

September 2022 Environmental Quality Board meeting

Wednesday, September 21 from 1 – 4 p.m.

Join in person or online

- In person: [520 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155](#), lower level conference rooms
 - [Join online](#)
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Participating in board meetings

Attending in person

The Environmental Quality Board (EQB) will convene its board 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](#) 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 Webex link above. Please review the [Guide to WebEx Participation](#) for additional information.

Accessibility

Please contact 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

EQB encourages public input and appreciates the opportunity to build shared understanding with members of the public. Members of the public may provide oral or written comment.

Oral public comment

In this meeting, the board will accept oral public comment during agenda item 9.

Procedure and guidelines for giving oral public comment:

- If you wish to speak:
 - In person: Sign up at the welcome table before the meeting starts.
 - Virtual: When prompted, use the “raise hand” feature in Webex, located at the bottom of your screen.
- 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 the board 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 board 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 board meeting packet.

Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions

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

Board members:

- Grace Arnold – Commissioner, Department of Commerce
- Peter Bakken – Public Member, Congressional District 1
- Joseph Bauerkemper – Public Member, Congressional District 8
- Julie Goehring – Public Member, Congressional District 7
- Steve Grove – Commissioner, Department of Employment and Economic Development
- Rylee Hince – Public Member, Congressional District 2
- Katrina Kessler – Commissioner, Pollution Control Agency
- Mehmet Konar-Steenberg – Public Member, Congressional District 5
- Jan Malcolm – Commissioner, Department of Health
- Nicholas Martin – Public Member, Congressional District 4
- Paul Nelson – Public Member, Congressional District 6
- Thom Petersen – Commissioner, Department of Agriculture
- Alice Roberts-Davis – Commissioner, Department of Administration
- Sarah Strommen – Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources
- Gerald Van Amburg – Vice-chair, EQB; Chair, Board of Water and Soil Resources
- Charles Zelle – Chair, Metropolitan Council

2. Approval of consent agenda

- Meeting minutes from May 18, 2022, Environmental Quality Board meeting (packet page #6)
- Preliminary agenda for September 21, 2022, Environmental Quality Board meeting

3. Executive Director's report

Erik Cedarleaf Dahl – Interim Executive Director, EQB

4. Update on climate change and water in Minnesota

The board will hear a presentation that breaks down observed trends in Minnesota's climate to its essential points, particularly emphasizing the ongoing changes in the quantity, timing, and intensity of precipitation, the rapid rate of winter warming, and how these changes vary across the state.

Minnesota's climate is famous for its ups, downs, and extremes, but is also experiencing changes unlike anything we have observed previously. Twelve of the 15 warmest years on record have occurred since 1998, and every major statewide precipitation record was set in either the 2000s or the 2010s. Minnesota's long-term and/or significant climate trends can pair with its typical variability (the normal ups and downs we've always had), to produce unprecedented conditions. According to available climate model projections, including many that are specific to Minnesota, more significant climate records are likely to fall, and fall again, in the decades ahead.

This presentation is context for the ongoing work of the 2020 State Water Plan implementation, which focuses on the intersection of water and climate change, as well as Minnesota's Climate Action Framework.

Presenter: Dr. Kenneth Blumenfeld – Senior Climatologist, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Materials enclosed: Climate changes observed and projected in Minnesota (packet page #8)

5. Update from the Climate Change Subcabinet on Minnesota's Climate Action Framework

The board will hear an update on the release of the Minnesota's Climate Action Framework, which outlines the body of work needed to build a carbon-neutral, resilient, and equitable future for Minnesota. The Climate Change Subcabinet developed the framework in response to Executive Order 19-37. Membership of the Subcabinet includes EQB's executive director and leaders of all state agencies represented on the board.

Presenters:

- Craig McDonnell – Assistant Commissioner, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- Frank Kohlasch – Climate Director, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

6. Update on 2020 State Water Plan implementation

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

Project leads:

- Erik Cedarleaf Dahl – Interim Executive Director, EQB
- Suzanne Rhees – Special Projects Coordinator, Board of Water and Soil Resources

Panel:

- Alycia Overbo – Drinking Water Strategic Initiatives and Communications Planner, Department of Health
- Randall Doneen – Conservation Assistance and Regulation Section Manager, Department of Natural Resources
- Jeff Berg – Water Policy Specialist, Department of Agriculture
- Andrea Hendrickson – State Hydraulic Engineer, Department of Transportation
- Melissa King – Water Programs Coordinator, Board of Water and Soil Resources
- Jennifer Kostrzewski – Environmental Analyst, MCES Water Resources Planning, Metropolitan Council
- Eric Wojchilk -- Planning Analyst, Local Planning Assistance, Metropolitan Council
- Lanya Ross – Environmental Analyst, MCES Water Supply Planning, Metropolitan Council
- Pooja Kanwar – Water Policy Consultant, Depart of Natural Resources
- Jeff Risberg – Planning Director, Impaired Waters Program, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- Laura Milberg – Climate Change Resilience Coordinator, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- Jesse Martus – Lake Area Management Plan Coordinator, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- Jennifer Davis – State Hazard Mitigation Officer, Homeland Security Emergency Management, Department of Public Safety
- Luigi Romolo – State Climatologist, Department of Natural Resources

Materials enclosed:

- Strategy Table from the 2020 State Water Plan (packet page #9)
- 2020 State Water Plan general implementation updates (packet page #15)

7. Update from Clean Water Council on the Clean Water Fund

EQB aligned the 2020 State Water Plan with the [Clean Water Council's strategic plan](#). The board will hear highlights of the draft fiscal year 2024–2025 Clean Water Fund recommendations, and how they fit into broader strategies to protect and restore surface water and protect drinking water sources.

Presenter: Paul Gardner – Administrator, Clean Water Council

Materials enclosed: Clean Water Fund Trajectory for FY 24-25 (packet page #23)

8. Discussion on celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act

The board will discuss ideas for marking the fiftieth anniversary of a landmark environmental law in Minnesota, the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), in 2023. MEPA established protections for Minnesota's natural resources and encouraged "productive and enjoyable harmony between human beings and their environment" (Minn. Stat. 116D.01). The legislation created EQB and a state-level environmental review program, and tasked EQB with governing and implementing its requirements.

Presenters: Faith Krogstad – Engagement and Communications Director, EQB

Materials enclosed: Memo RE: Minnesota Environmental Policy Act anniversary celebration planning (packet page #36)

9. Public comment

The board welcomes oral public comment on agenda items 4–8. Please see guidance and procedures on packet page 2.

10. Closing and adjournment

May 2022 Environmental Quality Board meeting

Wednesday, May 18, 2022 | 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Location: 520 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155, lower level conference rooms and Webex

Minutes (draft)

1. Welcome and introductions

Board members present elected Paul Nelson, Public Member representing District 2, as presiding officer.

Presiding Officer Nelson called to order the regular meeting of the Environmental Quality Board.

Members present: Peter Bakken, Joseph Bauerkemper, Nancy Daubenberger, Julie Goehring, Rylee Hince, Katrina Kessler, Mehmet Konar-Steenberg, Nicholas Martin, Paul Nelson, Alice Roberts-Davis, Sarah Strommen, Gerald Van Amburg

Proxies: Kim Collins for Nancy Daubenberger, Daniel Huff for Jan Malcolm, Kevin McKinnon for Steve Grove, Louise Miltich for Grace Arnold, and Sue Vento for Charles Zelle

Excused: Grace Arnold, Steve Grove, Jan Malcolm, Thom Petersen

2. Approval of consent agenda

- Meeting minutes from February 16, 2022, Environmental Quality Board meeting
- Preliminary agenda for May 18, 2022, Environmental Quality Board meeting

Motion: Julie Goehring moved the consent agenda, Rylee Hince seconded. Motion carries with a unanimous voice vote.

