end users of water treatment facilities with an emphasis on surface water. For more information, go to <http://www.mnawwa.org/page/SWTWHome>

May 10, 2018: **Smart Water Technology Roundtable: Workshop for IOT Solutions in Water Treatment;** Uponsor, 5925 148<sup>th</sup> St W, Apple Valley; contact [Steve.Riedel@state.mn.us](mailto: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](http://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.**

**The International Association of Great Lakes Research** and Michigan Technological University have announced the 2018 State of Lake Superior (SOLS) Conference will be held October 9-12 in Houghton, Michigan. Hosted on the MTU campus, SOLS will be a multi-day conference and include invited sessions and abstracts, plenary sessions, field trips, and associated meetings. Stay tuned for more details and the Call for Sessions in coming weeks at [iaglr.org/sol/sols18](http://iaglr.org/sol/sols18).

**The biennial 2018 Upper Midwest Invasive Species Conference (UMISC)** will be a Joint Conference with the North American Invasive Species Management Association, **October 15-18, 2018** at the Mayo Civic Center in Rochester, MN. Abstract Submission Is Open. Deadline to Submit an Abstract for Presentation: Wednesday, April 11, 2018. They are expecting about 700 people to attend. See <https://www.umisc.net/> or contact Doug Jensen, conference co-chair.

**WE ARE MINNESOTA WATER:** The Minnesota Historical Center, in cooperation with several state agencies have a display which is touring across the state. Visit: [We are Water MN](#) for the tour locations and dates. For more information contact: Margaret Wagner: 651-201-6488, [margaret.wagner@state.mn.us](mailto:margaret.wagner@state.mn.us)

**Minnesota Water Resources Conference: October 16–17, 2018, Saint Paul River Centre :** The Minnesota Water Resources Conference presents innovative, practical, and applied water resource engineering solutions, management techniques, and current research about Minnesota's water resources. For More information contact: Nichole Salinas, College of Continuing and Professional Studies, University of Minnesota, [612-301-2448](tel:612-301-2448), [ccapsconf3@umn.edu](mailto:ccapsconf3@umn.edu)

## 2018 Legislative Update

The following are bills that relate to water:

[HF 3352](#) (Heintzeman) / [SF 2934](#) (Westrom)—ML2018 FY2019 ENRTF funding bill

[HF3122](#) (Urdahl) /[SF2668](#) (Dahms)- Public facilities authority clean water bond issue and appropriations for \$167 million

HF3332 (Urdahl)/ SF3075 (Westrom)-- Wastewater infrastructure projects supplemental grant bond issue and appropriation (relates to statutes 446A.072 and 446A.073)

**Chloride Pollution (HF 3577, SH 3199)** This is legislation would provide liability relief for salt applicators who have completed certified training through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, ultimately preventing unnecessary chloride from impairing our waterways. This bill has passed with bipartisan support through several House committees and one Senate committee.

**Groundwater Protection Measure (HF 2887, SF 2720).** The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) and Governor Dayton have proposed Groundwater Protection Measure to limit nitrate pollution in drinking water. A bill to forbid the MDA from implementing the Groundwater Protection Measure has been moving through both the House and the Senate.

#### **Reducing Chloride Pollution in Lakes, Rivers, and Streams**

A coalition of groups supports legislation to reduce chloride pollution caused by excessive salt application. Committees in both the Minnesota Senate and Minnesota House of Representatives have heard the bill (HF 3577/SF 3199). The House passed the bill through Environment, Civil Law and Ways and Means committees. The Senate version has passed through the Environment Policy committee.

#### **REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS**

USGS: Release of National Water Quality Program Circular 1437, “**Understanding the influence of nutrients on stream ecosystems in agricultural landscapes**”. This circular summarizes important findings on nutrients and their effects in agricultural streams in eight study areas, all of which were part of the Cycle II Nutrient Enrichment Effects Study. USGS Circulars are well illustrated reports meant for wide distribution: Munn, M.D., Frey, J.W., Tesoriero, A.J., Black, R.W., Duff, J.H., Lee, Kathy, Maret, T.R., Mebane, C.A., Waite, I.R., and Zelt, R.B., 2018, Understanding the influence of nutrients on stream ecosystems in agricultural landscapes: U.S. Geological Survey Circular 1437, 80 p., <https://doi.org/10.3133/cir1437>. Expected release May 2018.