

Protecting Minnesota's Waters: Priorities for the 2008 – 2009 Biennium



**A Biennial Report of the Environmental Quality Board
May 2007**

The **Environmental Quality Board** draws together the Governor's Office, five citizens and the heads of nine state agencies in order to develop policy, create long-range plans and review proposed projects that would significantly influence Minnesota's environment and development. *Minnesota Statutes* (see Chapters 103A, 103B, 116C, 116D and 116G) directs the EQB to:

- Ensure compliance with state environmental policy
- Oversee the environmental review process
- Develop the state water plan and coordinate state water activities
- Coordinate environmental agencies and programs
- Study environmental issues
- Convene environmental congresses
- Advise the Governor and the Legislature

Today, the Board staff is housed in the Office of Geographic and Demographic Analysis of the Department of Administration.

Statutory Authority

This document was prepared in response to *Minnesota Statutes*, sections 103A.43 and 103B.151.

The **Clean Water Cabinet** includes commissioners of the departments of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources, and the Pollution Control Agency, the executive directors of the Board of Water and Soil Resources and the Metropolitan Council, and the Governor's director of cabinet affairs. Tim Scherkenbach serves as cabinet director.

Acknowledgements

Protecting Minnesota's Waters: Priorities for the 2008-2009 Biennium was prepared by Princesa VanBuren, EQB water policy planner, and John Wells, EQB strategic planning director, with assistance from the Clean Water Cabinet's Water Resources Leadership Group. Group members include: Agriculture (Greg Buzicky and Paul Burns), Board of Water and Soil Resources (Steve Woods and Doug Thomas), Health (John Linc Stine), Metropolitan Council (Keith Buttleman), Natural Resources (Kent Lokkesmoe and Jim Japs), Pollution Control (Tim Scherkenbach, Lisa Thorvig, and Gaylen Reetz), and Administration (John Wells). Additional contributors included Paul Eger, Jeff Risberg and Dave Weirens. John Wells served as project director.

Upon request, *Protecting Minnesota's Waters: Priorities for the 2008-2009 Biennium* will be made available in alternate format, such as Braille, large print or audio tape. For TTY, contact Minnesota Relay Service at 800-627-3529 and ask for the Environmental Quality Board.

For more information or for paper copies of *Protecting Minnesota's Waters: Priorities for the 2008-2009 Biennium*, contact the Environmental Quality Board at:



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Protecting Minnesota's Waters: Priorities for the 2008-2009 Biennium is available at the Environmental Quality Board's Internet site: www.eqb.state.mn.us.

The cost of preparing the report was \$9,000.

Cover photo <http://www.bridgewatersbandb.com/photos/B&B%20Photos%20%20002.jpg>. Photos inside report by Princesa VanBuren.

Introduction

As Minnesotans, we pride ourselves on our clean waters and abundant natural resources. These provide us with jobs, drive our quality of life, and are the cornerstone of recreation and tourism. However, the demands of an increasing population and expanding industry put the quality and availability of our water resources at risk and challenge us all to respond. A number of examples make the point.

The drought of 2006 reminded Minnesotans just how important water is to their well being and that, while the state is blessed with a wealth of water resources, these resources have limits. Water is scarce or unreliable in parts of the state; elsewhere, signs indicate that use is beginning to overwhelm the resource. The work of the Drought Task Force to coordinate agency responses to existing and potential shortages demonstrates the power of interagency cooperation.

Just like the drought, many other issues illustrate Minnesota's challenges, opportunities and strengths, but also the need to set priorities:

- The upcoming federal Farm Bill offers Minnesota a huge opportunity to make progress in water quality while fostering the health of the farm economy, but state and local authorities need the resources to help put practices on the land.
- The detection of perfluorochemicals in the ground waters of Washington County concerns citizens who need to know if their water is safe to drink, but it also demonstrates the commitment the Department of Health and the Pollution Control Agency have made to find the answers.
- The city of Ramsey faces future water shortages and may not be able to meet demands with ground water alone. A regional advisory committee of state and community leaders, the Northwest Metro Water Supply Group, is considering options for financing a treatment plant that can draw from the Mississippi River.

Each of these highlights the benefits of people working together across boundaries to develop solutions to pressing water issues. Each illustrates what is needed for the state to successfully address a priority issue.

The Charge

Minnesota Statutes, sections 103A.43 and 103B.151, directs the Environmental Quality Board to coordinate state water programs and develop a biennial water policy and priorities report. In furtherance of this mission, a committee of the board – the Clean Water Cabinet – and staff in the state's water agencies have worked to coordinate the Governor's Clean Water Initiative and define state water priorities. The cabinet and board present the 2008-2009 biennial water priorities based on this work. The priorities demonstrate a commitment to protecting the economic, social and ecological value of Minnesota's water resources.