3. Executive Director's report

Katie Pratt – Executive Director, EQB

- Thanked former EQB Public Member Al Forsberg for his work on the board; Mr. Forsberg gave a reflection on his time on the board
- Reviewed upcoming agenda items and reminded participants about the Open House after the meeting adjourns

4. Update from the Subcommittee for Pilot Program Implementation

EQB heard an update on the Pilot Program for integrating climate change into environmental review. Denise Wilson, Environmental Review Program Director of EQB, reviewed the upcoming sessions of the Speakers Series.

5. Emerging Environmental Leaders update

Faith Krogstad, EQB Engagement and Communications Director, gave an update on planning for ongoing and sustainable youth engagement at EQB, including a possible partnership with the Minnesota Youth Council.

6. Environment and Energy Report Card update

Erik Cedarleaf Dahl, EQB Planning Director, provided an overview of the Environment and Energy Report Card and the board discussed possible approaches to a report update.

7. Interagency Pollinator Protection Team update

Faith Krogstad, EQB Engagement and Communications Director, and Christina Locke, Department of Natural Resources Pollinator Conservation Coordinator, gave an update on the work of the Interagency Pollinator Protection Team. In 2022, the team is focusing their efforts in the development of a pollinator action framework. Additionally, the board heard an update on the plans for an event to kick off this year's Pollinator Week in June.

8. Public comment

EQB opened public comment on all preceding agenda items. One member of the public tried to speak, but was unable to due to technical difficulties. EQB staff offered alternative options to provide comment.

9. Closing and adjournment

Motion: Sarah Strommen moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Rylee Hince. Motion carries with unanimous voice vote.

Climate Parameter	Observations (through 2021)	Projections (2041-2070)	Cause/Explanation
Winter temperatures	Increasing rapidly, <u>fewer</u> cold extremes	Continued increases , with narrowing of winter season	Greenhouse gasses absorb escaping heat, warming winters and nights most while shrinking hemispheric snow cover and “cold air reservoirs”
Rainfall	Increasing all seasons, more extreme events	Increases likely but timing and seasonality uncertain	Rising global temperatures evaporate more ocean water into the air, making more moisture available for precipitating weather systems, increasing the likelihood for episodic heavy rainfall, and increasing the potential for unprecedented extremes
Seasonal Snowfall	Increasing , more extreme events	Seasonal decreases likely , but some extreme event increases possible	More moisture available for snow-producing weather systems, but warming of winter eventually decreases opportunities for snow
Heat waves & extreme heat	No trend through 2021	Increases expected by 2050, if not sooner	Warming to date concentrated in winters and nights, but heat waves more likely as seasonal and regional temperatures continue rising
Drought	Decreasing frequency, duration, coverage, and severity	Increases possible with longer dry spells and more “flash drought”	Wet trends have decreased drought regionally, but future precipitation increases projected to occur over fewer days, meaning longer dry spells. Future summer heat increases that coincide with dry spells may cause major drought episodes, though frequency is unclear.
Tornadoes, hail, t-storm winds	Trends unclear or none observed, but seasons/ranges <u>are</u> expanding.	Projections unclear , but continued expansion likely	Higher global temperatures increase storm size and rain intensity but decrease wind shear required for tornadoes, hail, and thunderstorm winds. Warming does make these hazards possible in all seasons.

Implementation of the 2020 State Water Plan and state agencies involved.

The purpose of this table is to summarize the types of actions needed to implement strategies in the 2020 State Water Plan. Primary state agencies involved are identified, recognizing that multiple agencies and many local and

regional partners are also involved in each action and may be the parties implementing them. As these strategies evolve, this table will be updated periodically over the 10-year lifespan of this plan.

Strategy	Statute change	Rule change	Policy change	Additional funding/reallocation	Planning	Research	Education and awareness	Other	Primary state agencies
GOAL 1: Ensure drinking water is safe and sufficient									
Strategy 1: Accelerate source water protection for community water systems.									
Action 1.1: Prioritize protection of the 400,000 acres of vulnerable land in DWSMAs.			●	●	●		●		MDH, BWSR, MDA
Action 1.2: Assess and monitor the safety and resiliency of surface DWSMAs.			●	●	●		●		MDH, MPCA
Action 1.3: Protect, restore, and increase perennial cover in the highest priority areas of the Mississippi River watershed.			●	●	●		●		MDH, BWSR, MDA
Strategy 2: Emphasize source water protection in watershed management.									
Action 2.1: Emphasize source water protection in implementing watershed management plans.				●	●				BWSR, Met Council, MDH
Action 2.2: Leverage the use of state dollars to protect drinking water.			●	●					BWSR
Action 2.3: Increase routine testing of private well water.				●	●	●	●		MDH
Strategy 3: Prevent nitrate contamination of drinking water and groundwater.									
Action 3.1: Fully implement Minnesota GPR in DWSMAs with nitrate concentrations above defined thresholds.		●		●	●		●		MDA
Action 3.2: Implement the NFMP in vulnerable areas as defined by township testing results.			●	●	●	●	●		MDA
Action 3.3: Ensure compliance with the Minnesota Feedlot Rule.			●	●	●		●	Permit renewal	MPCA

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Strategy	Statute change	Rule change	Policy change	Additional funding/reallocation	Planning	Research	Education and awareness	Other	Primary state agencies
GOAL 2: Manage landscapes to protect and improve water quality									
Strategy 1: Increase soil health									
Action 1.1: Work to meet state goals for expanding the acreage of cover crops and continuous living cover.					●	●	●		BWSR, MDA, MPCA
Action 1.2: Improve monitoring and metrics for soil health based on statewide research and modeling.			●	●	●	●	●		BWSR, MDA
Action 1.3: Diversify crops and agricultural practices that support soil health.				●	●	●	●		MDA, BWSR
Action 1.4: Reduce social and financial barriers to implementation of soil health practices.				●		●	●		BWSR, MDA, MPCA
Action 1.5: Establish soil health demonstration watersheds.				●	●	●	●		MDA, BWSR
Strategy 2: Expand opportunities to participate in ecosystem services markets									
Action 2.1: Develop accounting protocols and data foundations for ecosystem services trading.	●		●	●	●		●		MDA, BWSR, MPCA
Action 2.2: Pursue emerging options for ecosystem service markets using water quality trading as a starting point.				●	●	●	●		MDA, BWSR, MPCA

