

Legislative Subcommittee on Minnesota Water-- Policy Update

July 10, 2024

This update is a roundup of Minnesota water news, as well as articles from beyond Minnesota. It also includes summaries of meetings and reports and information about upcoming events. During the Legislative session, updates on water-related legislation and committee activities are added. I look forward to continuing to work on water issues that are important to all of us. Any errors or omissions are inadvertent. If found, please notify jim.stark@lcc.mn.gov. **Subscribe to the weekly update and follow SMWP at:** <https://www.lcc.mn.gov/smwp/>

Jim Stark, Director, Subcommittee on Minnesota Water Policy
1st Floor, Centennial Office Building, 658 Cedar St. St. Paul, MN 55155
Email: jim.stark@lcc.mn.gov
Ph: 612-718-2749 (Cell), 651-284-6431 (office)

The members of the subcommittee on Minnesota Water Policy (subcommittee) are:

- Representatives: Fischer, Hemmingsen-Jaeger, Jacob, Rehm, Schultz, and Skraba
- Senators: Hoffman, Kupec, Lang, Putnam, Weber, and Wesenberg
- The Subcommittee will meet on Monday, July 15, at noon. The public will be able to access the livestream from the subcommittee webpage at: https://www.lcc.mn.gov/smwp/Meetings_2024.html
- Meeting materials, including agenda, will be made available at: https://www.lcc.mn.gov/smwp/Meetings_2024.html
- **Subcommittee Meeting Agenda: Monday, July 15, 2024 at Noon, virtual Meeting**
- Call to order: Chair: Representative Hemmingsen-Jaeger
- Approval of minutes from June 10 meeting
- Funding Water Storage in the Red River Basin of Minnesota - Rob Sip, Red River Water Management Board
- Flooding Update, DNR staff
- Water quality treatment innovation*
- Update on Minnesota River Congress, Scott Sparlin
- Field trip to the Upper Mississippi River Watershed** : August 19 and 20, Jim Stark, Crystal Mathisrud
- Adjourn

* Dan Larson, WQ3D Gov't Affairs, Clarence Johnson, WQ3D Partner, Craig Wilson, WQ3D President

If you wish to testify, please contact Jim Stark by May 10 by 4:00 pm.

If you wish to attend in person, contact Jim Stark

LCC Subcommittee on Water Policy

The Public may view the meeting on the [LCC YouTube page](#)

Email: Jim.stark@Lcc.mn.gov

**** Subcommittee Field Tour: August 19 and 20, 2024- Draft**

The Subcommittee is planning a field tour focused on irrigation, stream-aquifer interactions and priority lakes in central Minnesota. The tentative agenda is shown below. If you are interested in attending, please contact Jim Stark, email is: Jim.Stark@lcc.mn.gov or by phone at 612-718-2749

Agenda

August 19

- 10 am: Arrive Prairie Farms, Rice Minnesota. Vehicles can be left at the farm
- Noon—Depart by Bus for Park Rapids Lunch, provided on the bus
- 2:00 pm: Arrive RD Offutt Corporation, Park Rapids
- 3:30 Depart--bus tour of watershed.
- 5:30 arrive at hotel, Park Rapids

August 20 (Tentative)

- From Park Rapids by bus. Possible stops:
- Former Potlatch Parcels now under active forest management with
- Deep Lake Park, new Hubbard County Park in development which includes forestland protection
- Steamboat Lake and Necktie River protection and restoration project vision and overview of partnerships/activities to date.
- Kabekona Lake stop and success story discussion.
- Mississippi Headwaters Board project highlight and success story
- Potential Ten Mile Lake Success Story (Cass County)
- **3:30: Depart by bus for Rice, Minnesota**

Breaking News

- **Flooding:** Many parts of the state experienced flooding in late June and early July. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Ecological and Water Resources Division has prepared the most recent Stream Flow Report. You will find previous reports and information on related water resource topics at the following link:
https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/surfacewater_section/stream_hydro/streamflow_weekly.html
- **Rapidan Dam partial failure sent more than a century's worth of sediment pollution downstream:** Check out this story from MPR News: <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2024/07/05/rapidan-dam-partial-failure-sent-more-than-a-centurys-worth-of-sediment-pollution-downstream>
- More than a century's worth of sediment was unleashed downstream into the Blue Earth River after the partial failure of the Rapidan Dam (MPR). The impacts to water quality and wildlife may not be known for another couple years, experts say. There was an estimated 11.6 million cubic yards of sediment behind the dam , and it was high in phosphorus and nitrogen because of nearby agricultural runoff, said Minnesota Department of Natural Resources ecologist Neil Haugerud. "When you release that kind of sediment in that big of an event, you can fill up downstream pools, you can cover up critical habitat for fish and macroinvertebrates," Haugerud said. "It has an effect on the ecosystem downstream, and how that effect will go on into the future will be yet to be seen." *Editor's note: That's about equal to a million dump trucks. For some perspective, average daily sediment load in the Minnesota River at Mankato, downstream from the*

Blue Earth River, is equal to 2,700 tons per day or a 10-ton dump truck load every five and a half minutes. That's about 260 dump trucks per day or 96,000 dump trucks per year.