Clean Water Cabinet Vision

As Minnesotans, we expect our waters to be clean and plentiful, both today and long into the future. This requires all Minnesotans to:

- Guard their waters from present and future threats
- Restore waters that are impaired
- Maintain an accurate picture of waters for citizens, managers and policy-makers
- Ensure adequate reserves of safe water to keep Minnesota prosperous and sustain healthy communities

The Partners

Protecting Minnesota's waters is a huge task, one that relies on the knowledge, authorities, partnerships, commitment and resources of state and local governments, the academic community, environmental organizations, agricultural groups, private firms, citizens and others. Each of these players is important and necessary in the effort to protect the state's waters.

The Priorities

The Clean Water Cabinet and Environmental Quality Board identify the following priority areas for the 2008-2009 biennium:

- **Water quality and the Clean Water Legacy Act**
- **Water supply**
- **Wetlands**

Water Quality and the Clean Water Legacy Act

Pollution in Minnesota's lakes, rivers and streams adversely impacts economic development, erodes quality of life and harms ecosystems. "Impaired waters" are lakes and rivers that do not meet water quality standards for one or more pollutants; thus, they are impaired for their designated uses under the federal Clean Water Act. The act requires that states:

- Assess all waters of the state to identify and list impairments
- Conduct total maximum daily load studies of impaired waters in order to set pollutant reduction goals
- Implement corrective measures to meet a TMDL's pollutant reduction goals and restore waters to standards

The 2006 Clean Water Legacy Act launched Minnesota on an accelerated path toward addressing impaired waters. Nearly \$25 million was appropriated in one-time funding to increase monitoring and assessment, and start a number of new TMDL studies and restoration and protection projects. This funding represents an important step forward for Minnesota's impaired waters efforts.

Minnesota currently has 2,250 listed impairments on 1,300 lakes and streams. With only a small percentage of the state's waters assessed for impairments, the MPCA anticipates many more listings in the coming years, which will necessitate a significant increase in TMDLs undertaken and restoration activities implemented.

What is a TMDL?

A TMDL, or total maximum daily load, is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a water body can receive and still meet water quality standards. It also is an allocation of that amount to the pollutant's sources. A TMDL sums the allowable loads of a single pollutant from all contributing point and nonpoint sources. The calculation must include a margin of safety to ensure that the water body can be used for the purposes the state has designated. The calculation must also account for seasonal variation in water quality.¹

Completion of TMDLs has a direct economic impact on Minnesota. The federal Clean Water Act prohibits new or expanded discharges to impaired waters until a TMDL is completed and the discharges are assigned waste load allocations. A 2005 state Appeals Court decision in the case of Maple Lake and Annandale, two Minnesota cities that had been issued a permit to build and jointly operate a new wastewater treatment plant, forced the MPCA to revoke the permit. With their existing plants at capacity, these cities effectively cannot grow until the TMDL study is completed and approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The decision has been appealed to the state Supreme Court; meanwhile, over 100 new or expanding wastewater facilities are affected by this situation.

The Governor recommends an increased appropriation from the General Fund of \$20 million per year for the FY 2008-2009 biennium. This recommended funding will enable continued progress in assessing the quality of lakes, rivers and streams; increase the number of TMDL studies initiated to address impaired waters as required by federal law; and result in the implementation of additional nonpoint and point source protection and restoration practices. Minnesota has a proud legacy of clean, abundant water; it's a critical foundation block in the state's economy and way of life. But even more importantly, Minnesotans want polluted waters restored and the state has embarked on a path to cleaning up its waters.

¹ Adapted from www.epa.gov/owow/tmdl/intro.html#definition

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Why Must Impaired Waters be Addressed?

Besides the need to protect our state's most treasured environmental and recreational resources, Minnesota needs to address impaired waters to allow continued economic development within impaired watersheds. Once a water body is added to the federal impaired waters list, Minnesota has 15 years to complete a TMDL report on each pollutant impairing the water body. Until a TMDL report is completed and approved by the EPA, the federal Clean Water Act restricts any new or expanded discharges of the pollutant of concern that would contribute to the problem, resulting in added expense and time to obtain permits.

Recommendations

Clean water is critical to preserving ecosystem health and quality of life, as well as accommodating and sustaining Minnesota's future economic growth. The Legislature should continue its commitment to advancing the policies enacted in 2006, contained in the Clean

Water Legacy Act (M.S. 114D). This recommendation represents a significant investment in water quality assessment, TMDL development, and nonpoint and point source protection and restoration.

