

# MINNESOTA>ENVIRONMENTAL<INITIATIVE

## Land and Water Policy Project

### Overview

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The Minnesota Environmental Initiative's (MEI) Land and Water Policy Project brought focused attention to the importance of and interplay between land use and water policies in Minnesota and how they are implemented.

MEI designed and facilitated a dialogue among stakeholders responsible for implementing and managing statewide land and water policies. Recent reports prepared by a variety of organizations generated numerous recommendations on how to best manage Minnesota's land and water resources for the future. The stakeholder dialogue provided a forum for discussing, evaluating and prioritizing these many recommendations.

The goal of the stakeholder Work Group was to develop strategies for actions resulting in improved coordination of land and water policies among state agencies and local units of government. Work Group membership was made up of representatives from state and local government, as well as the non-profit and private sectors.

### Brief Background

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In order to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of land and water policy implementation, MEI conducted a series of focus groups with representatives from local units of government including cities, counties, and watershed organizations in 2007. These discussions led to several recommendations for better-coordinated land and water programs and policies at the state and local levels. During 2008 MEI staff reviewed five additional reports containing hundreds of recommendations for improved land and water policy:

- LCCMR Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan
- Minnesota Stormwater Steering Committee Roadmap Project
- Clean Water Council Biennial Report: Progress and Recommendations on Clean Water Legacy Act
- Integrated Stormwater Permitting and Watershed Management
- Governor's Minnesota Climate Change Advisory Group Final Report

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## What Was Done

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From January through June 2009, Land and Water Policy Stakeholder Dialogue Work Group members reviewed and discussed recommendations from all six reports and identified three key areas in which to focus their efforts:

- **Shared Vision** – developing an implementation plan and action items that identify how a vision for Minnesota’s land and water resources could be created, who should be involved, and what it might contain
- **Coordinated Management for Improved Implementation** – working to align planning schedules between state agencies to create efficiencies at all levels and enable more effective implementation of protection and restoration activities
- **Integrated Community Assistance** – developing, communicating and coordinating resources and approaches to enhance the effectiveness of outreach within and between all levels of government to improve land use decisions that affect land and water quality.

## Where We Are Headed

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A meeting of Work Group participants and state agency leadership took place on July 7, 2009. Work Group members recommended actions to move the state forward in pursuit of improved coordination of land and water policies. Agency leadership embraced the Work Group’s recommendations and charged the state’s Environmental Quality Board (EQB) with refining and further developing next steps.

### More Information:

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