- **Infested Waters List:** The DNR will add a lake, river, pond or wetland to the infested waters list if it contains an aquatic invasive species that could spread to other waters. The DNR may also list a lake, river, pond or wetland as infested if it is connected to a body of water where an aquatic invasive species is present. To reduce the risk of spreading aquatic invasive species, activities like bait harvest and water use are managed differently in infested waters. You can download the infested waters list as an [Excel spreadsheet \(XLS\)](#). *Last updated June 11, 2024.* This Excel spreadsheet is the most complete version of the infested waters list and should be used for regulatory or permitting purposes. You can [view an interactive map of most infested waters](#) opens in a new browser tab on the [EDDMapS website](#) .
- **The call for nominations for the Advisory Council on water supply systems and wastewater treatment facilities are still open.** In 2023, the Minnesota Legislature created the advisory council on water supply systems and wastewater treatment facilities. Membership on the council includes wastewater operators from around the state, members of the public, and a representative for municipalities. Members will be appointed by the commissioners of the MPCA and the Minnesota Department of Health. Applications are being accepted through the [Secretary of State's website](#).
- **Job opening: Extension Educator, Private Wells and Groundwater:** The Private Wells and Groundwater Extension Educator will lead research-based educational programs to assist private well users and groundwater professionals in managing and understanding drinking water from private wells. The position requires a master's degree related to groundwater or public health and strong communication and relationship-building skills, among other requirements. This role is crucial for advancing the management and quality of private well water through educational outreach and technical assistance. To apply, visit <https://hr.umn.edu/Jobs/Find-Job> and search for job number **361778** or visit the direct link below: The application deadline is July 14, 2024. <https://hr.myu.umn.edu/jobs/ext/361778>
- **Locked deep under the Iron Range, helium could float a startup company:** Drillers looking for platinum and palladium stumbled on what may be a major helium reservoir in Minnesota. Now it could become a mine. ([Chloe Johnson](#) and [Walker Orenstein](#) Star Tribune, February 22 read the full story at the startribune.co

Water By Topic

Drinking Water

- The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) announced that it would be developing a statewide drinking water plan to guide the management of drinking water over the next ten years. Persistent link to this item <https://hdl.handle.net/11299/259166>
- State agencies (MDA, MDH and MPCA) have responded to an EPA request regarding a petition from several environmental organizations. The petition expressed concerns about the safety of drinking water in southeast Minnesota. The full response can be seen on the Subcommittee's website along with other materials from the December 5 meeting. Briefly, the agencies responded with the following intended actions: 1. An immediate outreach program to again notify affected residents using private wells with known nitrate concentrations above the Maximum Contaminant Level and to provide alternate water to vulnerable populations, 2. A public health intervention to ensure safe drinking water for private wells users in the mid-term in which well owner participation is voluntary; and 3. Enhanced long-term environmental and conservation strategies to reduce nitrate concentrations in the aquifers that provide drinking water

- **From the Minnesota Rural Water Association.** The MRWA has several training events for water operators: <https://www.mrwa.com>

Water Governance

- The Minnesota Groundwater Association has published their review of the 1989 Groundwater Protection Act. It can be found at: https://www.mgwa.org/documents/whitepapers/minnesotas_1989_ground_water_protection_act.pdf
- Freshwater and the UM have released a report on groundwater governance in the Great Lakes Region shown at the link below: <https://keeler.umn.edu/research/groundwater-governance-in-the-great-lakes-region-2021-2022>

Groundwater

- **Straight River near Park Rapids: New report indicates groundwater use having minimal effect on streams. More work is needed:** The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) continues to work in the Straight River Groundwater Management Area (SRGWMA) to address groundwater-related resource challenges and ensure that groundwater use remains sustainable. Groundwater use is vital to the people and economy in the Straight River Groundwater Management Area (SRGWMA). Since January 2016, the DNR has met with residents, permitted water users and local government leaders in the Straight River Area, near Park Rapids. These discussions helped form the [DNR action plan](#). Since the plan was finalized in 2018, the DNR has worked to complete the actions listed in the plan. These actions are designed to first gain a more detailed understanding of water flows in the area and then to propose a list of actions that will ensure a sustainable groundwater supply while protecting the Straight River ecosystem. The DNR recently completed a comprehensive review of all available streamflow and groundwater data related to Objective 1 of the plan, which states “groundwater use in the GWMA does not harm aquifers and ecosystems and does not negatively impact surface waters.” The new SRGWMA Monitoring and Analysis Report is available on the website. The DNR wants individuals, communities, and businesses to be able to continue using groundwater in a way that complies with the sustainability standard as described in Minn. Statute [103G.287, Subd. 5.](#)
- **Project Update: Bonanza Valley Groundwater Management Area. June 11, 2024: The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is implementing the [Bonanza Valley Groundwater Management Area Plan](#) (Plan).** It is a DNR plan for DNR actions in the Bonanza Valley Groundwater Management Area. While the DNR wants individuals, communities and businesses to keep using groundwater, [state law](#) requires that permitted water use is sustainable. The people in the Bonanza Valley area helped DNR develop the Plan that was finalized in 2016. Direct questions about this project can be addressed to Mark Hauck, DNR project manager, at 320-223- 7846 or mark.hauck@state.mn.us. For more information on the Bonanza Valley Groundwater Management Area or to sign up to receive project updates, visit the project web page at www.mndnr.gov/gwmp/area-bv.html. For more information on DNR’s groundwater management programs, visit: www.mndnr.gov/gwmp/index.html.
- **DNR Commissioner sets sustainable diversion limit for Little Rock Creek; April 23, 2024:** The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has issued a [Commissioner’s Order](#) (Order) to protect the ecology of Little Rock Creek. With this action, the DNR: Establishes a **sustainable diversion limit** for Little Rock Creek; Recognizes that a **water use conflict** exists among agricultural production water users within a zone near Little Rock Creek (called the Zone of Irrigation Influence; Gives **opportunity to permit holders** to submit a plan to the DNR to resolve the water use conflict that will keep water use impacts below the sustainable diversion limit, and **Withholds consideration of applications** for additional water use within the Zone of

Irrigation Influence until the conflict is resolved. Questions about this project can be addressed to Mark Hauck, DNR project manager, 320-223-7846, mark.hauck@state.mn.us For more information on the Little Rock Creek area groundwater project, visit the project web page at www.mndnr.gov/littlerock. For more information on the DNR's groundwater management programs, visit www.mndnr.gov/gwmp/index.html.