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Strategy	Statute change	Rule change	Policy change	Additional funding/reallocation	Planning	Research	Education and awareness	Other	Primary state agencies
Goal 3: Manage built environments and infrastructure for greater resiliency									
Strategy 1: Improve data sources and modeling.									
<i>Action 1.1: Pursue and fund next-generation LiDAR.</i>				●			●		DNR
<i>Action 1.2: Obtain dynamically downscaled climate projections.</i>				●	●		●		All state agencies
<i>Action 1.3: Support modeling efforts and risk management that consider climate change impacts.</i>				●		●			All state agencies
Strategy 2: Support communities with asset management and resiliency planning for wastewater, stormwater and drinking water infrastructure.									
<i>Action 2.1: Fund a comprehensive asset management program across Minnesota.</i>	●			●	●		●		MPCA, MDH
<i>Action 2.2: Provide training and technical assistance to smaller communities on tools to assess risk and vulnerability.</i>				●	●		●		MDH, MPCA
<i>Action 2.3: Adopt a stormwater data standard and fund digitization.</i>				●	●		●		MPCA
Strategy 3: Develop new and updated resiliency financing mechanisms.									
<i>Action 3.1: Develop and fund climate planning grants to communities for wastewater and stormwater infrastructure.</i>	●			●					MPCA, MDH, Met Council
<i>Action 3.2: Authorize and fund Public Facilities Authority (PFA) programs to support resilient infrastructure projects.</i>	●	●		●	●		●		PFA, MPCA, MDH
<i>Action 3.3: Expand the Minnesota Property-Assessed Clean Energy (MinnPACE) program to include water conservation and hazard mitigation projects.</i>	●		●				●		Commerce
Strategy 4: Design transportation infrastructure in floodplains for long-term resiliency.									
<i>Activity 4.1: Design culverts with future climate conditions in mind.</i>	●			●	●	●	●		DNR, MnDOT
<i>Activity 4.2 Prioritize climate adaptation actions across Minnesota’s road systems.</i>						●			MnDOT

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regional partners are also involved in each action and may be the parties implementing them. As these strategies evolve, this table will be updated periodically over the 10-year lifespan of this plan.

Strategy	Statute change	Rule change	Policy change	Additional funding/reallocation	Planning	Research	Education and awareness	Other	Primary state agencies
GOAL 4: Manage landscapes to hold water and reduce runoff									
Strategy 1: Identify opportunities to retain and store water and manage drainage.									
<i>Action 1.1: Identify and pursue opportunities for temporary and permanent water storage across agricultural landscapes.</i>	●		●	●	●	●	●		BWSR, DNR
<i>Action 1.2: Establish standards for technology, flow reduction, detention locations and sizing, drainage system design, culvert sizing, and flood staging.</i>			●	●	●	●	●		BWSR, DNR
<i>Action 1.3: Investigate and develop mechanisms to pay for water retention and detention.</i>	●		●	●		●			BWSR
Strategy 2: Develop multipurpose drainage water management standards, guidelines and incentives.									
<i>Action 2.1: Develop mechanisms to incentivize drainage BMPs.</i>				●	●	●	●		BWSR, DNR, MDA
<i>Action 2.2: Develop/expand technical and financial assistance.</i>				●					BWSR
<i>Action 2.3: Establish a consistent approach to drainage system design and permitting.</i>	●		●						BWSR
<i>Action 2.4: Increase the number of research and demonstration sites.</i>				●		●	●		MDA, BWSR
Strategy 3: Incorporate drainage water management into local water planning.									
<i>Action 3.1: Use the 1W1P process to establish watershed-scale standards.</i>			●		●		●		BWSR, MPCA, DNR

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regional partners are also involved in each action and may be the parties implementing them. As these strategies evolve, this table will be updated periodically over the 10-year lifespan of this plan.

Strategy	Statute change	Rule change	Policy change	Additional funding/reallocation	Planning	Research	Education and awareness	Other	Primary state agencies
GOAL 5: Promote resiliency in quality of life									
Strategy 1: Adapt and mitigate infrastructure planning, design and development for recreational needs.									
<i>Action 1.1: Incorporate the ability to withstand greater rainfall into infrastructure design and construction (e.g., docks, marinas, shelters).</i>				●	●				DNR, MnDOT
<i>Action 1.2: For existing facilities, anticipate the need for funding to deal with emergency repairs, closures and cleanup following damage from more frequent and unpredictable extreme weather events.</i>				●	●				DNR
<i>Action 1.3: Minimize the introduction and spread of invasive species through appropriate protective strategies and infrastructure utilizing existing programs such as the DNR Watercraft Inspection Program.</i>			●		●	●	●		DNR
Strategy 2: Improve monitoring and public communication regarding water quality and safety of beaches.									
<i>Action 2.1: Develop state web portal and activation of beach alerts system.</i>				●	●	●	●		MDH
<i>Action 2.2: Develop dedicated funding for increased monitoring of algal toxins.</i>				●	●	●			MPCA, MDH
Strategy 3: Manage fish and aquatic habitat for resilience.									
<i>Action 3.1: Manage fisheries to recognize and adapt to climate change trends, including altering fish stocking programs and harvest opportunities based on current and expected future conditions.</i>					●	●			DNR
<i>Action 3.2: Manage aquatic ecosystems to create, promote and maintain quality habitat, climate refuges and habitat connectivity.</i>				●	●	●	●		DNR
<i>Action 3.3: Monitor and research wildlife populations over time in variable conditions.</i>				●	●	●	●		DNR, MPCA
<i>Action 3.4: Continue efforts to reduce mercury emissions and conduct research to better understand how climate change affects mercury contamination in fish.</i>				●	●	●	●		DNR, MPCA, MDH

Strategy	Statute change	Rule change	Policy change	Additional funding/reallocation	Planning	Research	Education and awareness	Other	Primary state agencies
GOAL 5: Promote resiliency in quality of life (continued)									
Strategy 4: Conduct research and engagement to address impacts of changing water resources and ecosystems on mental health and well-being.									
<i>Action 4.1: Research the mental and emotional impacts of changing water resources and ecosystems due to climate change, particularly among those who are vulnerable to the effects of climate change (e.g., farmers and Indigenous persons), and identify potential strategies and resources that support mental health.</i>					●	●	●		All state agencies
<i>Action 4.2: Research community values and beliefs surrounding water, including those of particularly vulnerable communities, and work to integrate those values and beliefs into water resource planning.</i>					●	●	●		All state agencies
<i>Action 4.3: Strengthen networks and build community around water resources through cultural activities and citizen resource monitoring opportunities.</i>					●	●	●		All state agencies
<i>Action 4.4: Improve coordination between state and local emergency managers to identify communities impacted by climate-related water hazards to better target resources and reduce associated physical, emotional and mental stressors.</i>					●	●	●		All state agencies