The Clean Water Cabinet and Environmental Quality Board recommend that the Legislature support efforts to:

- Increase the amount of water quality data collected by state, local and federal agencies, as well as citizens
- Direct significant new resources to the development of TMDLs in order to accommodate economic growth and provide the blueprints for effective, focused cleanup of polluted waters
- Provide additional landowner assistance for implementation of specific practices targeted at protection and restoration of waters
- Conduct additional applied research on best management practices effectiveness
- Continue providing technical assistance to small unsewered communities



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Water Supply

In a state known for its lakes and rivers, some find it hard to imagine that water quantity is a topic needing discussion. However, Minnesota's water resources are not evenly distributed across the landscape. In some regions, there isn't enough water to sustain high volume users. In the metropolitan area, the mere density of people strains the resources. For this reason, Minnesota needs to proactively evaluate its water resources and manage them for future growth.

Two specific water supply priorities address these concerns:

- Minneapolis and Saint Paul interconnect
- Sustainable water use statewide

Minneapolis and Saint Paul Interconnect

The drought that Minnesota experienced in 2006 renewed discussions about water supply options and the necessity for planning. This need is heightened in areas of limited water supply or in areas of dense populations and high consumption.

The 2005 Legislature directed the Metropolitan Council to "carry out planning activities addressing the water supply needs of the metropolitan area" (*Minnesota Statutes*, section 473.1565). Specifically, the Council is charged with developing a base of technical information for water supply planning decisions and preparing a metropolitan area master water supply plan. The Legislature also established a water supply advisory committee to assist the Council in its planning activities, and directed the Council to submit regular reports to the Legislature detailing progress.

The Council organized its water supply planning efforts in two phases. The master water supply plan to be completed in late 2008 will reflect the work performed during the two phases. During the first phase, which culminated in a report to the 2007 Legislature, the Council conducted a preliminary assessment of water supply availability, evaluated the decision-making and approval process, and addressed water supply

safety, security and reliability. The Council identified several next steps and recommendations based on the work of the first phase for improving and streamlining the water resource evaluation, planning, decision-making and approval process. Second phase activities will define a process for evaluating water availability early in the decision-making process prior to growth management decisions. The Council also will assess the need for a regional approach to improving safety, security, reliability and efficiency of the region's water supplies.

The master water supply plan will include an assessment of water resource availability and water demand projections based on regional growth forecasts. For areas where potential local water supply limitations exist, the Council, in cooperation with municipalities and regulatory agencies, will identify water supply alternatives. The master water supply plan will also present opportunities for regional involvement in improving the safety, security, reliability and efficiency of the region's water supplies.

Interconnecting the Twin Cities

A majority of metropolitan area communities have at least one emergency connection with a neighboring community (Figure 1). Most of these interconnections occur using relatively small-diameter pipes and are capable only of augmenting supplies, rather than completely replacing them.

The two largest water suppliers in the metropolitan region, the city of Minneapolis Water Works and the St. Paul Regional Water Services, are not interconnected. Some of the suburban communities they serve have interconnections with neighboring utilities. These small connections could supplement supplies for those communities, but could not provide backup supplies to either major system.

Since the 1930s, officials in both cities have sought to connect the two systems to provide ongoing, emergency water to one another should the need arise. Historically, however, the project has lacked interest by both parties

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simultaneously. While both systems are well suited to supplement the needs of the other, they simply lack the facilities to transfer the water.

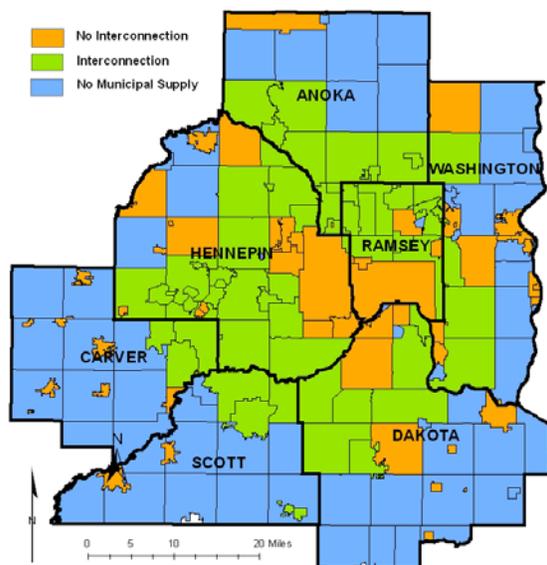


Figure 1. Community emergency water interconnections

Recommendations

Prior to the 2006 legislative session, the Minnesota Department of Health recommended the issuance of a \$10 million state grant to the utilities for construction of an interconnection. The grant would match similar amounts contributed by the two water utilities. The Governor recommended waiting until completion of the Council's report to the 2007 Legislature before making a decision on the matter. The Council reaffirmed the regional benefit of the interconnection during the first phase of water supply planning activities and recommended state funding for the interconnection.