- **County geologic and groundwater information:** Recent atlases are split into two parts. Geologic studies include unconsolidated deposits and bedrock. Groundwater studies include flow systems, aquifers, groundwater chemistry, and sensitivity to pollution. For more information, see the following site: https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/groundwater_section/mapping/status.html

Rivers

MPCA to Monitor Entire Minnesota Stretch of Mississippi River in 2024:

April 25: From the MPCA via the Clean Water Council: The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) announced a new initiative to monitor water quality throughout the entire Mississippi River within Minnesota's borders for the first time in a single year. Water and aquatic life samples taken in 2024 from 50+ strategic locations between Bemidji and the Iowa border will provide a complete picture of water quality along the 650-mile stretch of the river within the state. The MPCA has previously gathered water samples from designated stretches of the river over many years — not ever attempting to sample the entire river in Minnesota during one monitoring season.

Media coverage:

- [Minnesota to take the pulse of the Mississippi River, from the headwaters to Iowa border \(aol.com\)](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune)
- [State regulators launch big Mississippi water monitoring project | MPR News](#)
- [MPCA will monitor a year's worth of Mississippi River water within the state \(yahoo.com\)](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press)
- [MPCA to test entirety of Mississippi River this year • Minnesota Reformer](#)
- The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Ecological and Water Resources Division has prepared the most recent Hydrologic Conditions Report. This report provides general information on the status of water resources across Minnesota. [The report is available here](#) Previous reports and information on related topics are also available at this location. Questions about this report? Contact our report team at csg.dnr@state.mn.us
- The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Ecological and Water Resources Division has prepared the most recent Stream Flow Report. You will find previous reports and information on related water resource topics at the following link: https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/surfacewater_section/stream_hydro/streamflow_weekly.html. Additional Information about rivers and streamflow can be found at the following sites:
 - Minnesota's watershed basins: <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/watersheds/map.html>
 - DNR/MPCA Cooperative Stream Gaging Program: <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/csg/index.html>
 - US Drought Monitor for the Midwest: <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>
 - National Weather Service: <https://water.weather.gov/ahps/region.php?state=mn>
 - National Flood Forecast Center, North Central Region: Shows areas where the potential for flooding is occurring or is possible. For details, visit: <https://www.weather.gov/ncrfc/>
 - DNR's latest information on drought is available from the DNR at the following link under Education and Training: <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/climate/drought/index.html>

Drainage

- The 2022 Ag Census data was released on February 13, 2024. One census question asked, “During 2022, considering the total acres on this operation, how many acres were drained by tile?” Subsurface tile drainage is concentrated in the corn belt. It accounts for a considerable portion of the cropland harvested in the Midwest, especially in states that are dominated by rain-fed agriculture and have poorly drained soils that require drainage. These states have some of the world’s most fertile soils that require subsurface drainage for crop production. Without drainage, crop production would not be able to meet the growing food demand because of poor crop yield due to excess water. Read more about the [Pros and Cons of drainage](#).

Lakes

- **New USGS Report: Connecting tributary mercury loads to nearshore and offshore sediments in Lake Superior, has been published and is free to read and download:** [Connecting tributary mercury loads to nearshore and offshore sediments in Lake Superior - ScienceDirect](#)
- The St. Louis River Area of Concern (SLRAOC) is one of 31 AOCs in the U.S. portion of the Great Lakes basin. It was designated as an AOC under the U.S. – Canada Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement in 1987 because of significant impacts that occurred before modern environmental laws were in place. Following the SLRAOC Remedial Action Plan, state and federal agencies have been implementing management actions to address the legacy impairments. You can now see the work in progress throughout the SLRAOC: contractors are busy each construction season, plant and animal populations are rebounding, water is cleaner, and lost habitat is being restored. [Click here to learn more](#)
- **Lake Superior Partner News – 2024** Lake Superior News: Stephanie Swart, Lake Superior Lake Coordinator, Michigan EGLE, swarts@michigan.gov
 - NOAA has released new, high-resolution land cover data — used to document key geographic and landscape features covering Earth's surface — for coastal communities across the country. This new data can be used to improve planning for sea level rise, protect communities from flooding, inform wetland restoration projects and enable other activities to build climate resilience. <https://coast.noaa.gov/ccapatlas/>
 - Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission Ganawenindiwag: Working with plant relatives to heal and protect Gichigami shorelines. <https://glifwc.org/Environmental/ganawenindiwag.pdf>
 - Office of the Great Lakes 2023 State of the Great Lakes report. <https://www.michigan.gov/egle/newsroom/press-releases/2023/12/19/2023-state-of-the-great-lakes-report>
 - U.S. EPA National Rivers and Streams Assessment. The survey took place 2018-2019. <https://riverstreamassessment.epa.gov/webreport/>
 - Department of Interior Nature-based Solutions Roadmap. <https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/doi-nbs-roadmap.pdf>
 - USGS National Climate Change Viewer has been updated with the latest climate models. https://apps.usgs.gov/nccv/loca2/nccv2_loca2_counties.html
 - IAGLRs 67th Conference on Great Lakes Research. May 20-24, 2024, in Windsor, Ontario. <https://iaglr.org/iaglr2024/>

