

September 2023 Environmental Quality Board meeting

Wednesday, September 20 from 1 – 4 p.m.

Join in person or online

- In person: [520 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155](#), Conference Room 100
 - Online: For the meeting link and more information, visit the [board meeting webpage](#).
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Participating in board meetings

Attending in person

The Environmental Quality Board (EQB) will convene its meeting in person in the lower level conference rooms at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency St. Paul office building. All visitors must sign in at the front desk.

Transportation options:

- Bicycle: Visit the [Saint Paul Bike Map](#) webpage for route information. Outdoor bicycle parking is available to the left of the front doors near the loading dock.
- Transit: Use [Metro Transit's Trip Planner](#) to determine the best routes and times.
- Car: You may park in a Visitor Parking space in the parking lot just outside the front door, or park in one of the visitor lots. The visitor lots are the Blue Lot (Olive St. and University Ave.) and the Jupiter Lot (on Grove St. across from the Ramsey County Law Enforcement Center); please see the [parking map](#). Parking in these lots is free of charge. You must register your vehicle at the front desk upon arrival.

Attending virtually

Members of the public may join the meeting virtually using the Teams link at the board meeting webpage link above. Please review the [Guide to Teams Participation](#) for additional information.

Accessibility

Please contact Environmental Quality Board (EQB) staff at least one week prior to the event at info.EQB@state.mn.us to arrange an accommodation. Meeting materials can be provided in different forms, such as large print, braille, or on a recording.

Public engagement opportunities at EQB meetings

EQB encourages public input and appreciates the opportunity to build shared understanding with members of the public. The opportunities for public engagement for this meeting are below.

Oral public comment

In this meeting, the board will accept oral public comment as the final agenda item.

Procedure and guidelines for giving oral public comment:

- If you wish to speak:
 - Virtual: when prompted, use the “raise hand” feature in Teams, located at the top of your screen.
 - In person: sign up at the welcome table before the meeting starts.
- Your remarks will be limited to two (2) minutes. When necessary, the chairperson may limit commenters’ time for remarks to ensure there is equal opportunity for the public to comment.
- When the chairperson calls on you to speak:
 - Introduce yourself before beginning your comment.
 - Please keep your remarks to those facts which are relevant and specific, as determined by the chairperson, to the agenda item at hand.
 - Please be respectful of board members, staff, and other meeting participants. Avoid questioning motives. The chair, vice-chair, or other presiding officer will not tolerate personal attacks.
 - Please note that the chair will use their discretion for directing public comment to ensure the board’s ability to effectively conduct business.

Written public comment

You may submit written comment to EQB by emailing your letter to info.EQB@state.mn.us or mailing to: Environmental Quality Board, 520 Lafayette Road, Saint Paul, MN 55155. Comments must be received by EQB staff **by noon the day before the meeting**.

Staff will compile letters, make them available to members and the public online, and attach them to the public record. Any written comments received after this deadline will be included in the next meeting packet.

All comments will be made available to the public. Please only submit information that you wish to make available publicly. EQB does not edit or delete submissions that include personal information. We reserve the right to not publish any comments we deem offensive, intimidating, belligerent, harassing, bullying, or that contain any other inappropriate or aggressive behavior.

Agenda

1. Welcome and roll call

Nancy Daubenberger – Chair, EQB; Commissioner, Department of Transportation

2. Approval of consent agenda

- Meeting minutes from the August 16, 2023, Environmental Quality Board meeting on packet page 5
- Preliminary agenda for the September 20, 2023, Environmental Quality Board meeting

3. Executive Director's report

Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB

4. Duluth follow-up (closed session)

Type of item: Informational, potential decision

Summary: The Board will go into closed session as permitted by attorney-client privilege under Minn. Stat. 13D.05 in order to discuss and receive legal advice on the possibility of participating in the legal case related the petition for an EAW for the Kineth Hotel (Case title: *In re Resolution Reversing the Planning Commission's Decision to Grant the Petition for an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) for a Hotel at Sundby Road and West Page Street.*)

Outcome: The Board will receive legal advice.

Presenter: Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB; Oliver Larson and Anne Kealing, Attorney General's Office

5. Pollinator action framework

Type of Item: Decision

Summary: The Board will hear a presentation about the 2023 Minnesota State Agency Pollinator Report, which contains the Pollinator Action Framework to protect pollinators in Minnesota. The Board will discuss next steps for the implementation of the action framework and will consider a resolution to approve the 2023 Minnesota State Agency Pollinator Report and the Pollinator Action Framework. The report is on page 11 of the packet.

Outcome: The Board will approve the 2023 Minnesota State Agency Pollinator Report and the Pollinator Action Framework

Presenters:

Rebeca Gutierrez-Moreno, State Pollinator Coordinator, EQB

Christina Locke, Pollinator Conservation Coordinator, DNR

Jamison Scholer, Research Scientist, MDA

6. 2020 State Water Plan Implementation Update

Type of item: Informational

Summary: The purpose of the [2020 State Water Plan](#) is to establish a framework for aligning state agencies, legislative priorities, and local government policy, programs and actions for the coming decade. EQB developed this plan to set an agenda for tackling the stubborn and complex water problems that climate change will intensify for Minnesotans. A water plan memo can be found on page 38 of the packet.

The Minnesota Legislature directs the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) to coordinate comprehensive long-range water resources planning and policy through a State Water Plan every 10 years ([Minnesota Statutes 103B.151](#), [103A.43](#), [103A.204](#)).

The board will hear a progress update on the [2020 State Water Plan](#) on Goals #1 and #2.

Outcome: Update the Board on implementation of the 2020 State Water Plan and an opportunity for the Board to ask questions about implementation and progress toward goals.

Presenters:

Erik Dahl, Planning Director – Special Projects, EQB

Alycia Overbo – Drinking Water Strategic Initiatives and Communications Planner, Department of Health

Jeff Berg – Water Policy Specialist, Department of Agriculture

Suzanne Rhees – Special Projects Coordinator, Board of Water and Soil Resources

7. Clean Water Council update

Type of item: Informational

Summary: The Clean Water Council recommends how to spend the Clean Water Fund (CWF) that is derived from the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment. The CWF supplements existing funding for water and plays a major role in fulfilling elements of the State Water Plan. A Clean Water Council memo can be found on page 39 of the packet.

Outcome: EQB members see the connections among key water programs and the Clean Water Fund and recognizes that many components of implementing the State Water Plan are supported by the work of the Clean Water Council and the CWF.

Presenter: Paul Gardner – Clean Water Council Administrator

8. Per diem and expense policy

Type of item: Decision

Summary: Legislation in 2023 increased the allowable per diem payment for public members of multiple Boards, including EQB. To account for this change, and make other clarifications, the Board needs to approve an updated Per diem and expense policy. The policy was last updated in 2018. The policy can be found on packet page 41.

Outcome: The Board approves an updated policy on per diem and expense payments.

Presenter: Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB

9. Public comment

The board welcomes oral public comment. Please see guidance and procedures on packet page 2.

After the August 16, 2023 meeting, the Board received public comment. Public comment is included in page 44 of the packet.

10. Closing and adjournment

August 2023 Environmental Quality Board meeting

Wednesday, August 16, 2023 | 1:00-4:00 p.m. | Virtual

Minutes

1. Welcome and roll call

Vice Chair Nicholas Martin called to order the regular meeting of the Environmental Quality Board.

Members present: Peter Bakken, Joseph Bauerkemper, Stacie Christensen, Nancy Daubenberger, Kenneth Foster, Rylee Hince, Todd Holman, Daniel Katzenberger, Katrina Kessler, Mehmet Konar-Steenberg, Nicholas Martin, Paul Nelson, Sarah Strommen

Members excused: Grace Arnold, Brooke Cunningham, Thom Petersen, Matt Varilek, Charles Zelle

Proxies present: Dan Huff (for Cunningham), Lissa Pawlisch (for Arnold), Stephan Roos (for Petersen), Sue Vento (for Zelle)

EQB staff present: Catherine Neuschler, Erik Dahl, Rebeca Gutierrez-Moreno, Hazel Houle, Jesse Krzenski, Priscilla Villa-Watt, Kayla Walsh

Vice Chair Martin welcomed new EQB member Todd Holman, Chair of the Board of Water and Soil Resources.

