

Spring 2022 - University of Minnesota Response to SF 2330 / HF2193

The University of Minnesota is honored to be asked by the Minnesota Legislature to develop a scope of work, timeline, and budget for a plan to promote and protect clean water in Minnesota for the next 50 years as described in SF 2330 / HF2193. We have the relevant expertise to pursue and deliver a state-wide water assessment, and this expertise is distributed across several colleges, institutes, and campuses.

Expertise at the UMN

As a land grant research institution, the University of Minnesota, through the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR), is the right partner for the Minnesota Legislature to engage. The Water Council is not a formal University unit with staff and a budget. It is a university-wide collection of experts and water-related units. It is chartered by the OVPR as a forum to bring together representatives of natural scientists, engineers, social scientists and economists working on various aspects of water. Because of this intellectual breadth, the Water Council is an appropriate body to identify relevant expertise for this assessment and to coordinate a University response to this legislative request.

Also through the OVPR, the University maintains the Strategic Partnerships and Research Collaborative, SPARC. This entity has specific project scoping and management skills across the University research enterprise and will be employed to provide these coordination services to this effort.

Background on the Water Council and Water Network

The Water Council (<https://water.umn.edu/>) comprises 17 members drawn from key units with water expertise across the University (roster below). Founded by the OVPR, The U of M Water Council serves the University and the State of Minnesota by 1) promoting and supporting the strategic development of water research and education; 2) adding value and bringing resources to the University and State around water issues, 3) coordinate across the University's water assets, and 4) connecting with people about water, water research, and water education.

As part of these duties, the U of M Water Council manages and coordinates the U of M Water Network, a coalition of faculty, researchers, students and staff working together to advance water-related research for a sustainable future. The Water Network currently has over 230 members from across the U of M system with expertise in hydrology, aquatic ecology, water management and treatment, and water policy, among other areas. A recent inventory by the Water Council determined that 272 individuals are active in water-related research at the UMN, representing 9,337 unique publications as of 2019. The full report of this expertise can be found at <https://stateofwater.d.umn.edu/about/water-inventory>, and the current roster of Water Network members can be found at <https://stateofwater.d.umn.edu/members>.

Background on the Strategic Partnerships and Research Collaborative

The Strategic Partnerships and Research Collaborative (SPARC) is a research and innovation hub based at the University of Minnesota. SPARC engages researchers and practitioners across disciplines in the US and globally to establish new large-scale programs that catalyze collaboration, innovate for new discoveries, and deliver practical new solutions that address these critical challenges. SPARC promotes and advances partnerships and projects that put our partners, faculty, staff, and students at the forefront of global innovation, impact, and change.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve the State of Minnesota as the state's land grant research institution.

Sincerely,

Andy Erickson – Chair, U of M Water Council

Water Council Membership:

- Andy Erickson – Chair; St. Anthony Falls Laboratory
- Jeffrey Peterson - Past Chair; Water Resources Center
- Rolf Weberg - Chair Elect; Natural Resources Research Institute
- Catherine Bruns; Communication Studies
- Amber Cameron; Office of Public Engagement
- Afton Clarke-Sather; Geography
- Mae Davenport; Department of Forest Resources
- John Downing; Minnesota Sea Grant Program
- Diana Karwan; Forest Resources
- Bonnie Keeler; Humphrey School of Public Affairs
- Melissa Kenney; Institute on the Environment
- David Mulla; Soil, Water, and Climate
- Crystal Ng; Earth and Environmental Science
- Nick Phelps; MN Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center
- Anthony Runkel; Minnesota Geological Survey
- Robert Sterner; Large Lakes Observatory
- Dan Gilchrist; Office of the Vice President for Research
- Lynne Schoen; University of Minnesota Foundation, Corporate and Foundation Relations