- Great Lakes tribal knowledge of climate change. <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/2023/11/09/great-lakes-native-tribes-knowledge-key-to-climate-change-work/70893550007/>
- A Sea of Change for Superior. A documentary exploring the legacy of the world's greatest freshwater lake in a time of unprecedented change. <https://cgee.hamline.edu/current-initiatives/sea-change-for-lake-superior>

Invasive Species

- The DNR regularly updates the state infested waters list, which includes Minnesota lakes and rivers containing certain aquatic invasive species. The most complete and up-to-date list of infested waters is an Excel spreadsheet available at the DNR website: https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/ais/infested.html?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

Mining And Mineral Extraction

- The Lake Superior Partnership Binational Program consists of scientists, managers, and staff from tribal, state, federal and state agencies from Canada and the US. Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC). Staff work within the Partnership to protect and restore the Lake Superior ecosystem through collective and coordinated actions. According to the Lake Superior Lake Wide Management Plan (LAMP), metallic mining and oil and gas transport are threats to the ecological integrity of Lake Superior and its watershed. A subcommittee of the Partnership has focused on characterizing potential impacts of mining and oil and gas transport and to provide information to the agencies involved in the Program. This is being done by way of the story map available at the following link: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/7844034cf586455080e93bfa49139818>

Forever Chemicals and the 3M Settlement

- Minnesota Department of Health: Minnesota residents who get their drinking water from a community public water system will now be able to find out if their system's water has any level of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), through an interactive online dashboard. From, Blois Olsen: Fluence Media. <https://fluence-media.co/3mnJnyV>

News from State and Federal Agencies, Boards and Councils

DNR

- Water Talk can be found at the following link: Look for Water Talk Newsletter: https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/watermgmt_section/water-talk-newsletter.html
- The most current version (June) that includes information on the following topics:

Note: All held 9-10 a.m. Central Time.

- **July 31, 2024:** Managing Map Changes; [Register](#)
- **Aug. 28, 2024:** Resolving Potential Violations: Floodway, Low Floor, Vents; [Register](#)
- **Sept. 25, 2024:** Accessory and Agricultural Structures; [Register](#)
- **Oct. 30, 2024:** Great Lakes Coastal Floodplain Management; [Register](#)

- **Nov. 27, 2024:** Natural and Beneficial Functions; [Register](#)
- **Dec. 18, 2024:** Community Rating System; [Register](#)
 - These trainings and registration links are also available on the DNR [Floodplain Training and Education page](#).
- DNR Freshwater Mussel Newsletter: <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNDNR/bulletins/33ac552>
- The Groundwater Atlas of Cass County has recently been published by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/groundwater_section/mapping/county-geo-atlas.html

Metropolitan Council

- The Metropolitan Council’s Spring 2024 Water Resources Update is available through GovDelivery. It contains articles about Water Assessments, Water Resources Planning and Policy, Subregional work group engagement, the Water Atlas, Promoting equity with water efficiency grants, Sustainable water supplies in the northeast metro, Engagement and Turfgrass water conservation. To subscribe, please email Shannon Skally at shannon.skally@metc.state.mn.us and include the email address you would like to register to receive future editions of the Water Resources Update
- The Metropolitan Council is updating the current Water Policy Plan as part of the region’s long-range plan, Imagine 2050. The plan outlines water supply, water resources, and wastewater policies to align local and regional water priorities. These six papers are located on our [Water Policy Plan Research web pages](#). These papers are an important step in this planning cycle, creating another opportunity to engage with stakeholders [2050 Water Policy Plan](#) authoring team as they begin to write policy. The met Council is asking for feedback on these papers through the survey link within each section of the pages. To stay up to date with the planning process and learn about opportunities to provide input, visit the [2050 Water Policy Plan Update web page](#).
- The Metropolitan Council also shares a link to the Metropolitan Water Supply Plan: [2022 MAWSAC report](#), which has been posted to the MAWSAC web page: <https://metro council.org/Wastewater-Water/Publications-And-Resources/WATER-SUPPLY-PLANNING/REPORTS-TO-THE-LEGISLATURE/2022-MAWSAC-Recommendations-for-Water-Supply-Plann.aspx>
- The following link, from the Metropolitan Council, contains information on several water resource topics: <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNORGMETC/bulletins/354b121>

Board of Soil and Water Resources

- <https://bwsr.state.mn.us>
- BWSR is the state soil and water conservation agency, and it administers programs that prevent sediment and nutrients from entering our lakes, rivers, and streams; enhance fish and wildlife habitat; and protect wetlands. The 20-member board consists of representatives of local and state government agencies and citizens. BWSR’s mission is to improve and protect Minnesota’s water and soil resources by working in partnership with local organizations and private landowners.
- **BWSR Training Newsletter May 2024: See the website to access the training schedule**
 - Announcements
 - BWSR Program and Training Updates
 - Technical Training & Certification Program Updates
 - Upcoming Training Events

- Related Partner Trainings
- Learn on Your Own

Minnesota Department of Health

- **Minnesota Department of Health Environmental Health Division Highlights Update:** Highlights include a joint agency statement on new federal limits on PFAS in drinking water.
- MDH Waterline can be accessed at the following link:
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/waterline>
 - MDH Releases Annual Report during Safe Drinking Water Week
 - St. Paul Introduces H₂O to Go
 - Art and Water Continue to Converge
 - Tools for Lead and Copper Community Site Plans
 - New Fond du Lac Treatment Plant
 - Bernie Bullert Featured in U of M Foundation Publication
 - PFAS May Not Be Forever
 - Success Stories from the Source