2. Approval of consent agenda

- Meeting minutes from June 21, 2023, Environmental Quality Board meeting
- Proposed agenda for August 16, 2023, Environmental Quality Board meeting

Motion: Board Member Konar-Steenberg moved the consent agenda; Board Member Katzenberger seconded. Motion carries with a unanimous vote.

3. Executive Director's report

Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB

- Staffing Update
 - New EQB staff member: Priscilla Villa-Watt, Communications and Engagement Coordinator

- Events
 - Environmental Congress planned for 2024
- Updated guidance for climate in environmental review is now posted on the EQB website
- Comments received after the June meeting re: Duluth environmental review issue
 - The comments continue to center around the determination of the RGU within the city of Duluth government
 - The comment in the packet raised concern about the memo that ED Neuschler wrote for the June packet, and particularly a phrase that said “the Duluth City Code also indicated that the Planning Commission is an advisory body to the Duluth City Council with respect to environmental review”, and that EQB was interpreting the law through that phrase. That was not the intention, as clearly stated elsewhere in the memo. That line should have stated “the Duluth City Code also indicated that the Planning Commission is an advisory body to the Duluth City Council.” How that relates to environmental review is now under review in the courts and EQB staff will be monitoring that decision.

Discussion re: Duluth environmental review issue:

- Board members raised concerns that if the EQB doesn’t follow up deliberately, that EQB will have contributed, perhaps unintentionally, to potentially establishing a precedent through which the decisions that have been noticed in the *Monitor* can be appealed in ways that are not provided for in statute and rule.
- The key question of interest is can a local unit of government hold an appeal for an already noticed decision?
- Board members asked about EQB’s ability to intervene in the court case; the rules say that EQB can intervene
- EQB staff could craft a question and prepare a resolution for the board to make a request of the AG’s office that the board could review in September.

Next steps: Chair Daubenger requested that EQB staff work with the AG’s office to present at the next board meeting ED Neuschler says she will ask the AG’s office for information on how to request a formal opinion on what the law is for this type of situation.

1. FY24 Workplan overview, public comment, and approval

Presenters: Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB; Kayla Walsh, Environmental Review Program Administrator, EQB; Erik Dahl, Planning Director – Special Projects, EQB; Rebeca Gutierrez-Moreno, State Pollinator Coordinator, EQB

Type of item: Decision

Summary: The Executive Director and staff presented the proposed organizational workplan for FY24.

Discussion:

- Board education will be considered for the EQB projects as needed.

- Defining the difference between what court decisions have determined cumulative impacts vs. cumulative potential effects could mean that is something that EQB needs to clarify, and EQB could put out some education on that as well.

Public comment:

Paula Maccabee: Provided comments related to climate and the greenhouse gas calculator, scientific information, and mandatory categories.

Jill Crafton: Provided comments related to greenhouse gas emissions.

Claire M. Olson: Provided comment on the urgency of needed changes to the environmental review system and providing EQB with resources.

Willis Mattison, Izaak Walton League: Provided comment about cumulative impacts, greenhouse gases, and the adequacy of avenues for public input.

Zoey Petersen: Provided comment supporting calculating lifetime greenhouse gas emissions.

Mike Tauber: Provided comments related to Pineland Sands and the environmental impacts predicted. Locals have spent a lot of time studying and aggregating information only to see Minnesota rules, statutes, and laws ignored in favor of developments proffered by politically connected corporate interests.

Amy Brallier: Provided comments asking EQB to establish scientific expert panel oversight and include the full life cycle assessment of projects, the life cycle of greenhouse emissions in the calculator, and RGUs should make docs accessible online.

Sara Wolff: Provided comments on the urgent need for incorporating life cycle emissions and the need for this to be a priority.

Discussion continued:

- EQB isn't the only entity working to address the issues some of the public commenters mentioned. Many of the agencies that are part of the EQB are also part of the state's climate subcabinet and are working with many of the organizations across the state.
- EQB should have some discussion around prioritization, or if the board desires to move forward with all of these things, make sure there is a path for agency tech reps to work with EQB staff to appropriately scale the agency time.

Outcome: Decision on a resolution to approve the fiscal year 2024 organization workplan.

Motion: Board Member Konar Steenberg moved to approve the resolution; Board Member Katzenberger seconded.

In favor: Bakken, Bauerkemper, Christensen, Foster, Holman, Katzenberger, Konar-Steenberg, Martin, Nelson, Strommen. Opposed: none. Excused: Arnold, Cunningham, Daubenberger, Hince, Kessler, Petersen, Varilek.

Motion passes.

2. Strategic plan

Presenter: Catherine Neuschler – Executive Director, EQB

Type of item: Informational

Summary: The EQB’s organizational strategic plan covers the years 2018 to 2023. A revision and update for the next five years is needed. The Board heard about the planned process to review the strategic plan and identified what can be leveraged from the existing EQB Strategic Plan to guide decision-making and actions for the next five-year planning cycle.

Next steps: Gather input on mission and priority results/outcomes from multiple groups: EQB staff, internal state agency partners and the Board. There will be facilitated exercises to gather input on the mission and outcomes/priority results at the EQB staff and Tech Rep Meetings for September and October and the board meeting in October or November.

3. Public comment

After the June 21, 2023 meeting, the Board received public comments in follow up to item #5 of that meeting agenda. Public comment is included on page 40 of the packet, and in the additional information packet.

Comments:

Paula Maccabee: Provided comments that the initial impetus for the EQB was to study environmental issues across departments. Supports EQB going back to the initial vision; also asks EQB to study and make concrete policy recommendations on existential issues for climate, water, lands and living beings. There should be community input on what has and has not worked in environmental review.

Jill Crawford-Nichols: Provided comments regarding the Duluth issue, including a request that the AG and the EQB to get involved in the case, since subdivision 10 is written entirely for the board to be able to address circumstances such as this. Asked EQB to move quickly to get answers.

Willis Mattison: Provided comments that it is appropriate to revisit the EQB mission statement and suggests the EQB look to the enabling legislation in MEPA itself. Also raises concern that there has not been a robust opportunity for public involvement and comment; it is constrained by the written comment requirement and by the two to three minute oral comment. Asks EQB to exercise the directive from the legislature to create expert panels that could provide expertise to the tasks at hand that EQB has, especially with regard to vetting the science.

Rebecca Mulenburg, representative of the citizens petition for an EAW for the hotel project in Duluth: Provided comments asking EQB to intervene in the case, indicating that by not intervening in the long term, it would lead to the dissolution of the Citizens Petition for an EAW and in the short term the clearing of 6 acres of forested land on the site before a decision is made by the Court of Appeals.

Sara Wolff: Asked a question and provided comments supporting the inclusion of life cycle emissions as part of the calculation for EIS and other aspects of environmental review, including the greenhouse gas emission calculator.

Mark Baker: Provided comments supporting and requesting EQB to intervene in the Duluth matter under Subdivision 10 and the time to act is now.

Joy Anderson: Provided comments that because an EIS is almost never ordered, the alternatives analysis, which is supposed to be at the heart of MEPA, is missed. Asks that the decision criteria be revised in a way that makes it clear to RGUs that when there is actually the potential for significant environmental effects, they do order an EIS.