2020 State Water Plan implementation updates

Goal 1: Ensure Drinking Water Is Safe and Sufficient

- 1) MDH worked with DNR and BWSR to protect priority areas in the Mississippi River watershed by integrating the drinking water Source Water Assessment Areas into the revised 2021 State Forest Action Plan and emphasizing Upper Mississippi River Basin forestland in the Plan. Inclusion of these areas in the State Forest Action Plan helps establish protection of forestlands and prioritize practices in surface water drinking water sources, which are eligible for funding through the Farm Bill and 1W1P.
- 2) The Minnesota Source Water Protection Collaborative is working on projects that advance source water protection in vulnerable drinking water areas. The Collaborative, convened by Environmental Initiative, is developing an artist-in-residence pilot project to creatively engage with community members and shed light on source water protection issues in a small, rural Minnesota community.
- 3) MDA continues pesticide testing of private wells to provide information to homeowners and the public about the presence of pesticides in private drinking water wells and in groundwater. Funding is for free pesticide testing of private wells in areas where groundwater may be at risk for elevated pesticide concentrations. Testing focuses on pesticides that have been detected at concentrations near or above the drinking water standard including the breakdown chemicals of the herbicide cyanazine which is no longer used.
- 4) The MDA is working with partners at the Rosholt Research Farm near Westport, Minnesota to develop guidance and outreach on irrigation and nitrogen best management practices and cover crops, and the associated water quality impacts on irrigated, sandy soils.
- 5) MDA is actively involved in many Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan implementation activities (using Clean Water Funding) including; support for: promotion, demonstration, and adoption of best management practices (BMPs) for nitrogen fertilizer and to promote vegetative cover in vulnerable areas; staffing at Minnesota Extension to educate on and promote fertilizer BMPs; support for conducting local advisory teams to work with farmers and crop advisors to reduce nitrate in areas with elevated nitrate in groundwater; conducting computer modeling to evaluate the impacts of specific agricultural and land management practices in local areas; and, support for demonstration projects.
- 6) The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) is a voluntary program that supports the implementation of conservation practices on a field by field, whole farm basis. Through its process of identifying and mitigating agricultural risks to water quality, the MAWQCP delivers on-farm conservation that helps protect and restore Minnesota's lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater. The MAWQCP is a national demonstration project that is operated as a public-private partnership between the State of Minnesota, the United States Department of Agriculture, Minnesota's 88 soil and water conservation districts and industry

leaders, including Land 'Lakes, Inc., and Hormel. Farmers and landowners who mitigate all risks to water quality on their operation are certified.

Goal 2: Manage landscapes to protect and improve water quality.

1. MDA is working with Mower SWCD in SE MN and Pipestone and Rock SWCDs in SW MN to pilot on-farm cover crop trials. Farmers work with their agronomist to plant cover crops on part of their field and compare with non-cover cropped areas. The SWCDs work with the farmers and agronomist to do in-field soil health measures.
2. The Minnesota Nutrient Management Initiative (NMI) was developed by MDA to assist farmers and crop advisers in evaluating alternative nutrient management practices on their own fields. Participating farmers can work with a crop adviser to set up Field Trials or Advanced Rate Trials on their own farms. After submitting crop management information and completing trial harvest, farmers and crop advisers are reimbursed for their time and will receive a summary of the results of their trials.
3. BWSR is partnering with the Minnesota Office for Soil Health, MDA, and a broad range of stakeholders on a Soil Health Action Plan, funded by the McKnight Foundation (noted in slide deck). BWSR and MDA are coordinating their efforts on this plan and MDA's legislatively directed "healthy soil management plan" (see slides).
4. The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program and the McKnight Foundation have launched the Climate Smart Farms Project to deliver individualized service to producers for climate adaptation and mitigation management. Annual payments of \$1,000 provide MAWQCP-certified producers support as they work with local representatives to explore and prepare for evolving climate marketplaces and public programs. The MAWQCP Climate Smart Farm Endorsement serves to identify the climate benefits within farm production systems and enables producers to explore additional actions unique and site-specific to their operations.
5. MDA administers in excess of \$29M in AgBMP loans used for the implementation of any practice that reduces or mitigates the effects of water pollution. The purpose is to encourage agricultural best management practices and other practices that prevent or reduce runoff from feedlots, farm fields and for other pollution problems identified by the county in local water plans. Funding can also be used to replace or treat contaminated wells. The program is administered by local governments and local loaning institutions and has extremely low administration costs.
6. The Forever Green Initiative develops new perennial and winter annual crops and associated cropping systems that preserve and enhance water quality and supports the development of new supply chains that provide profitable markets for these crops. Forever Green activities are critical to increasing vegetative cover in Minnesota and address many of the strategies outlined in in the Clean Water Council's Strategic Plan and State Water Plan.
7. BWSR has established a Soil Health Grant with \$3.5 M from the Clean Water Fund to enhance the adoption of cover crops and other soil health practices in areas where there are direct benefits to public water supplies. Seven applications were funded during the first grant application period; the additional funds are being made available as part of the CWF

Competitive Grants RFP (see slides). An additional soil health appropriation of \$1.3 M from the General Fund will be allocated to all Soil and Water Conservation Districts as a base cost-share (noncompetitive) grant.

Goal 3: Manage built environments and infrastructure for greater resiliency.

1. MDA is requesting Clean Water Funding to expand the existing state weather station and soil temperature network to provide accurate local weather data across the farming areas of the Minnesota. Accurate and timely weather data will help farmers optimize the timing of irrigation, fertilizer and pesticide applications, and other inputs; reduce pesticide drift which can impact water quality; and help reduce the risk from adopting new environmentally friendly practices to promote soil health and vegetative cover. This will result in improved surface water and groundwater quality. Other beneficial uses of the data include reducing pesticide drift to protect pollinators and use of precipitation data by the National Weather Service and municipalities to better predict flood conditions.
2. UMN Department of Soil, Water, and Climate and the UMN Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership submitted their Agricultural Weather Study Interim Report to the MN Department of Commerce in June 2022. The report is available at <https://government-relations.umn.edu/2022-agricultural-weather-study> The functional interactive data tool is anticipated to be completed and available through a public portal – and training events conducted – by 10/31/2023.
3. The MPCA will continue to seek additional funding to provide local governments and Tribal Nations funding for planning and implementing projects that help them adapt to more frequent extreme rainfall events, warming temperatures, and other climate change impacts.
4. MDH and Minnesota Rural Water Association have a workgroup to support small communities with asset management. The workgroup updated the asset management tool used with communities to incorporate source water protection needs and climate change risks. Including source water protection and climate change in asset management can make water systems more resilient to future needs and can create opportunities for potential funding sources. The updated asset management tool was used for the first time with a community in June.
5. DPS-Homeland Security and Emergency Management on behalf of the city of Duluth has applied to FEMA's post-disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to provide a backup generator to the Lakewood Water Treatment Plant. The installation of a generator with multiple feeder connections and historically suitable new pump house will ensure a reliable source of drinking water to the over 105,000 residents, businesses, industry, and visitors to Duluth and surrounding areas. The project is in final Environmental and Historic review at FEMA and once approved the \$7.8m project will be constructed at a 90% federal and 10% local cost share.
6. The DNR is focusing efforts in three different areas of the [Geomorphic Approach](#). 1) Education and Awareness, including continued technical assistance to agencies, LGU's and communities throughout Minnesota on improving safety and resiliency of road projects. 2) Research,

including a new collaboration and LCCMR proposal with MNDNR and UM-SAFL to evaluate benefits 3) Planning, with continued development and improvements in an adaptive management approach.