Department of Agriculture

- Southeast Minnesota Groundwater Resources has five short videos and three graphics found at links below:
<https://www.mda.state.mn.us/segwresources>
- Minnesota Water Quality Certification Program newsletter:
<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNMDA/bulletins/37937a6>
- More than one million acres of Minnesota farmland are now enrolled in the voluntary agricultural water quality program. **READ:** <https://fluence-media.co/45ZgzkJ>

Clean Water Council

Council details can be found at the Clean Water Council's website: <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/air-water-land-climate/clean-water-council>

- **Full Council:** The next meeting is Monday, **July 15th** (topics: discussion on Clean Water Fund proposals). The packet from the **June 17th** meeting (topics: fifth set of Clean Water Fund proposals for FY26-27 biennium) has been posted at [our web site](#).
- **Policy Committee:** The next meeting is Friday, **June 28th** (topics: draft private well policy statement; feedlot inspection statistics; CREP expansion possibility). The packet from the **May 17th** meeting (topics: conversation about feedlot regulation and nitrate response) has been posted [at our web site](#).
- **Budget & Outcomes Committee:** The next meeting is Friday, **July 12th** (topic: TBD). The packet from the **June 7th** meeting (topics: review of May 20th and June 3rd budget presentations) [has been posted](#).
- **Updates on Projects Supported by the Clean Water Fund**
- The Council has heard proposals for the last several months and now seeks public input. There are a couple of options for interested parties. You may submit written comments in preparation for the Council's July 15th or August 19th meetings by sending them [via e-mail](#). We will not have a proposed draft budget until after the July 15th meeting, but many entities like to share written comments ahead of time about how funds have been used to date. You may offer comments in-person (in addition to or in lieu of written comments) at

either of these meetings, which convene from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the offices of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), lower-level conference room, 520 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155. Virtual participation is also welcome using Webex, and a link will be posted in the "Upcoming Meetings" section below.

- [**How the Legislature addressed nitrate contamination in Minnesota \(minnpost.com\)**](#): A roundup of news on how the Clean Water Fund and other sources of funding will address nitrate in private wells, especially the southeast.
- [**MPCA Smart Salting News - Summer 2024**](#): Catch up on Salt Symposium 2024, 14 new chloride impairments, and loans available to reduce chloride.
- [**Geomorphic Approach for Culvert Design**](#): The DNR shows how better culvert design can positively impact water quality. Funding is available!
- [**2024 Kernza® Field Days**](#): Throughout the summer, farmers and research partners are hosting in-person field days in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and New Mexico. The linked schedule of field days covers a range of topics, including Kernza® breeding, production, processing, economics, ecosystem services and market development.
- [**New publications shed light on PFAS exposures and children**](#): Health Risk Assessment scientists at the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) recently published two articles in the *Journal of Environmental Exposure Assessment* related to PFAS. [One publication presents an updated method to determine how PFAS accumulates in human bodies](#) from birth through childhood. [The other publication presents a study performed in partnership with MDH's Public Health Laboratory](#), that found powdered infant formula is not a major source of PFAS exposure.
- [**What's in your water? How Minnesota is addressing high nitrate levels - ABC 6 News - kaaltv.com**](#): The Minnesota Department of Health held its first community discussion about nitrates in private wells in southeast Minnesota. Also see [Minnesota Department of Health starts nitrates discussions in Stewartville - Post Bulletin | Rochester Minnesota \(paywall\)](#)
- [**Minnesota Stormwater Research Center annual meeting registration**](#): The MSRC has its annual meeting on July 18th. The agenda includes updates on ten ongoing research projects; summary of the 2024-2025 research priorities and path forward; and showcase of the new and upcoming enhancements to stormwater technology transfer.
- [**Bonanza Valley Groundwater Management Area**](#): The DNR manages a Groundwater Management Area in central Minnesota where aquifer levels are monitored in a heavily irrigated region.
- [**Minnesota's Lakes are Cleaner This Summer Thanks to Farmers' Conservation Efforts | Natural Resources Conservation Service \(usda.gov\)**](#): The Clean Water Fund is cited as a factor.
- [**How do you cost effectively clean up Agricultural Pollution \(youtube.com\)**](#): "GEMS is working closely with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Water Quality Certification program and University of Minnesota colleagues to deploy AI and a host of other data science methods, in combination with ground-truth and remote-sensed data, to inform farmers of best management practices and track the water quality outcomes of those practices at scale."
- [**Submerged 'bug hotels' tell a story about clean water – St. Croix 360 \(stcroix360.com\)**](#): The National Park Service samples macroinvertebrates in the St. Croix River, but it refers to monitoring done over a longer period by the MPCA.
- [**Seventeen manure pits reportedly overflow at large feedlots in southern Minnesota \(startribune.com\)**](#): "The overflows [in Rock, Nobles, and Jackson Counties] have so far been contained to nearby farm fields, and none of the 17 overflowing pits have directly discharged into a river or stream," [MPCA staff] said.