Board discussion:

- At minimum EQB can ask for an interpretation of law – has it been consistent practice that what gets published in the *Monitor* represents a final agency action, so can the local government/RGU hear an appeal administratively of an already noticed opinion?
 - Board members requested information on how we get an answer to what is the law? EQB can make a request to the Attorney General’s Office to make a formal statement on the matter.
- EQB can ask the AG if they think the time for intervention has passed. If it hasn’t, and EQB needs to move quickly, a special meeting can be called before the planned September meeting.
- ED Neuschler will investigate if this is something that she or the chair can request or if there needs to be a full vote of the Board. If there does need to be a vote, will work on crafting a resolution.

4. Closing and adjournment

Board Member Bakken motioned to adjourn. Board Member Konar-Steenberg seconded. All in favor; meeting adjourned.



RESOLUTION OF THE MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

Approval of the 2023 Minnesota State Agency Pollinator Report and the Minnesota Pollinator Action Framework

Pollinators are essential for healthy ecosystems and the sustainability of our food production systems. However, they face multiple threats, including the loss and fragmentation of their habitat, diseases, parasites, pesticides, and climate change.

In Minnesota, Executive Order 19-28 directs state agencies to restore healthy, diverse pollinator populations, and instructs the Environmental Quality Board (Board) to convene the interagency pollinator protection team to take action and report on progress to the Board in a report by December 1 of each year.

The interagency team studied the issues and engaged the public in the development of an action framework to guide the strategic alignment of resources, policies, and programs to help Minnesota’s pollinators. This year, the Minnesota State Agency Pollinator Report contains the Minnesota Pollinator Action Framework.

The board resolves to approve the 2023 Minnesota State Agency Pollinator Report and the Minnesota Pollinator Action Framework,

The board further resolves to support cross-agency collaboration to lead the implementation of the Minnesota Pollinator Action Framework.

The board approved and adopted this resolution on [month] [day], [year].

Nancy Daubenberger, Chair
Minnesota Environmental Quality Board

Date: 9/20/23_____

Attachments: 2023 Minnesota State Agency Pollinator Report



2023 Minnesota State Agency Pollinator Annual Report

Minnesota Pollinator Action Framework

September 2023

2023 Interagency Pollinator Protection Team

Rebeca Gutierrez-Moreno, Ph.D., State Pollinator Coordinator – Minnesota Environmental Quality Board

Christina Locke, Ph.D., Pollinator Conservation Coordinator – Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Jamison Scholer, M.S., Research Scientist – Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Angela Kolonich, Ph.D., Science Education Specialist – Minnesota Department of Education

Tina Markeson, Roadside Vegetation Management Unit Supervisor – Minnesota Department of Transportation

Christopher E. Smith, CWB, Wildlife Ecologist – Minnesota Department of Transportation

Laura Marti, Hydrogeologist – Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Michelle Gage, CEM, Sustainability Coordinator – Minnesota Department of Corrections

Erik Runquist, Ph.D., Conservation Research Scientist – Minnesota Zoo

Chris Guevin, Facilities Management Division Director – Minnesota Department of Administration

Paul Erdmann, Ecological Science Conservationist – Board of Water and Soil Resources

Upon request, this material will be made available in an alternative format such as large print, Braille or audio recording.

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Charge

In Minnesota, state agencies work together to protect pollinators. Executive Order 19-28 directs the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) to lead and convene an interagency pollinator protection team (hereafter the interagency team) to restore healthy, diverse pollinator populations that sustain and enhance Minnesota's environment, economy, and way of life.

The interagency team is comprised of designees of the Departments of Administration (ADMIN), Agriculture (MDA), Corrections (DOC), Education (MDE), Health (MDH), Natural Resources (DNR), Transportation (MnDOT), the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), and the Minnesota Zoological Garden (MNZOO). This team provides operational support, ensures interagency coordination, develops cross-agency policies and programs, and reports on progress toward statewide pollinator protection goals to the EQB every year.

Introduction

Pollinators continue to face multiple threats, including the loss of habitat, pesticides, pathogens, parasites and climate change. Because these threats do not act in isolation but interact with each other and intensify their detrimental effects on pollinator populations, a multidisciplinary approach is necessary to make significant progress toward helping pollinators.

The interagency team is committed to working toward restoring healthy and diverse pollinator populations in Minnesota. Our agencies continue to work individually and together to support policies, programs and initiatives to advance our three pollinator protection goals: 1) Lands throughout Minnesota support healthy, diverse, and abundant pollinator populations; 2) Minnesotans use pesticides judiciously and only when necessary; 3) Minnesotans understand, value, and actively support pollinators.

Since 2022, we have focused our interagency efforts on developing a comprehensive pollinator action framework to guide the strategic alignment of resources, policies, and programs to help pollinators in our state. This year's pollinator report contains the action framework matrix, provides our vision for each goal, and includes context for the actions included. In addition, a section on climate change and pollinators and "stories of action" present a wider picture of pollinator efforts ongoing in Minnesota.

Developing the pollinator action framework

To develop the pollinator action framework, we conducted two rounds of public engagement during 2022 and 2023. We sought input from subject-matter experts, and organizations working to help pollinators, and members of the general public. We received input through conversations with focus groups, direct review of the framework matrix by subject matter experts, and through EQB's online public engagement platform.

In addition, we considered the 2018 recommendations for pollinator protections developed by the Governor's Committee on Pollinator Protection. Finally, we held workshops with leadership from state agencies involved in

the interagency team to inform the final pollinator action framework matrix included in this year's pollinator report.

Structure of the pollinator action framework

The pollinator action framework is organized in four sections. There is one section for each of our pollinator protection goals, and a fourth section named "Desired outcome", which includes actions necessary to: advance our knowledge on pollinator populations; develop protocols for sharing information; enhance at-risk pollinator protections; and advance our strategic planning. Each section is divided by categories and subcategories describing the intention of the specific actions that need to be taken to meet the goal.

In addition, the actions included in the pollinator action framework matrix are categorized as actions state agencies can **lead** on by taking administrative action, actions the state legislature can **enact** by writing laws and allocating funds, and actions the state can **encourage** individuals, communities, and organizations to do. Some actions expand on existing efforts, while other actions could require the creation of new policies, programs, or grants. Many actions will require collaboration, partnerships and initiatives beyond state government.

Climate change and pollinators

Minnesota's climate continues to change rapidly. Winters and nights are getting warmer, and precipitation has increased, with floods occurring more frequently. These changes threaten Minnesota's economic activities, ecosystems, and public health.

Climate change also threatens the stability and diversity of our food supply, because the majority of food crops are dependent on pollinators. Additionally, pollinators are responsible for the reproduction of approximately 85% of wild plants, meaning they are essential to the survival of natural ecosystems. Disruptions to the delicate balance that exists between plants and the creatures responsible for their reproduction can be catastrophic.

Climate change can cause mismatches in timing between flower bloom and pollinator emergence, causing insects to miss out on food, and plants to miss out on pollination services. The loss and fragmentation of pollinator habitat compounds the issue of food scarcity for pollinators.

Protecting and restoring habitat with diverse plant systems not only feeds pollinators, but helps store carbon, mitigate drought, and yield many other far-reaching benefits. This is the work of all land managers and land stewards, in both protected areas and working landscapes.

The pollinator action framework identifies actions that will help us restore healthy and diverse pollinator populations and build a more resilient Minnesota against climate change. Additionally, we have an opportunity to connect with Minnesota's Climate Action Framework and synergize efforts to amplify our common goals. It will take all of us to build a brighter future for generations to come.

Equity statement

The interagency team pledges to implement the pollinator action framework with an equity-conscious approach. We believe that integrating equity into our work is the only way we can truly advance our pollinator protection goals. Therefore, we will intentionally seek the input, feedback and collaboration from Minnesota's tribal nations, and from individuals, organizations, and communities with diverse perspectives who share our state's lands and natural resources.

Stories of action

In this section we highlight two stories from organizations who are doing important work to help Minnesota's pollinators. They show the importance of building strategic collaborations between different sectors, and engaging with members of the public who can play a critical role in pollinator protection.