7. MnDOT is investing in staff to support MnDOT's commitment to resilience. Two new positions embedded in function areas have been created: a hydraulic resilience engineer and a green infrastructure specialist. These positions will work on further integration of resilience in hydraulic design and erosion and stormwater management. Multimodal Planning & Program Management and Sustainability & Public Health is a newly created division that combines two previously separate divisions. This will give the agency closer coordination of expertise and resources in these areas.
8. MnDOT is sponsoring research related to climate change impacts and resilience. Results from this research will be used by the agency to develop strategies to manage climate related risk to transportation infrastructure. MnDOT research efforts includes a 9-state regional USGS pooled fund study on potential nonstationary of stream gage data which is used to design bridges and large culverts, a U of MN project on climate change adaption of urban stormwater infrastructure using hydraulic models from 3 cities, Minneapolis, Rochester and Duluth, and a pilot study to apply an extreme flood vulnerability analysis to MnDOT bridges and culverts in Dodge County. Information about MnDOT climate resilience research is available on the MnDOT sustainability webpage. <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/sustainability/climate-resilience.html>
9. MnDOT is developing Climate Resilience Performance Measures that will be used to determine if the MnDOT multi-modal system is becoming more or less resilient to climate change. Measures being considered are in three categories: adaption and natural environment, asset condition and vulnerability, and climate or extreme weather impacts. Plans are to track measures and ultimately assist in program planning, project prioritization and selection. Examples of proposed measures include the percent of seeding using native vegetation, percent of highway culverts in poor or very poor condition, and dollars spent on flooding and washouts. Climate resilience performance measures will support MnDOT's resilience improvement plan and unlock access to new federal funds, such as the PROTECT program, which can be used to improve transportation resilience.
10. The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program in partnership with UofM Extension created an Irrigation Water Management Endorsement. Irrigation impacts not only the quantity but also the quality of Minnesota's water and, therefore, good irrigation practices are essential for protecting the State's water resources. The Irrigation Endorsement recognizes MAWQCP Certified producers who complete the Minnesota Irrigator Program, a comprehensive 2-day course offered by the University of Minnesota. The program educates producers about irrigation efficiency and how to limit the impact of irrigation on surface and groundwater resources. After completing the course, endorsed participants commitment to maintaining Irrigation Water Management on their MAWQCP Certified operation.

Goal 4: Manage landscapes to hold water and reduce runoff.

1. MPCA has initiated a project in Minnesota River Basin to identify best types of water storage opportunities, how to map where storage can occur in priority subwatersheds and model the effects of water storage on river flows. Results to be used for guidance to local watersheds.
2. BWSR has awarded funding to three projects under a new Water Quality and Storage Pilot Grant Program, with funding provided by the Legislature in 2021. The program has been designed to prioritize projects in the Minnesota River and Lower Mississippi River basins, with the goal of supporting practices that demonstrate reduction in flood potential, water quality improvement, and mitigation of climate change impacts. The awarded projects are located in Lyon and Le Sueur counties.
3. MDA is a Technical Partner in Discovery Farms, a farmer-led program to protect water by gathering information under real-world conditions and to provide practical, credible, site-specific information to support better farm management. Partners install and maintain equipment to measure sediment, nitrogen and phosphorus loss that occurs on farm fields. Information from this program generates a better understanding of the relationship between agricultural land management and water quality.
4. In June 2022, BWSR received an ENTRF grant from LCCMR to develop a strategic framework to guide local water storage implementation. The framework will use existing data, local stakeholder input, be scalable, and emphasize multi-benefit water storage (water quality, flooding, habitat). A science-based, systematic approach that local governments and citizens can use to evaluate water storage opportunities is essential to improving watershed conditions. There currently is no comprehensive approach to prioritize, identify, and assess water storage projects and their ability to achieve multiple benefits, including water quality and habitat improvement, flood damage reduction, and increased landscape resiliency to climate change.

The framework will include tools to create and evaluate potential water storage datasets along with education materials, workbooks, and step-by-step instructions that local planners can use to engage landowners and measure progress toward achieving multipurpose watershed goals.
5. In March of 2022, a two-day interagency hydrology workshop was held online for regional and field staff and managers from nine state and federal agencies who participate directly in or provide technical support to local watershed planning and implementation. Over 200 people attended each day of the event. Organized by BWSR, DNR, MDA, MDH, and MPCA, the workshop was designed to help staff gain a greater understanding of the needs and challenges of improving hydrology, provide a common foundation of approaches and tools to amplify the importance of hydrology in local planning, and enhance interagency coordination and alignment when helping local planning groups address hydrology.
6. BWSR, MDA, MPCA and other agencies, under the direction of the Minnesota Climate Subcabinet, developed a white paper, "[Water Storage: A Planning and Decision Framework](#)," as a resource for local governments considering water storage projects under the pilot grant program (see slides) or as part of their watershed planning efforts. The paper presents a process and decision support framework that watershed partners can use to identify and prioritize water storage options/potential across the landscape to meet their goals. The step-by-step

approach can be an effective way to help users evaluate a variety of storage strategies to meet local and regional needs. The storage strategies selected will differ depending on the issue or problem to be solved.

7. BWSR One Watershed One Plan Program (1W1P) Update. BWSR established plan content requirements in 2016 for comprehensive watershed management plans developed through 1W1P, which require that plans establish water storage goals and standards for water storage, retention, and infiltration. As of August 2022, 54 watersheds are participating with plans approved or in process of plan development ([One Watershed, One Plan Participating Watersheds | MN Board of Water, Soil Resources \(state.mn.us\)](#)). BWSR has compiled an inventory of the water storage goals identified in completed and approved plans.
8. The Drainage Work Group and Drainage Management Team are looking for opportunities to provide a more robust and systematic set of standards for design and review of drainage system improvements and to improve public notification of such projects. Efforts are being made to find ways to meet drainage needs without systemwide upgrades, such as adding storage to the landscape or promoting good soil health practices. However, there is currently not sufficient funding to see real change. If we can find a way to quantify the water quality or health benefits of the storage or soil health practices additional funding sources may be available.
9. DNR is working with the Drainage Management Team and Drainage Work Group to incorporate early coordination opportunities where the Drainage Statute (Chapter 103E) supports it. By adopting a consistent and more thorough approach, the DNR believes everyone will be better served and delays and confusion later in the drainage projects will be reduced. This engagement will also create more alignment with comprehensive watershed planning efforts under the One Watershed One Plan program.

Goal 5: Promote resiliency in quality of life.

1. MDH presented the beach monitoring initiative to CWC during the agency funding presentations. This proposal may be included in the CWC's recommendations to the Governor and Legislature for funding in the FY24-25 biennium.
2. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) are teaming up to offer conferences on Suicide Prevention for Rural Faith Leaders in Bemidji on September 27, 2022, and in Mankato on September 29, 2022.
3. The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program provides Farm Business Management Program scholarships to water quality certified producers to learn business management strategies. The Minnesota Farm Business Management Program (FBM) is a one-on-one program to provide education to farm owners and operators on farm financial performance—a direct compliment to MAWQCP providing one-on-one education in farm conservation performance. The program focuses on using quality records and sound business decisions with tools such as the FINBIN Farm Financial Database.
4. The DNR Lake Superior Area Fisheries Office has been working to better understand the population dynamics of native Brook Trout in Minnesota's Lake Superior Basin. The DNR is

aware of Brook Trout in tributaries to Lake Superior and that there are (potentially very large 20" +) Brook Trout in Lake Superior called Coaster Brook Trout whose populations have declined tremendously through time. It is unknown whether the Brook Trout in Lake Superior are produced in Lake Superior, produced above-barriers in MN tributaries, or whether they are produced in other jurisdictions. An initial investigation into Brook Trout genetics confirmed stream specific distinct genetic populations above-barriers in MN tributaries and Coaster Brook Trout below-barriers and in Lake Superior could be traced back to these above-barrier populations.