- [NPDES and SDS feedlot permits | Minnesota Pollution Control Agency](#): The current State Disposal System (SDS) and National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) general feedlot permits will be expiring soon. Proposals for new general permits have been drafted and are now available for your review and comment. Proposed changes include increased land application requirements in areas of the state with vulnerable ground water resources; additional visual inspections during and after land application of manure; and requiring manure that is transferred to others to be land applied in accordance with the permit requirements.
- [New rule gives tribal governments more input on state water quality standards | MPR News](#): "The new Environmental Protection Agency rule is designed to protect the reserved rights of tribal members. Reserved rights are the rights to hunt, fish and gather resources. Tribes commonly reserved, or did not give up, those rights when they signed treaties ceding land to the federal government."
- [Minnesota drought-free for the first time in 2 years | MPR News](#): "Most of Minnesota has been running major rainfall surpluses this spring, eliminating drought for the first time since June 2022. It was the wettest spring in five years for many."
- [Minnesota Nitrate concerns inspire Iowa groups to seek EPA help - Root River Current](#): Organizations in Iowa petition EPA for help in Iowa on nitrates based on what took place in Minnesota.
- [Statewide water monitoring initiative underway on Mississippi River in Minnesota \(dglobe.com\)](#) (paywall): The MPCA is monitoring the entire stretch of the Mississippi in Minnesota.
- [‘We should have a sense of urgency’ as farm drainage tile drives nutrient pollution - Investigate Midwest](#): "An increased use of agricultural drainage tile is one reason a 2025 deadline to reduce nitrate and phosphorus entering the Gulf of Mexico by 20% is unlikely."
- [DNR: Elko New Market can pump more groundwater to supply bottled water plant | MPR News](#): "The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has authorized the city of Elko New Market to pump more groundwater to provide to a proposed bottled water plant. A California-based company, Niagara Bottling, [plans to build](#) a facility to produce bottled beverages in the Scott County city south of the Twin Cities metro."
- [Residents complain of water problems after Elko New Market pumping test | MPR News](#): "Some residents who live near Elko New Market want answers after water from their private wells turned gray or yellow and contained black sediment late last year. The residents say the changes occurred around the same time the city was conducting an aquifer test by pumping groundwater at higher-than-normal rates. Those who reported problems live in New Market or Eureka townships, outside of the Elko New Market city limits."
- [The farming revolution from 'precision ag' is coming, just slowly \(minnpost.com\)](#): Better fertilizer application is discussed.

LCCMR

- <https://www.lccmr.mn.gov>
- [Offer Input to LCCMR](#): The Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) is a 17-member body made up of state legislators and citizens. Every year, the LCCMR recommends to the Minnesota legislature projects to receive money from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. The LCCMR is required by law to develop a strategic plan every six years to guide those recommendations. The LCCMR is currently working on creating a strategic plan for 2025-2031, and your input is needed. This survey is voluntary and should take 5 - 10 minutes to complete. Your responses to questions will remain anonymous.

- The LCCMR received 214 proposals requesting a total of \$182,897,000 in response to its 2025 RFP. Applicants should have received an email by today, April 5, 2024, to confirm receipt. See [2025 funding process page](#) for more information about the steps and schedule of this funding cycle.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

- **Smart Salting Newsletter**

The newsletter contains the following articles and is available through gov. delivery. It is produced by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Chloride Reduction Program. Contact smartsalting.pca@state.mn.us with editorial questions or requests.

- [Salt Symposium 2024](#)
- [Want to evaluate your winter operations before winter hits?](#)
- [Join us for a Smart Salting for Community Leaders Workshop](#)
- [Minnesota adds 14 Impaired Waters for chloride in 2024](#)
- [2024 Smart Salting Certification trainings posted](#)
- [Loans for Small Businesses to upgrade equipment for chloride reduction](#)

- **Impaired Waters List** The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency [released a draft](#) of its biennial Impaired Waters List for public comment. The number of water bodies added are a significant decrease compared to the 2022 list, which illustrates progress in restoring and protecting water — though challenges remain throughout the state, particularly related to difficult to manage pollutants such as “forever chemicals” and sulfate. The list is required by the federal Clean Water Act. It includes waters that no longer meet water quality standards, as well as water bodies that have improved and are proposed to be taken off the list. This year’s list assessed and reviewed the Mississippi River – Twin Cities, Minnesota River – Yellow Medicine River, Bois de Sioux River, and Mustika River watersheds, among others throughout the state. The list underscores Minnesota’s progress in restoring and protecting waters while highlighting the need for long-term solutions. The MPCA issued a media release showing how a Ramsey County lake became de-listed from the Impaired Waters List: [After more than 20 years, restoration of Kohlman Lake sees results | Minnesota Pollution Control Agency](#)
- The MPCA Waterfront Bulletin newsletter contain news from partners about watershed projects, people, and upcoming events throughout Minnesota. Contact Beverly.Godfrey@state.mn.us. This addition includes many articles including information about lake quality, private drinking water, the Mississippi River, watershed reports and more. MPCA Waterline Bulletin, available via Gov Delivery upon request: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency mpca@public.govdelivery.com
 - After restoration projects, two northeast Minnesota streams are seeing clearer waters and more fish. Trout are once again finding a home in two small cold-water streams in northeast Minnesota after water quality conservation work in the Nemadji River Watershed. Watershed studies completed by the MPCA over the past two decades have shown that Skunk and Elim creeks in Carlton County are degraded by excess sediment. The creeks drain land west of the Nemadji River, a main tributary to western Lake Superior. When the MPCA added Skunk Creek to the impaired waters list in 2014, 2,400 tons of sediment were flowing into the creek each year. Projects have since reduced sediment loads by 224 tons and prevented more than 17,000 tons of sediment from entering the creeks. The projects helped bring fish back to the creeks, too.
 - Root River Watershed WRAPS update finalized: The MPCA approved a report from the Root River Watershed in southeastern Minnesota in April. The WRAPS report for this area can be read on the

[MPCA website](#). Many aspects of the watershed remain unchanged since data were reported in 2016. One highlight of the report is that new tools and studies developed since then will heavily influence the effectiveness and efficiency of future restoration efforts.