Towards better honey bee health in northern climates

By Bridget Mendel and Katie Lee

The University of Minnesota's history of honey bee research, outreach and education is over a century strong. The UMN Honey Bee Lab consists of a professor-led research and teaching program, an outreach team known as the Bee Squad, and an Apiculture Extension educator. Much like a honey bee colony, these three entities work together and collaborate on research, extension and outreach programming that supports beekeepers and the public in Minnesota and beyond.

Due to landscape changes, increased pesticide use, and new pests and pathogens, today's beekeepers need to work harder to keep their bees healthy than their predecessors. There is a steep learning curve for new beekeepers, and having reliable educational resources and mentorship is essential for success.

In collaboration with Minnesota beekeepers and with funding from a Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education grant by the National Food Institute of Food and Agriculture of the United States Department of Agriculture, the Bee Lab team is developing a new tool to support more beekeepers across the north central region of the US. The innovative *Beekeeping in Northern Climates Workbook* is designed to guide beekeepers through colony health monitoring and management through the seasons. The ultimate goal is to enhance beekeeping skills and confidence and to increase overall colony health in the state of Minnesota.

The workbook is a tool that adds to the Bee Lab's *Beekeeping in Northern Climates* short course and manual. It provides beekeeping support during colony inspections, prompts seasonal management reminders, shares tips and tricks, and helps track goals with space for note taking. The workbook includes references for disease identification and honey bee nutrition sources.

The *Beekeeping in Northern Climates Workbook* is designed to help a beekeeper working alone or to be an interface between a beekeeper and their mentor. Alone, the workbook guides a beekeeper through colony

observations and decision making. Paired with a mentor, a beekeeper mentee can report their observations, receive confirmation or notes about their colony health and management, helping to build skills and confidence.

Currently in its pilot phase, a beekeeper-vetted version of the workbook will be available to Minnesota beekeepers, beekeeping clubs, and beekeeping educators by spring 2024. The project team is currently collecting beekeeper feedback and developing virtual and in-person mentoring models that can be used in conjunction with the workbook.

What is the feedback so far? Beekeepers are excited to have an in-apiary companion designed specifically for beekeeping in northern climates. The colorful workbook inspires good note taking and record keeping, one of the most important skills a beekeeper can have!



Students and instructor in a beekeeping class (Photo credit: Lucia Possehl)

The Lawns to Legumes Program – building strategic partnerships

By Blue Thumb

In their yards, gardens, and lawns, Minnesotans across the state are building a movement to protect pollinators. Lawns to Legumes — the first statewide program of its kind — provides residents with funding and expert advice to create habitat to help native pollinators, including at-risk species like the rusty patched bumblebee and the

monarch butterfly. Adding native plants to enough yards, even in developed areas, can form a network of high-quality habitat that help pollinators thrive.

Administered by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, the Lawns to Legumes program now has over 100 conservation partners supporting outreach and education and acting as volunteer coaches for the program. The Blue Thumb Partnership, led by Metro Blooms, has played a key role by conducting workshops, coordinating coaches, reimbursing residents for cost-share funding and ensuring that equity goals are met. Partners also include public agencies, landscape design and build contractors, and native nurseries who are part of building a movement to reduce turf and expand pollinator habitat.

During the program's pilot phase, nearly 8,000 people participated in workshops and webinars, and downloaded resources for do-it-yourself home projects. Since 2019, over 3,000 residents have completed projects ranging in size from 10' x 10' plantings on small city lots to larger pollinator meadows. When it comes to creating pollinator habitat, even small contributions can make a big difference! The pilot phase was funded by \$900,000 from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.

Phase II of the program is currently underway with \$2,000,000 of funding. In 2023, the Minnesota Legislature agreed to provide an additional \$4,000,000 to support the program through 2026. In spring of 2024, new awardees will receive a \$400 award for native plantings in their yard. Neighborhood representatives, residents and renters interested in planting for pollinators this spring can visit the [Blue Thumb](#) and [Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources](#) websites for information on projects like pocket gardens, pollinator lawns, pollinator pots, how to design your project, and more.



Neighbors planting at a Lawns to Legumes Neighborhood Demonstration site (Photo credit: Briana Erickson)

Goal 1: Lands in Minnesota support healthy, diverse, and abundant pollinator populations

Key output

More food sources and nesting and overwintering sites for pollinators

Vision

Land management activities in Minnesota provide enough nesting and foraging pollinator habitat to stabilize pollinator populations. Any loss in habitat is compensated by restoration or enhancement projects that increase the availability of high-quality food resources and nesting and overwintering sites for pollinators.

Context

Minnesota is located at the intersection of four major ecological biomes, which are naturally occurring areas hosting different interconnected communities of living organisms. These areas are: 1) the deciduous forest, 2) coniferous forest, 3) prairie grassland, and 4) tallgrass aspen parkland. Hundreds of pollinator species are found in all of these ecosystems, responsible for the reproduction of native plants that provide food and shelter for other animals, store carbon, prevent erosion, and buffer waterways.

The loss and fragmentation of these areas contribute to pollinator declines. The pollinator action framework proposes actions to protect, restore, enhance, and connect pollinator habitat in public and private lands. Actions to support this goal are organized in the following categories:

Intentional land stewardship

The pollinator action framework includes actions to engage public and private land managers and stewards, support programs and provide incentives to convert areas with low flowering plant diversity to pollinator habitat and prioritizing the use of native plants.

Strategic policy and programs to protect, restore, create, and enhance pollinator habitat

This category includes actions that will address the increasing demand for native plants, protect habitat for endangered and threatened pollinators, and develop guidance for individuals and organizations managing pollinator habitat.

Comprehensive research and data collection related to pollinator habitat

Actions in this category aim fill in gaps in our understanding of pollinator habitat needs and evaluate the impacts of ongoing efforts; for example, leading and encouraging research to help understand how different habitat management practices affect pollinator populations.

Table 1. Pollinator action framework matrix, Goal 1: Lands throughout Minnesota support healthy, diverse, and abundant pollinator populations

Category	Subcategory	Action	Lead	Enact	Encourage	
1.1. Intentional land stewardship	1.1.1. Protect pollinator habitat	Work with public land managers, private landowners and land stewards to identify and protect existing pollinator habitat	X		X	
		Expand and improve compensation rates for DNR’s Prairie Bank Program	X	X		
		Revise lighting guidelines in state-administered facilities to reduce light pollution detrimental to pollinators	X			
	1.1.2. Restore and create pollinator habitat		Work with public land managers and land stewards to promote the installation and management of pollinator habitat in rights-of-way		X	X
			Expand beneficial reuse at state-managed Closed Landfill Program sites and promote opportunities to partner with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to facilitate pollinator habitat creation on closed landfill sites	X	X	
			Engage public land managers to convert lawn or unused spaces and new developments to pollinator habitat (e.g., expanding the capacity of the Lawns to Legumes Program to include public lands)	X	X	X
			Support and expand existing programs that provide incentives for farmers and foresters that implement pollinator-friendly land management practices (e.g., diversified crop production, no till, cover crops, prairie strips, forest thinning, wildlife openings, etc.)	X	X	
			Promote the installation of a certain percentage of pollinator-friendly landscaping in new developments (e.g., provide rebates for pollinator garden installations)	X		X