5. The DNR is conducting an extensive investigation and genetic cataloguing of North Shore Brook Trout populations that was recently funded through USEPA (\$30k for collecting genetic samples) and MNDNR (\$90k for genetic analysis). This more thorough investigation will provide the detailed information DNR needs to know what watersheds are producing Coaster Brook Trout in Lake Superior and then we will work on cold-water seep and spring identification and protection strategies and overall improve climate change resilience strategies in these watersheds.
6. The DNR Finland Area Fisheries Office has been actively partnering with local, State, and Federal partners to execute their climate change resilience plan which in part includes riparian forest restoration and replacing culverts that currently act as barriers to fish migration.
7. The "Roadmap to Resilience" concept is a partner-driven process to assess climate and development related impacts at the HUC 10/12 scale. For DNR, the primary goal is to enhance the long-term resilience of important cold water Brook Trout watersheds. DNR secured a GLRI grant in 2021 to complete an assessment for the Tischer Creek watershed. All relevant partners have been convened and the process will be completed by the fall of 2023. A similar process is being led by the Soil and Water Conservation District on Amity Creek, the MNDNR and City of Duluth on Buckingham Creek and a conglomerate of partners on Keene Creek. The Keene Creek effort is being augmented by support from the soon to be completed One Watershed One Plan for the St. Louis River.
8. The DNR Parks and Trails are designing and developing water access sites to be more resilient to greater rainfall and wind events. Since 2020 ten sites have been redeveloped with improved stormwater systems and shoreline buffers. A breakwater water on Lake Superior in Grand Marias was also redeveloped.
9. Since 2020, DNR Parks and Trails has had several closures of various facilities due to storm damage, fires, or flooding. Examples include several fishing piers damaged this spring when strong winds pushed them onto shore, access sites and trail closed when the Greenwood wildfire burned August 2021, and several sites closed for storm damage including trees down or sidewalks washed out.
10. Since 2015, DNR Parks and Trails has been creating "clean in, clean out" areas at public water access sites to give boaters a safe place to clean and drain their watercraft to prevent the spread of invasive species. Watercraft Inspectors continue to be available at many waterbodies to educate boaters on the proper steps to take and what to look for. The new strategies such a vacuum cleaning stations, tool stations and social marketing strategies are also helping create awareness and prevent the spread.

Lake Superior Updates

1. Minnesota DNR's [St. Louis River Restoration Initiative](#) recently restored 230 acres of coastal marsh habitat (Kingsbury Bay, Grassy Point) and 8 acres of critical habitat for threatened and endangered birds (Interstate Island). These projects restore habitat lost due to historic impacts and will contribute to delisting the St. Louis River as a Great Lakes Area of Concern.
2. There are three One Watershed One Plan planning areas that encompass the drainage to Lake Superior: the [Lake Superior North One Watershed One Plan](#) was a pilot watershed for watershed-based comprehensive local water management and will be undergoing a five-year review and update in 2022. The [Nemadji Watershed One Water One Plan](#) was completed in 2020 and includes an overarching goal for water storage, which will be achieved through restoring wetlands and floodplains. The [Draft St. Louis River Watershed One Watershed One Plan](#) is currently available for public comments until October 26, 2022. The project area is divided into five planning areas to better reflect the diversity of issues and uniqueness found throughout the plan area.
3. The Duluth Beaches TMDLs were completed in 2022 for five beaches impaired due to bacteria levels. The beaches are located within the [Duluth Urban Area Watershed](#) . The TMDLs (and WRAPS) documents provide the building blocks of data and information from which projects and activities can be implemented.
4. The City of Duluth has completed a [Climate Action Work Plan](#) that “identifies targeted strategies for decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and for becoming more resilient in preparation for a changing climate.” In addition, the City of Duluth and St. Louis County have jointly developed the [Duluth Coastal Infrastructure Resiliency Project](#) to restore past damage to infrastructure and improve resilience for future hazards.
5. The MPCA awarded grants to Cloquet and Duluth to prepare their infrastructure for extreme weather caused by climate change: the City of Cloquet will use the \$106,000 grant to update and expand their comprehensive stormwater master plan. The City of Duluth will use the \$100,000 grant to create a stormwater resiliency plan and to conduct an assessment to identify infrastructure vulnerabilities. See: [MPCA news release](#) .

Clean Water Fund Trajectory for FY24-25



Paul Gardner, Administrator

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September 21, 2022 MN Environmental Quality Board





- State Advisory Council created in 2006 to “advise on the administration and implementation of” the **Clean Water Legacy Act**.
- Every two years, recommends how to spend the **Clean Water Fund**

Voting members (17)

- Counties (2) (Metro, Greater MN)
- Townships (1)
- Municipalities (2)
- Farm organizations (2)
- Environmental organizations (2)
- Tribal government (1)
- Business (2)
- Fishing organizations (1)
- Hunting organizations (1)
- Lakes/Streams nonprofits (1)
- Watershed districts (1)
- Soil & Water Conservation Districts (1)

Plus 6 agencies + U of M + 4 legislators (non-voting)



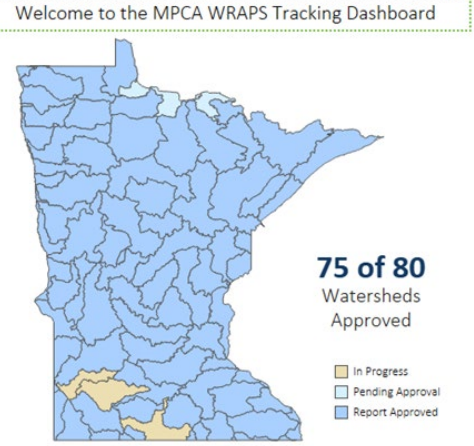
Clean Water Fund (1/3 of Legacy Amendment)

- 25 years; runs out in 2034
- ~\$1.4 billion appropriated since 2009 for clean water; ~\$3 billion by 2034
- “May be spent only to protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams, to protect groundwater from degradation, and to protect drinking water sources.”



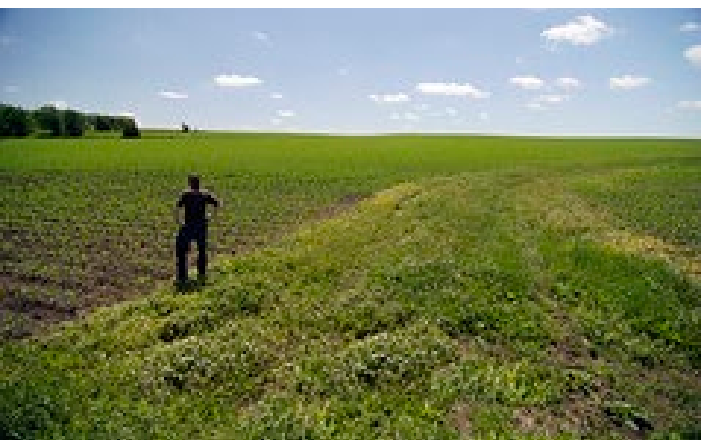
Permitted Purposes

- Constitutional Drinking Water Requirement
 “at least five percent of the clean water fund must be spent only to protect drinking water sources” –MN Constitution, Article XI, Sec. 15
- Testing waters, identifying impaired waters, establishing TMDLs, implementing restoration plans, and evaluation
- Prevent surface water from being impaired (“protection strategies”)
- Wastewater and stormwater grants and loans
- Prevent degradation of groundwater
- Support for agencies to do the above, including enhanced compliance and enforcement



Watershed Approach

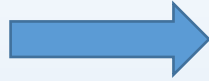
- **Test it & find source of problem** (Monitoring, assessment & characterization)
- **Make a plan to fix it** (Watershed Restoration & Protection Strategies- WRAPS; One Watershed One Plan)
- **Train people how to fix it or persuade landowners to act** (Technical assistance)
- **Set aside land where feasible** (Protection strategies)
- **“Restore” when necessary** (Restoration and mitigation strategies)
- **Measure**