- Overall, significant progress in surface water quality has occurred within the [Mississippi River-St. Cloud Watershed](#) over the past decade. A virtual public meeting on May 23, 2024, from 9-11 a.m. will discuss the most recent data, detailed in a Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) report. A link to the meeting is on the [MPCA website events and meetings page](#). Visit the [MPCA website public comments page](#) during the comment period to give feedback on the plans outlined in the latest reports. This period will run through June 12.
- Updated data will be reviewed in the coming months for the Pomme de Terre Watershed, in central-western Minnesota, and the Mississippi River-Lake Pepin Watershed, south of the Twin Cities. More information about data from those watersheds will be shared at a later date.
- [MPCA scientists share 20 years of success](#): Twenty years ago, Minnesota took a step toward a cleaner environment when the MPCA first removed a lake from its list of polluted bodies of water in the state. Since then, more than 60 other lakes also have returned to health, according to a recent article detailing the agency's success in this area. Four MPCA scientists — Jeff Strom, Amy Timm, Jesse Anderson, and Scott MacLean — wrote the article for the Spring 2024 issue of LakeLine magazine, a publication of the North American Lake Management Society. [Read more on the MPCA website](#).
- [Anglers, state work to prevent lead poisoning of loons](#): According to the MPCA, the current national estimate is 25% of adult common loon deaths are due to lead poisoning after ingesting lead fishing tackle. The National Loon Center has announced that Lindy Fishing Tackle has become the first company to sign the Loons and Lakes Legacy Pledge, vowing to make its entire product line lead-free and loon friendly within three years. [Learn more from this report by KARE 11](#).
- [DNR, April 11: Track the health of our waters](#): With more than 92,000 miles of streams and over 12,000 lakes in Minnesota, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) [Volunteer Water Monitoring Program](#) is gearing up for the 51st season of lake and stream water clarity monitoring across the state. [Join today](#) in tracking the health of our waters. Volunteers conduct a simple water clarity test in a lake or stream at least twice a month during the summer.

Environmental Quality Board

- <https://www.egb.state.mn.us/>
- The Environmental Quality Board is pleased to present the Environmental Review Projects Database. The searchable database allows you to find information about projects noticed in the EQB Monitor. Access the [Environmental Review Projects Database](#)
- The new EQB quarterly newsletter provides a way for readers to get updated on our work and stay informed on the latest EQB projects. Last week we sent out our first newsletter, which features a note from our Executive Director, fun facts about the EQB and pollinators, updates to our website, and a behind-the-scenes

blurb with our environmental review staff. In case you missed it, you can still [read the newsletter and sign up](#) to receive upcoming editions.

- Environmental Review: join our roundtable discussion: We want to hear from you! Join The Environmental Quality Board (EQB) for an informal webinar and listening session. EQB is offering two virtual sessions, where we will provide information on the [2024 Mandatory Categories report](#), summarize the feedback we received so far via surveys, and spend most of the time hearing from members of the public, interested organizations, and others. Both listening sessions will cover the same introductory topics, so you do not need to attend both. The EQB is required by the legislature to write a report on environmental review mandatory categories every three years. Mandatory categories are in EQB rules; they describe what types of projects need an environmental review. The report describes the purpose of each category and analyzes recommendations for whether that category should be changed. Your feedback will be considered in EQB's drafting on this report which is due to the legislature December 2024. For more information on how to join the roundtable discussions, visit the [Mandatory Categories webpage](#).

USGS

- WaterWatch: <https://waterwatch.usgs.gov>
- At least 45% of the nation's tap water is estimated to have one or more types of the chemicals known as per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances, or PFAS, according to a new study by the U.S. Geological Survey. <https://www.usgs.gov/news/national-news-release/tap-water-study-detects-pfas-forever-chemicals-across-us> There are more than 12,000 types of PFAS, not all of which can be detected with current tests; the USGS study tested for the presence of 32 types. You can read an Associated Press article on the topic at the following website (July10) [Study says drinking water from nearly half of US faucets contains potentially harmful chemicals | Great Lakes Now](#)
- [Minnesota USGS Water Science Center](#)
- Access current flood and high-flow conditions and other streamflow information: https://waterwatch.usgs.gov/new/index.php?id=ww_flood
- Regional and Local Flood Alerts: <https://water.usgs.gov/alerts/index.html>
- USGS Data on Domestic Wells: <https://ca.water.usgs.gov/projects/USGS-US-domestic-wells.html>
- Environmental Health Featured Science Activities: <https://www.usgs.gov/programs/environmental-health-program/science/environmental-health-featured-science-activities>
- The Geo HEALTH–USGS Newsletter provides information on USGS science pertinent to safeguarding the health of fish, wildlife, domesticated animals, livestock, and people from environmental exposures to contaminants and pathogens. Past Issues: https://www.usgs.gov/geohealth-usgs?qt-newsletter_group=0#qt-newsletter_group

University of Minnesota

- Minnesota Geological Survey: <https://cse.umn.edu/mgs>
- The most recent Water Resources Center newsletter contains news about understanding manure's role in water contamination, chloride contamination, corn production related to nitrogen, the upcoming water resources conference and more. For information about the Water Resources Center at the University of Minnesota, follow this link: <https://wrc.umn.edu/news>
 - Links to other water-based websites
 - Minnesota Sea Grant
 - Natural Resources Research Institute

- Extension Water Resources
- Minnesota Water Research Digital Library

News from Regional and Local Organizations

Minnesota Rural Water Association

- See news, training and meeting information at the following link: <https://www.mrwa.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/MRWA-TA-TIMES-September-2023.pdf>

Friends of the Mississippi River--See news at their website:

- Webpage: <https://fmr.org/>

Freshwater Society

- See water news at the Freshwater Website: <https://freshwater.org/>
- Freshwater has a new report on the “State of Water” in Minnesota. The top observations, needs, and barriers for water in Minnesota are outlined below, along with specific actions to address them. These include:
 - Water management is fractured and siloed – and collaboration is a must.
 - Water needs are regional and local. Keep meeting as a watershed.
 - Everyone should have access to safe drinking water.
 - Authentic community engagement is critical to the success of planning, projects and programs.
 - We take clean and safe water for granted in Minnesota.
 - The water industry needs dollars and people.
 - Changes in climate impact water – integrate water needs into climate initiatives.
 - Improved land management is needed for better water.
 - We must cultivate funding navigators.
 - We believe that everyone should have access to clean, safe, affordable drinking water and wastewater services. All communities should be resilient in the face of climate risks, have a role in decision-making processes related to water management, and share in the economic, social, and environmental benefits of water systems. Here's how we think that can happen.