Category	Subcategory	Action	Lead	Enact	Encourage
		Update state building design guidelines to consider pollinator habitat for new buildings and major renovations	X		
	1.1.3. Enhance the quality of existing pollinator habitat	Continue prioritizing the use of native plants in state-managed landscapes	X		X
		Continue prioritizing non-chemical habitat management tools in state-managed landscapes	X		X
		Promote the use of farming, forestry and other land management practices that provide multiple benefits to soil, water and wildlife	X		X
		Encourage peer-to-peer workshops focused on incorporating and protecting pollinator habitat in working lands			X
		Ensure guidance for long-term management of pollinator habitat is available to the public	X		X
1.2. Strategic policy and programs to protect, restore, create, and enhance pollinator habitat	1.2.1. Develop policy and programs to increase native plant supply	Create a state native seed program with an emphasis on early season species	X	X	
		Update the state seed mixes and related guidance with an emphasis on pollinator benefits	X		
		Collaborate with and support seed and native plant vendors and other partners to increase the production of plant species important to pollinators (including trees and shrubs)	X		X
		Support and expand the state forest nursery efforts to include a wide diversity of pollinator-friendly plants (e.g. flowering trees and shrubs)	X		
		Provide funding to diversify seed mixes used in private land restorations		X	

Category	Subcategory	Action	Lead	Enact	Encourage
	1.2.2. Design strategies to support pollinator habitat	Develop guidance about integrated habitat management approaches in public and private lands			X
		Develop a strategy to increase connectivity of habitat in highly fragmented landscapes	X		X
		Create a certification program for pollinator-friendly landscaping available to landscape and gardening companies	X		X
		Develop state regulations to increase remnant prairie protections (similar to existing wetland protections in statute)	X	X	
		Develop technical assistance and resources to increase pollinator habitat to support pollination from native pollinator species	X	X	X
		Improve coordination and management of DNR rights-of-way to meet pollinator best management practices in alignment with existing goals and objectives	X		
1.3. Comprehensive research and data collection related to pollinator habitat	1.3.1. Understand pollinator habitat needs	Research how habitat management practices affect pollinator populations	X		X
		Support the development of resources to guide strategic prioritization of habitat conservation efforts	X		X
		Increase capacity to evaluate the quality and success of habitat conservation projects	X	X	X
		Research the benefits to pollinators of including adjacent-pollinator habitat in areas with intensive pesticide use (e.g. golf courses)			X

Category	Subcategory	Action	Lead	Enact	Encourage
		Identify areas with low native plant diversity on state lands that would be good candidates for prairie or forest restoration or enhancement	X	X	

Goal 2: Minnesotans use pesticides judiciously and only when necessary

Key output

Reduced impacts to pollinators from pesticides through integrated pest management (IPM)

Vision

Awareness and adoption of integrated pest management continues to be prioritized across working landscapes in Minnesota. The state continues to promote and fund new IPM efforts to support growers across many cropping systems and pesticide use scenarios. IPM principles have broad support in forestry, agriculture and wildlife management. When pesticide use is necessary, regulators help ensure a strong culture of safe pesticide use and label compliance exists among users of pesticide products.

Context

We engaged the public, stakeholders, and subject matter experts to identify actions to ensure pesticides are used judiciously and only when necessary. We included the following categories in the pollinator action framework.

Judicious use of pesticides

One of the best ways to ensure pesticides are being used judiciously is through a more holistic pest management approach like IPM. IPM is an approach to managing pests that seeks to prevent the long-term buildup of pest populations beyond economically damaging levels. Pest control relies on species-specific management strategies, re-occurring pest monitoring, and use of a combination of management techniques to control pest damage below an established guideline, and with the least possible hazard to people, property, and the environment. Through use of diversified pest management, pesticide users can work to prevent the buildup of pest populations before pesticide intervention is required. Diversified practices like those listed below can be leveraged before intervention with chemical control.

- *Host-plant resistance.* Use of plant varieties that can withstand certain amount of pest damage or are less desirable for pests.
- *Physical/mechanical control.* Use of physical barriers, sanitation, mulches, mowing and manual removal.
- *Cultural control.* Use of crop rotation, irrigation, and fertilizers, prescribed burning, and native plantings in ways that prevent or discourage pests.
- *Biological control.* Living organisms that target pests such as predators, pathogens, and parasites intentionally released or supported through adjacent habitat.

Robust protections

Federal and state pesticide regulators provide compliance assistance for pesticide product labels. State-led compliance efforts are supported by education and outreach focused on mitigation strategies to reduce harm to pollinators, minimize off-site pesticide movement, and increase awareness of safe product use and handling. Additionally, agencies continue to promote awareness about pesticide misuse reporting.

Focused research

We identify areas of focused research that would inform pollinator protection efforts, including: pesticide toxicity values for native pollinators species, risk of inert ingredients on pollinators, and cumulative risk to pollinators of multiple pesticides used in conjunction. Continued research on economic pest action thresholds used as a part of IPM is important to ensure that pesticides are used judiciously and only when necessary while retaining Minnesota's agricultural economic strength.

Table 2. Pollinator action framework matrix, Goal 2: Minnesotans use pesticides judiciously and only when necessary, to reduce harm to pollinators from pesticides while retaining economic strength

Category	Subcategory	Action	Lead	Enact	Encourage	
2.1. Judicious use of pesticides	2.1.1. Support integrated pest management (IPM) on agricultural and non-agricultural lands	Develop IPM programs for crops and non-agricultural systems where they do not yet exist			X	
		Develop and collect standardized methods to evaluate and analyze the adoption of IPM on Minnesota farms and in non-agricultural systems			X	
		Continue funding for projects that include implementation of or research on IPM		X	X	
			Continue to strengthen compliance assistance for pollinator and IPM language on pesticide labels	X		X
	2.1.2. Promote IPM on agricultural and non-agricultural lands		Increase IPM education for all pesticide users	X		X
			Collaborate to create and distribute signage about the use of IPM and reducing risks to pollinators for different settings	X		X
		2.1.1. Support IPM in managed pollinator colonies	Continue to fund projects that include research on or implementation of IPM		X	X
			Continue to strengthen and support compliance assistance for legal pesticide use			X
			Promote the use of existing IPM programs			X
			Provide education on IPM for pollinator colony health			X
2.2. Robust protections	2.2.1. Support or develop strategic policy and programs	Continued long-term funding for the “Pollinator Research Account”		X		

Category	Subcategory	Action	Lead	Enact	Encourage
	2.2.2. Reduce off target movement of pesticides	Increase promotion of mitigation strategies to reduce pesticide movement off-site, including promoting reduction of dust-off from treated seed	X		X
		Expand promotion of existing BMPs for using and disposing of treated seed	X		X
	2.2.4. Report pesticide misuse	Increase awareness about pesticide misuse reporting	X		X
		Strengthen capacity to investigate pesticide misuse reports		X	
2.3 Focused research	2.3.1. Understand pesticide exposures in the environment	Monitor pesticides in soil and pollinator friendly plants in natural landscapes			X
		Collect data on how and where pesticide-treated seed is being disposed of in Minnesota	X	X	X
		Evaluate methods to reduce abraded dust from planting of pesticide treated seed			X
		Collect data on how the restriction of the use and sale of neonicotinoid insecticides to licensed applicators has impacted pollinators in other states	X		X
	2.3.2. Study the effects of pesticides and pesticide inert ingredients on pollinators and their habitat	Conduct native pollinator species pesticide toxicity studies following EPA guidelines that can be used in risk analyses			X
		Conduct studies on the effects of pesticide inert ingredients on pollinators following EPA guidelines that can be used in risk analyses			X

Category	Subcategory	Action	Lead	Enact	Encourage
		Conduct studies on how pesticides interact with each other and other stressors to affect pollinator health following EPA guidelines that can be used in risk analyses			X
		Create new or update outdated thresholds for common pests in Minnesota			X
		Research and document obstacles pest managers face to adopt IPM and what factors lead to increased adoption			X

Goal 3: Minnesotans understand, value, and actively support pollinators

Key output

More action through community commitments

Vision

Mitigate barriers preventing Minnesotans from actively participating in pollinator protection initiatives and programs by increasing awareness of pollinators and their needs, building intentional relationships with external partners, and supporting funding initiatives for pollinator programs.