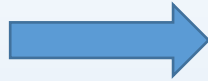
DO THESE PROJECTS



By YEAR



AND YOU GET THESE REDUCTIONS

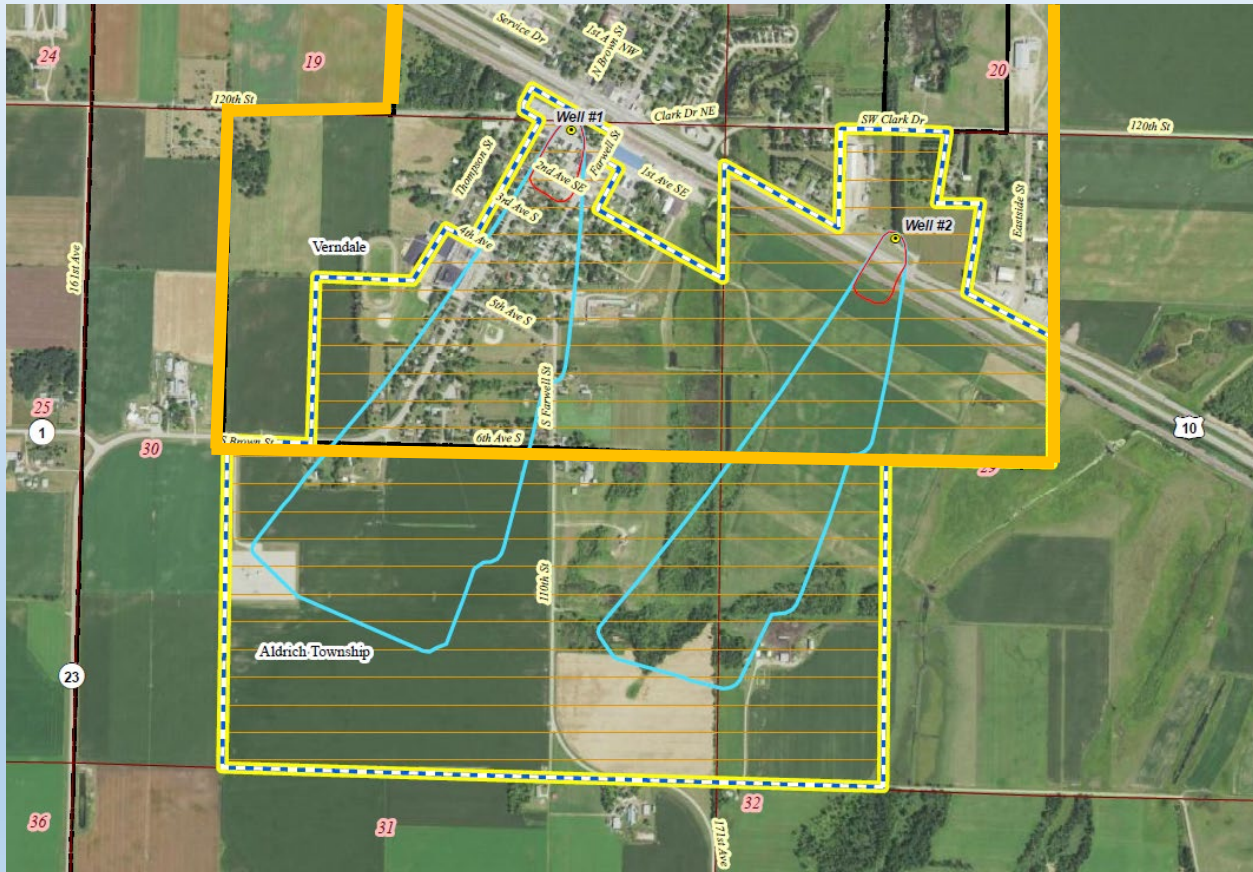


AND IT WILL COST

Drainage	Treatment Group Type & Number of BMPs	Cost	Issue	Unit	Existing Conditions	Quantitative Measurable Goal				PTMApp Scenario Reduction	5 year Load Reduction Goal	10 year Load Reduction Goal	10 yr. Progress towards Measurable Goal (%)
						Metric	Amount (%)*	Target Load Reduction	Year				
Drainage to Mississippi River	Storage (244) Filtration (78) Infiltration (3) Source Reduction (812)	\$6,437,605	Sediment	tons/yr	116,416	Annual Load (mass/yr.)	45	52,387	2025	14,488	7,244	14,488	28
			Nutrients: Total Nitrogen	lbs/yr	10,848	Annual Load (mass/yr.)	45	4,882	2040	112	56	112	2
			Nutrients: Total Phosphorus	lbs/yr	134	Annual Load (mass/yr.)	45	60	2025	12	6	12	20
			Excess Runoff: 2 Year	acre feet	71,177	2-Yr. Runoff Volume	25	17,794	2030	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
			Excess Runoff: 10 Year	acre feet	167,868	2-Yr. Runoff Volume	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Drainage to Upper Iowa River	Storage (44) Filtration (15) Source Reduction (268)	\$1,410,038	Sediment	tons/yr	112,249	Annual Load (mass/yr.)	45	50,512	2025	27,776	13,888	27,776	55
			Nutrients: Total Nitrogen	lbs/yr	32,828	Annual Load (mass/yr.)	45	14,773	2040	3,285	1,642	3,285	22
			Nutrients: Total Phosphorus	lbs/yr	2,024	Annual Load (mass/yr.)	45	911	2025	360	180	360	40
			Excess Runoff: 2 Year	acre feet	7,781	2-Yr. Runoff Volume	25	1,945	2030	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
			Excess Runoff: 10 Year	acre feet	17,036	2-Yr. Runoff Volume	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Excerpt from Root River "One Watershed One Plan"

Verndale (Wadena Co) Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA)