Minnesota Association of soil and Water Conservation Districts

- The May newsletter is now available: Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. See articles on Little Rock lake, Association Elections, the Legislative session and more.

Minnesota Water Well Association

- The Groundwater Foundation Launches Water Well Wish: New national grant program drills water wells for those who lack access to clean water: The Groundwater Foundation is launching its new nationwide grant program, Water Well Wish. Water Well Wish will provide grants to low-income individuals to repair or replace private water wells at no cost to the recipient. The program will work directly with families across the United States and provide 100% of the funding, to repair an existing system or drill a new water well. This will provide families with access to clean water for drinking, cooking, personal hygiene, washing dishes and clothes, and more. The Water Well Wish was created to help families in need who rely on private water wells

but cannot afford the upfront cost of drilling a new water well or having their current system repaired. It is estimated that more than 2 million Americans face water insecurity and lack a reliable source of safe, clean water. To learn more about the Water Well Wish program please visit WaterWellWish.org for a feature video and additional information.

Minnesota Ground Water Association

- To find information on the MWGA: <https://www.mgwa.org>
- MGWA 2023 Fall Conference, 50 Years of the Safe Drinking Water Act, November 14th, 2023. The meeting was recorded and is available at the MGWA website. [MGWA 2014 Conference](#)).

Session Recap:

Session Summary:

Legacy Finance Bill (HF4124)

The Governor signed this bill as [2024 Session Laws Chapter 106](#). The Clean Water Council's supplemental budget recommendations were included. The \$25 million in Clean Water Fund appropriations include 99.8% of the Council's recommendations.

House Agricultural Omnibus Finance Bill (SF4942)

The ag bill was combined with several other omnibus appropriations bills as [SF4942](#) in both houses as [\(HF5247\)](#) that also included the content of SF4942. The bill passed and included:

- \$2.8 million for nitrate home water treatment in eight SE MN counties with a focus on vulnerable private well users and potentially education and technical assistance
- \$495,000 for additional soil health grants focused on eight SE MN counties
- The House position of shifting revenue from a 40 cent per ton fee on fertilizer to a drinking water mitigation account was not adopted. The fee will continue to fund the Agricultural Fertilizer Research and Education Council (AFREC) but the council overseeing it will include four new members who have expertise in sustainable agriculture, soil health, public health, and water quality. It also makes regenerative agriculture and clean water projects eligible for AFREC funds. The bill also requires AFREC to develop or update research priorities and guidance on manure management and fertilizer use that affects water quality.

Environment & Natural Resources Omnibus Finance Bill (HF3911)

A [conference committee](#) came to an agreement. The bill language is [here](#) and a summary article is [here](#). Key water-related elements include:

- \$850,000 in manure management grants
- Requires State Nitrogen Fertilizer Purchase Report and Reduction Goal
- Requires State Salt Purchase Report and Reduction Goal
- Requires Analysis of Sewage Sludge for Land Application for PFAS
- Requires PFAS Removal Report
- Requires Water Quality Monitoring at State Fish Hatcheries
- Creates higher penalties for violations of the buffer law
- Requires soil health appropriations report
- \$300,000 for adaptive management in the Red River Basin
- Items that were dropped from the final agreement include a requirement for an environmental impact statement for large feedlots; funding for a drain tile disclosure system and drain tile seller disclosure requirement; and funding for Keep It Clean grants to keep human waste off of lakes in the winter.

(Passed, but without water item) Tax Bill (HF5247) The House passed its omnibus as did the Senate as [HF5247](#) in both houses. The Senate bill included \$2 million in extra one-time capacity funding for soil and water conservation districts. The bill eventually became a vehicle for the omnibus finance bill passed in the last hour of the session, but the SWCD funding was not included.

Capital Investment Bills: There were two bills in each house, neither of which has come up for a floor vote. One is a bill that uses general obligation (GO) bonds and requires a supermajority and therefore bipartisan support. The other uses general fund money and only requires a majority vote. A bonding bill (which includes plenty of water infrastructure funding) is generally the last piece of the puzzle to fall in place by the end of session, since it requires a bipartisan vote. The bills did not pass.

Minnesota lawmakers assert protections for public waters | MPR News: "In the final days of the session, lawmakers passed language clarifying that a waterway that meets the legal definition is a public water, even if it's not on a decades-old state inventory."

News from Washington: Northeast-Midwest Institute nemw.org

- **EPA Creates New Grant Program for Underserved Communities in the Great Lakes:** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a new \$30 million grant program that looks to advance environmental justice in underserved and overburdened communities across the Great Lakes. According to the EPA, the funding is being provided under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which invests \$1 billion in the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) to accelerate Great Lakes restoration and protection. EPA plans to award funding to create a broad, basin-wide Great Lakes Environmental Justice Grant Program (roughly \$20 million to one or more recipients) and up to \$10 million to create more localized Great Lakes Environmental Justice Grant Programs in underserved communities. (Northeast- Midwest Institute)