Context

Through the public engagement process to develop this framework, we heard many ideas for action from Minnesotans who are interested in learning and doing more to help pollinators. Many organizations are leading grassroots and community-centered pollinator-related actions across the state, and we believe more can be done as we create opportunities to work together. The actions to advance this goal are organized in the following categories:

Strong partnerships and relationship building

Partnership and relationship building is the foundation to grow and expand our pollinator protection movement. If we intentionally seek key partners and collaborators who have influence and the trust of their communities, and actively listen and learn from their experiences, we can work to expand each other's capacity.

Diverse and inclusive public participation

There are differences in the levels of awareness, information, and resources available for communities across Minnesota to get involved in helping pollinators. This category includes a broad action to identify communities who have not been involved in pollinator protection actions, to learn what are the barriers they are facing to participate and determine strategies to meaningfully include them in this work.

Informed communities

This category includes actions to improve accessibility to information, and to increase public awareness about pollinators, their needs, and effective ways to help them. Topics include promoting the use of native plants vs in garden projects, raising awareness of pollinators at popular events – like the Minnesota State Fair – and making it easier for local governments to amend their ordinances to be compatible with pollinator-friendly landscaping.

Sustained education and training

This section includes actions to share accurate information on pollinator protection, expand pollinator-related education and training, and make resources readily available to different target audiences.

Table 3. Pollinator action framework matrix, Goal 2: Minnesotans understand, value, and actively support pollinators

Category	Subcategory	Action	Lead	Enact	Encourage
3.1. Strong partnership and relationship building	3.1.1. Build intentional relationships with individuals and organizations for pollinator protection	Connect with communities that have adopted pollinator-friendly resolutions to learn from their experiences and strategize ways to engage cities that have not participated	X		X
		Strengthen relationships with non-profit and for-profit organizations that work to protect pollinators	X		
	3.1.3. Build strategic partnerships to advance pollinator protection goals	Collaborate with GreenStep Cities program to increase education and promotion of pollinator-friendly practices	X		
		Collaborate with stores that sell retail pesticides and flowering plants to include information and resources about how to protect pollinators and their habitat	X		X
		Create a process with Tribal Nations to work together on pollinator protection	X		
		Collaborate with the Minnesota Science Teachers Association to promote pollinator educational resources for use in K-12 classrooms	X		X
	3.2. Diverse and inclusive public participation	3.2.2. Increase participation in initiatives and programs	Assess which communities have not been involved in pollinator protection actions, reach out to them, and learn how to align this subject with their community priorities	X	
3.3. Informed communities	3.3.1. Effective public access to information	Improve accessibility of pollinator protection resources (i.e. translations)	X		X
		3.3.2. Increase public awareness about pollinator needs and ways to help them	Leverage Pollinator Week to raise awareness about pollinator protection through different strategies: pollinator costume contest, pollinator garden sign design contest, webinar series with pollinator experts, etc.	X	
		Promote pollinator-related apps (i.e., Bumble Bee Watch, iNaturalist) at community events			X

Category	Subcategory	Action	Lead	Enact	Encourage
		Promote pollinator protection actions at the State Fair	X		X
		Provide clear information about how to create and improve pollinator habitat (e.g. increase awareness about mitigating the negative effects of light pollution)	X		X
		Provide information about the benefits to wildlife of using native vs non-native plants	X		X
		Increase visibility of pollinator-friendly lawn alternatives (e.g. media campaign that shows what pollinator habitat looks like)	X		X
		Review local ordinances and coordinate with municipalities to make those ordinances compatible with adopting pollinator friendly landscaping			X
3.4. Sustained education and training	3.4.1. Strengthen programs with pollinator protection resources and information	Develop an interagency communications plan to promote pollinator resources and programs	X		
		Include pollinator-related education and resources in current agency-led programs where appropriate (e.g., as done in Ag in the Classroom)	X		
		Develop programming in partnership with youth organizations like Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, YMCA, etc. to educate and facilitate pollinator projects and participation in pollinator-related community science projects.	X		
		Explore synergies with third-party certification programs that support pollinators and pollinator habitat	X		

Category	Subcategory	Action	Lead	Enact	Encourage
		Work with organizations with expertise to expand pollinator-related education and training for inmates at state-administered facilities (e.g. beekeeping, habitat restoration training)	X		
	3.4.2. Make pollinator protection educational resources readily available for the public	Create a hub of pollinator-related curriculum/materials that makes it easy for educators to incorporate in their programs	X		
		Encourage members of the Master Gardener’s program to be a resource for schools who want to install pollinator habitat	X		X
		Work with SWCDs to increase pollinator guidance and resources (e.g. pollinator-friendly plants to mitigate flooding)	X		
		Increase awareness of programs to assist landowners, land stewards, and land managers in creating, managing, and maintaining pollinator habitat	X		X

Desired outcome: Healthy, diverse pollinator populations that sustain and enhance Minnesota’s environment, economy, and way of life

Vision

Build a strong foundation for making informed decisions, develop strategic protections for imperiled pollinators, and improve our long-term coordination within state agencies and with external partners and collaborators to help Minnesota’s pollinators.

Context

Minnesota is home to thousands of species that can be considered pollinators, the vast majority of which are insects. Insects are the most diverse class of animals in the world, each species with its own particular life cycle and habitat needs.

We recognize there is a large information gap about pollinators in our state. Recent surveys conducted by the Department of Natural Resources’ Biological Survey and the University of Minnesota’s Bee Lab documented 500 species of bees in Minnesota. These results give us a glimpse about the diversity of one subset of pollinators, but more work is needed to paint a full picture on the status of pollinators in Minnesota, including questions of abundance, distribution, population trends, and the effects of land management activities on species. These questions are critical to understanding what species are in need of protection, and how best to plan for recovery of imperiled species. It is also critically important to have policies and partnerships in place that allow for effective implementation of protective measures for imperiled species.

In this section of the pollinator action framework, we include actions to help us address knowledge gaps, policy actions that affect species protections, and improvements to our internal and external collaboration.

Informed decision-making

In this category, we include actions that will help us gather and share information necessary to make sound decisions to develop policies, programs and initiatives needed to advance our pollinator protection goals.

Strategic protections

Actions in this category aim to increase our capacity to strategically protect imperiled pollinators. Additionally, we consider actions to protect managed pollinators from diseases and parasites.

Long-term planning

The actions included in this category have the intention to improve coordination among state agencies, to identify further interagency collaborations, avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts, and optimize resources. We include an action to encourage the creation of a pollinator coalition of diverse stakeholders in Minnesota to increase collaboration and capacity to tackle pollinator conservation issues.

Table 4. Pollinator action framework matrix, Desired outcome: Healthy, diverse pollinator populations that sustain and enhance Minnesota’s environment, economy, and way of life

Category	Subcategory	Action	Lead	Enact	Encourage
4.1. Informed decision-making	4.1.1. Long-term monitoring	Secure permanent funding to inventory and monitor pollinators	X	X	
		Explore and promote monitoring techniques that don’t require lethal captures	X		X
	4.1.2. Generate new information and create a framework for sharing information	Create a group to develop a pollinator-specific research priority list and identify funding streams	X		X
		Develop a framework to facilitate collaboration, data and information sharing about pollinators among organizations	X		X
		Research risk of environmental pollutants (e.g., salts and heavy metals) on pollinators			X
		Research the drivers behind changes of perception and behavior toward pollinator-friendly practices to inform state outreach and education efforts	X		X
	4.2 Strategic protections	4.2.1. Develop effective policy to protect at-risk pollinator species	Include a question on the Environmental Assessment Worksheet form that provides information about potential reductions in pollinator habitat and identifies proposed mitigation that will offset those reductions	X	
Increase capacity for state listing at-risk species (including staffing, taxonomic expertise, and data gathering)			X	X	
4.2.2. Protect pollinators from diseases and parasites		Develop a model local ordinance for hobby beekeeping addressing managed pollinators’ health concerns			X