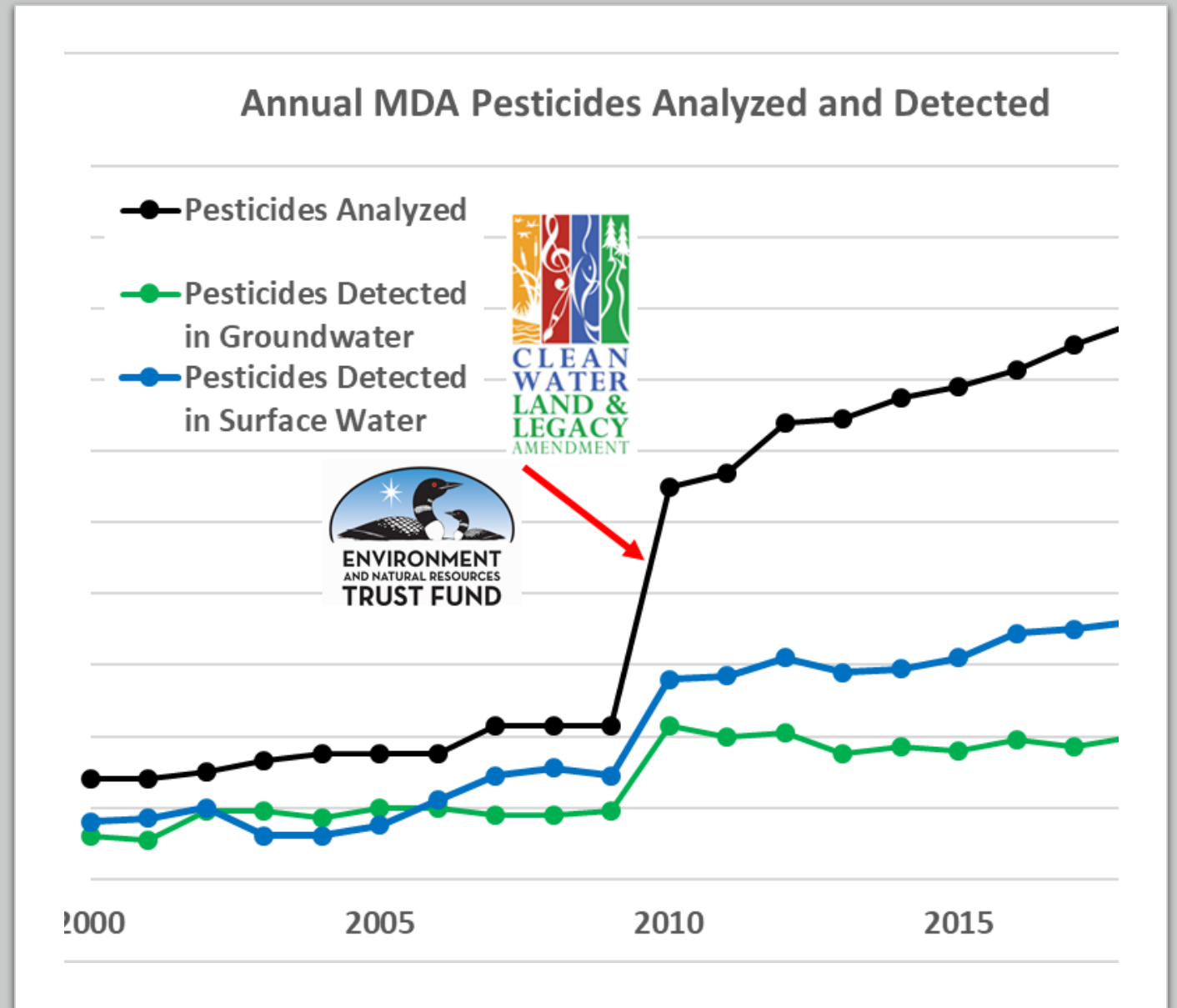


10 year time of travel

-  Emergency Response Area
-  Wellhead Protection Area
-  DWSMA
-  High Risk

Value of the Clean Water Fund

- Fulfill federal requirements (Total Maximum Daily Loads-TMDL)
- Accurate data supports more precise permitting requirements
- More expertise
- Enhanced compliance
- Protect waters that are of high quality before there is a problem



Value of the Clean Water Fund

- More projects become “shovel-ready” more quickly, get more state and federal funds than other states
 - Great Lakes Restoration Initiative
 - Tech assistance to farmers
 - Permanent conservation easements—CREP
 - Voyageurs National Park
- Every \$1 in CWF leverages >\$1



Big Goals from Strategic Plan

- Protect & restore 200,000 priority acres in Mississippi Headwaters Basin
- Protect 400,000 acres surrounding 900+ wellheads
- Enroll 6.5 million acres of farmland in MN Ag Water Quality Certification program
- Conserve 150 million gallons/yr of metro groundwater
- 80% septic system compliance



Highlights of FY24- 25 DRAFT Recommendations

Expand What Works for Bigger Impact

- More “shovel-ready” projects
- 50% increase for perennials
- More chloride reduction grants
- More low-income grants to replace septic systems
- Increased water storage
- More farm acreage w/soil health

Highlights of FY24-25 DRAFT Recommendations

Increase Capacity to Assess Threats to Groundwater, Drinking Water, and Aquatic Life

- Free well testing for five contaminants for 10% of MN annually for ten years
- Additional PFAS monitoring/assessment
- Culvert cost-share
- Mussel restoration
- Leverage fed Great Lakes \$\$
- Statewide beach closing web site

Thank you!



Memo

Date: September 9, 2022

To: Members of the Environmental Quality Board

From: Faith Krogstad, EQB Engagement and Communications Director

RE: Minnesota Environmental Policy Act anniversary celebration planning

The year 2023 will mark the fiftieth anniversary of a landmark environmental protection law, the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). The purpose of MEPA is:

- (1) to declare a state policy that will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between human beings and their environment;
- (2) to promote efforts that will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of human beings; and
- (3) to enrich the understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the state and to the nation. [Minn. Stat. 116D.01]

MEPA states that it is the policy of state government “to use all practicable means and measures ... to create and maintain conditions under which human beings and nature can exist in productive harmony, and fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of the state's people” [Minn. Stat. 116D.02].

This legislation established the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) and state-level environmental review, and provided EQB with the authority to adopt rules to implement the policy. Using this authority, the board created and oversees, the state Environmental Review Program.

To mark this anniversary, the EQB has an opportunity to reflect on its history and the changes in Minnesota’s environmental quality over the last fifty years. EQB can also look ahead to the next fifty years and beyond as Minnesota faces the current and future effects of a warming climate and other environmental concerns that threaten human health, land, water, air, and wildlife. To secure Minnesota’s environment quality for current and future generations, what is needed now?

EQB staff members are collecting and generating ideas for marking this anniversary. **At the September board meeting, EQB staff are seeking ideas and guidance from the board to inform the project intentions and scope.**

Intentions of the project (draft)

- To celebrate successes in environmental protection over the last 50 years
- Increase understanding of the history of environmental quality in Minnesota since MEPA passed
- Increase awareness about the current state of Minnesota’s environmental quality, as well as future projections, and identify challenges and opportunities for improvement
- Highlight existing disparities in environmental quality and the history and systems that created them
- Engage Minnesotans in a public, multi-sector conversation about strategy and actions to best protect environmental quality for future generations
- Document ideas collected throughout 2023 and use them to inform EQB’s vision and strategy for environmental protection in Minnesota

Brainstorming ideas for the celebration

At the September meeting, EQB staff will request ideas for the MEPA celebration from the board. One area of inquiry that EQB staff have been following is considering ways to integrate the MEPA anniversary celebration into existing fiscal year 2022-2023 work plan activities to make the best use of staff capacity. Many of these activities are interagency in nature, and typically supported by staff from EQB member agencies. For brainstorming purposes, the following are examples of existing work plan activities or programs that could be tied into the MEPA celebration project. Please note, this is not an exhaustive list; it is meant as a starting point for brainstorming.

Figure 1. Opportunities to align with current work plan activities

Environment and Energy Report Card	Environmental Congress	Climate Action Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status and trends for air, land, water, energy, and climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convening Minnesotans across sectors for learning and dialogue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing support of climate engagement and progress reporting • Anniversary of release in Sept 2023

Staff welcome other ideas for celebrating the anniversary of MEPA. Ideas raised thus far include implementing a communications campaign to raise awareness about Minnesota’s environmental protections and environmental quality. Many of these would require additional support from EQB member agencies.

Next steps

EQB staff will use the results of the September board discussion, along with consultation with partners and interagency colleagues, to guide the continued development of a draft project charter and other project management documents.

EQB staff are seeking board support to convene a steering team to guide the design and development of this project. Additionally, EQB staff are seeking member agency support in convening an interagency implementation team to carry out project activities. The composition of these teams will depend on the direction of this project.