Category	Subcategory	Action	Lead	Enact	Encourage
		Raise awareness and provide guidance to protect managed pollinator health from diseases and parasites due to interstate managed pollinator transport			X
		Raise awareness of BMPs for commercial bumble bee colonies to address risk of disease spread to wild bees			X
4.3. Long-term planning	4.3.1. Improve interagency coordination	Align state agencies' policies, practices and procedures to effectively protect pollinators and reduce inconsistencies	X		
		Create and maintain an inventory of past and ongoing pollinator protection programs and initiatives	X		
		Synergize strategies and priorities between the Pollinator and the Climate Action Framework (e.g. integrate pollinator-friendly plants in green infrastructure projects)	X		
	4.3.2. Improve intra-agency coordination	Clarify internal pollinator policies and streamline their implementation across agency actions.	X		
		Update pollinator-related state policies, standard operating procedures, protocols, and guidelines in light of new scientific information	X		
	4.3.3. Improve coordination with non-agency organizations	Create a coalition of pollinator conservation stakeholders to increase collaboration, resources and capacity for statewide implementation of pollinator priority actions		X	X

Call to action

The pollinator action framework is a call to action to individuals and organizations across sectors, regions and communities to join forces to help our state pollinators. Many actions will take connections, collaborations and strategic partnerships to make significant progress. We call on decision makers and legislators to support initiatives considering the actions included in this document.

As we move forward with our mission, we are committed to keep a listening ear, and to identify additional opportunities to engage with Minnesotans in this work to amplify our impact.

Acknowledgements

The interagency pollinator protection team would like to thank the members of the public who provided their insights, feedback and comments during the development of the pollinator action framework. Your input informed our discussions and helped us see different perspectives of what is needed to help Minnesota's pollinators. Special acknowledgement to the following organizations:

- University of Minnesota Bee Lab and Extension Service
- The Natural Resources Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture
- Monarch Joint Venture
- Xerces Society
- Minnesota Farm Bureau

Memo

Date: September 8, 2023

To: EQB Board Members

From: Erik Cedarleaf Dahl, Planning Director

RE: State Water Plan background and today's update

The Minnesota Legislature directs the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) to coordinate comprehensive long-range water resources planning and policy through a State Water Plan every 10 years ([Minnesota Statutes 103B.151](#), [103A.43](#), [103A.204](#)). This plan fulfills the legislative mandate.

The purpose of the 2020 State Water Plan is to establish a framework for aligning state agencies, legislative priorities, and local government policy, programs and actions for the coming decade. EQB developed this plan to set an agenda for tackling the stubborn and complex water problems that climate change will intensify for Minnesotans.

The goal of the 2020 State Water Plan is to shine a spotlight on actions Minnesota can take to protect our waters from climate change. In order to protect our waters, we must also take decisive action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to curb the worst effects of climate change.

The plan defines goals, strategies and actions. It highlights key water issues related to climate, but it is not an exhaustive list of the challenges we face or the solutions to implement. Ideas set forth in this plan can help establish priorities and inform decision-making, and they underscore the need to take actions with multiple benefits across several goals to move beyond our current trajectory.

The plan contains five goals, these goals represent focus areas for Minnesotans to become more resilient to climate change and prepare for its impacts on water in the coming decade. Each goal contains recommended strategies and actions to achieve it. The goals overlap and interrelate, so many of the strategies apply to multiple goals.

- Goal 1: Ensure drinking water is safe and sufficient
- Goal 2: Manage landscapes to protect and improve water quality
- Goal 3: Manage built environment and infrastructure for greater resiliency
- Goal 4: Manage landscapes to hold water and reduce runoff
- Goal 5: Promote resiliency in quality of life

Here is a link to the 2020 State Water Plan: [Download the 2020 State Water Plan \(7MB PDF\)](#)

Today staff will provide an overview of Goals #1 and #2 implementation and we'll return in the fall or early winter to update the Board on Goals #3 through #5.

Memo

Date: August 30, 2023

To: EQB Board Members

From: Paul Gardner, Clean Water Council Administrator

RE: Clean Water Council update

The Clean Water Council is a state advisory council created in 2006 to advise on the implementation of the Clean Water Legacy Act ([Minn. Stat. 114D](#)). After the ratification of the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment in 2008, the Council was directed by statute to make biennial recommendations on the use of the Clean Water Fund, which is one-third of the increased sales tax revenue created by the Legacy Amendment. [The most recent biennial recommendations](#) were for \$318 million. The next set of recommendations are due January 15, 2025.

The [Council](#) includes 28 members, including 17 voting members who are appointed by the Governor, and 11 non-voting members (four legislators, the University of Minnesota, and six state agencies). The Governor's appointees represent particular organizations:

- Environmental organizations (2)
- Farm organizations (2)
- Business organizations (2)
- Municipal governments (2)
- Counties (2—1 metro and 1 non-metro)
- Hunting organizations
- Fishing organizations
- Soil and water conservation districts
- Watershed districts
- Lakes and streams nonprofits
- Tribal governments
- Townships

Much of the Clean Water Fund is used to address non-point source water pollution issues that are the largest contributor to impairments in Minnesota's waters.

By statute, The Council's recommendations must:

- (1) be to protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams and to protect groundwater from degradation and ensure that at least five percent of the clean water fund is spent only to protect drinking water sources;
- (2) be consistent with the purposes, policies, goals, and priorities in [the Clean Water Legacy Act]; and
- (3) allocate adequate support and resources to identify degraded groundwater and impaired waters, develop Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), implement restoration of groundwater and impaired waters, and provide assistance and incentives to prevent groundwater and surface waters from becoming degraded or impaired and improve the quality of surface waters which are listed as impaired but have no approved TMDL.

The Council is currently developing its next strategic plan, which will be focused on what can be achieved by 2034, when the Legacy Amendment expires.

RESOLUTION OF THE MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

Per diem and expense policy for Board members

Multiple Minnesota statutes allow and set requirements for per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses incurred for member of state administrative boards, agencies, and committees. For the Environmental Quality Board, these include:

- Minn. Stat. § 15.0575, subdivision 3
- Minn. Stat. § 116C.03, subd. 2a for EQB Board Members
- Minn. Stat. §15.059, subdivision 3 for EQB Appointed Advisory Councils

Under these statutes, Boards are required to adopt internal standards for purposes of making per diem payments. In addition, it is good practice to provide clarity about compensation and reimbursement.

The EQB last adopted a per diem and expense policy for Board members on February 21, 2018. Since that time, changes have been made to statutes to update the allowable per diem amounts, and to allowable expense reimbursements.

The board resolves to adopt the attached Per diem and expense policy for Board members, dated September 2023. This policy applies to per diem and expenses incurred after July 1, 2023 and supersedes all prior policies on per diems and expense reimbursements.

The board approved and adopted this resolution on [month] [day], [year].

 Nancy Daubengerger, Chair
 Minnesota Environmental Quality Board

Date: 9/20/23

Attachments: Environmental Quality Board Per diem and expense policy for Board members, September 2023

Environmental Quality Board

Per diem and expense policy for Board members

Effective Date: July 1, 2023

I. Legal Basis

The basis for this policy is Minn. Stat. § 15.0575, subdivision 3 and Minn. Stat. § 116C.03, subd. 2a for EQB Board Members, and Minn. Stat. §15.059, subdivision 3 for EQB Appointed Advisory Councils. This policy fulfills the requirement under Minn. Stat. § 15.0575, subd. 3(c) to adopt internal standards for purposes of making per diem payments.

Minnesota Statute §15.0575, subdivision 3. Compensation.

(a) Members of the boards may be compensated at the rate of \$55 a day spent on board activities, when authorized by the board, plus expenses in the same manner and amount as authorized by the commissioner's plan adopted under section 43A.18, subdivision 2. Members who, as a result of time spent attending board meetings, incur childcare expenses that would not otherwise have been incurred, may be reimbursed for those expenses upon board authorization.

(b) Members who are state employees or employees of the political subdivisions of the state must not receive the daily payment for activities that occur during working hours for which they are compensated by the state or political subdivision. However, a state or political subdivision employee may receive the daily payment if the employee uses vacation time or compensatory time accumulated in accordance with a collective bargaining agreement or compensation plan for board activities. Members who are state employees or employees of the political subdivisions of the state may receive the expenses provided for in this subdivision unless the expenses are reimbursed by another source. Members who are state employees or employees of political subdivisions of the state may be reimbursed for child care expenses only for time spent on board activities that are outside their working hours.

(c) Each board must adopt internal standards prescribing what constitutes a day spent on board activities for purposes of making daily payments under this subdivision.

Minnesota Statutes §15.059, subdivision 3. Compensation.

(a) Members of the advisory councils and committees may be compensated at the rate of \$55 a day spent on council or committee activities, when authorized by the council or committee, plus expenses in the same manner and amount as authorized by the commissioner's plan adopted under section 43A.18, subdivision 2. Members who, as a result of time spent attending council or committee meetings, incur child care expenses that would not otherwise have been incurred, may be reimbursed for those expenses upon council or committee authorization.

(b) Members who are state employees or employees of political subdivisions must not receive the daily compensation for activities that occur during working hours for which they are compensated by the state or political subdivision. However, a state or political subdivision employee may receive the daily payment if the employee uses vacation time or compensatory time accumulated in accordance with a collective bargaining agreement or compensation plan for council or committee activity. Members who are state employees or employees of the political subdivisions of the state may receive the expenses provided for in this section unless the expenses are reimbursed by another source. Members who are state employees or employees of political subdivisions of the state may be reimbursed for child care expenses only for time spent on board activities that are outside their working hours.

(c) Each council and committee must adopt internal standards prescribing what constitutes a day spent on council or committee activities for purposes of making daily payments under this subdivision.

Minnesota Statutes § 116C.03, subdivision 2a. (As amended in 2023)

Subd. 2a. Public members. The membership terms, compensation, removal, and filling of vacancies of public members of the board shall be as provided in section 15.0575, except that a public member may be compensated at the rate of up to \$125 a day.

II. Policy of the Environmental Quality Board (Board)

- 1) The Board shall compensate Board members and reimburse eligible expenses for each day spent on Board activities, including travel days when needed and appropriate.
 - a) Per Diem Compensation: The Board shall compensate state agency members of the Board, when eligible, at the rate of \$55/day; the Board shall compensate public members of the Board at the rate of \$125/day.
 - b) Expense Reimbursement: The Board shall reimburse eligible expenses for all members in the same manner and amount as authorized by the Commissioner’s Plan adopted under section 43A.18, subdivision 2.
- 2) The Board’s policy is to provide the per diem compensation, plus expenses, to eligible members for the following meetings and activities that constitute a day spent on Board activities:
 - a) Regular and Special Meetings of the Board and Subcommittees – This includes the regular monthly Board meeting, any special Board meetings, meetings of Board subcommittees, and preparatory meetings scheduled by EQB staff.
 - b) Other Board-related Activities – This includes Board retreats or similar meetings; attending the Environmental Congress; participating as an appointee on Board-appointed advisory councils; attending training relevant to Board membership with prior approval by the Board Chair or the Executive Director; and representing the Board at events and meetings with prior approval by the Board Chair or the Executive Director.
 - c) Participation in other activities – such as short phone calls or meetings with EQB staff – does not constitute a day eligible for a per diem.
- 3) Procedures
 - a) Expense Reports: Each Board member eligible to receive a per diem and expense reimbursement as outlined in the Policy section above must claim them on the appropriate form provided by the Executive Director and/or Board Administrator. This form must be submitted to the Board Administrator for approval and processing on a bi-monthly basis. All compensation for the state fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) must be submitted no later than two weeks after the end of the fiscal year.

- b) Expense reimbursement shall be in accordance with the current Commissioner’s Plan for state employees.
 - i) Note the following expense report requirements for non-state employees and state employees:
 - (1) Non-state Employees must provide their Social Security number (on top of the form) and home address for purposes of expense processing.
 - (2) State Employees must fill out the employee expense report to request reimbursement. Specify “Environmental Quality Board” on the form.
 - ii) Approval of all expense requests must be communicated to the MPCA by the Executive Director. The availability of funds must be confirmed by MPCA staff. Notification of action on all requests must be made by the Executive Director to the Board member or by MPCA staff at the request of the Executive Director.
- c) Expense Reimbursement:
 - i) Mileage: Mileage is reimbursed at the current rate as specified by the IRS for travel to and from approved Board meetings and on approved Board business. Mileage must be calculated on the most direct route according to the Department of Transportation records.
 - ii) Meals: Food allowances are actual expenditures for meals and gratuity, not including alcoholic beverages, up to the maximum and under the conditions specified in the Commissioner’s Plan. When in travel status for two (2) or more consecutive meals, reimbursement shall be for the actual costs of the meals including tax and a reasonable gratuity, up to the combined maximum amount for the reimbursable meals.
 - (1) As of the date of this policy, the maximum reimbursement for localities within Minnesota is \$10.00 for breakfast (if you are in travel status prior to 6 a.m.), \$13.00 for lunch and \$19.00 for dinner (if you are in travel status after 7 p.m.).
 - (2) Refer to the statutory language in Minn. Stat. §15.059, Subd. 3(b) for eligibility requirements for state employees or employees of political subdivisions.
 - iii) Lodging: Hotel/motel will be reimbursed for actual expenditures providing good judgment is exercised in incurring lodging costs and that charges are reasonable and consistent with the facilities available. Receipts for lodging must accompany the Expense Report.
 - iv) Child Care: Expenses for childcare will be paid if such expenses are incurred as a result of time spent attending Board meetings and would not otherwise have been incurred by the Board member. Members who are state employees or employees of political subdivisions of the state may be reimbursed for childcare expenses only for time spent on Board activities that are outside their working hours.
 - v) Miscellaneous: This category of expenses includes parking, phone calls when in travel status overnight, and others. Consult the provisions of the Commissioner’s Plan under expense reimbursement. With the exception of parking, Board members may incur miscellaneous expenses infrequently and their reimbursement can be discussed with the Executive Director on a case-by-case basis.
 - vi) Receipts: Receipts are required for hotels, non-meter parking, and other miscellaneous expenses



August 15, 2023

RE: Environmental Review Work Plan

Dear Members of the Environmental Quality Board:

Thank you for undertaking the important issue of environmental review improvement and for your engagement with the public along this process.

MNIPL was encouraged that staff comments in documents supporting the July ERIS meeting, as well as comments from the public, emphasized the importance of

- scientific integrity and accountability
- the inclusion of a project's lifecycle emissions, including those emissions realized outside the state
- looking at how much is too much when it comes to environmental impacts

The work plan presented today does not name these priorities or present a path for achieving them. Rather, it places these issues to be considered in the future (packet page 16).

Everything we do as a society either helps or worsens the climate disruption hole we are digging.

Projects can produce the energy they require with renewables. Projects can be sited on already degraded land and improving it in conjunction with its new use.

Projects can move us forward. So can work plans.

In the midst of discouraging news about the environment – wildfires, air quality, heat indexes, coral reefs – there is hope, too. See the Inflation Reduction Act. Minnesota's 100% Clean Electricity Bill. Yesterday's Montana court ruling finding that "the state must consider potential damage when approving projects."

We urge the Environmental Quality Board to revisit the work plan, prioritizing those actions bulleted at the top of this letter which help us turn from projects that harm to projects that heal. We can pick a different trajectory. It requires making decisions that advance our better future.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara Wolff". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sara Wolff
Strategic Policy Director