The Clean Water Cabinet and Environmental Quality Board recommend that the Legislature:

- Provide funding for the development of a water interconnect between the cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul
- Continue efforts to ensure water supply reliability and proper water supply safety and security

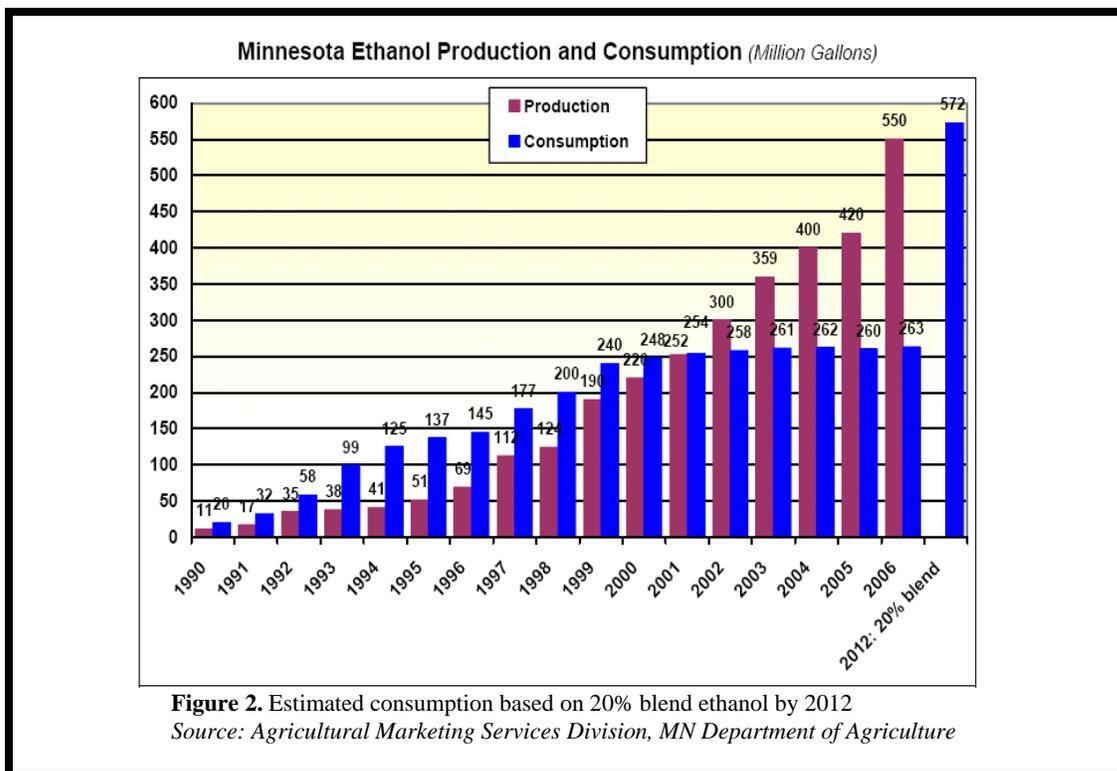
Sustainable Water Use Statewide

The health of Minnesota's freshwater habitats is threatened by physical and chemical changes from many causes, including runoff and water appropriation. A rapidly growing population, increased water consumption rates, emerging water demands, and other factors challenge our ability to maintain adequate water supplies for Minnesota's people and habitats. Between 1995 and 2005, water use grew 50 percent faster than population. Population will grow another 26 percent by 2030. In addition, the emerging issue of ethanol production requires special state attention. Given that the production of 1 gallon of ethanol requires 4-5 gallons of water, increasing ethanol production has significant implications for water supplies. In 2006 Minnesota ethanol production will require about 2.5 billion gallons of water – more than the water used by Washington County in one year. The state must act strategically to ensure sustainable water use to meet the needs of an increasing – and increasingly demanding – population.

In the metropolitan area, water levels in the major water supply aquifers have not been measured regionally in more than 15 years. An effort is underway to collect those measurements in 2008.

Water supply planning is becoming increasingly important to ensure adequate water supplies for current and future demands. Public water suppliers are required to have a DNR approved water supply plan that addresses projected water needs, the adequacy of existing resources, emergency preparedness and conservation. Water supply plans must be updated every 10 years, and the second-generation plans are currently being developed with a specific focus on resource sustainability and monitoring. The DNR is working with communities on long-term water supply planning efforts, but recently staff resources have been diverted to deal with potential impacts of increased water demand for ethanol production. An administration budget initiative has been introduced to help address ethanol issues so that long-term water supply planning efforts can continue.

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Assessing Water Sustainability

In April 2007, the Environmental Quality Board adopted a joint EQB-DNR report, *Use of Minnesota's Renewable Water Resources: Moving toward Sustainability*, summarizing information about the quantity and use of water resources in Minnesota. The study was carried out in accordance with *Minnesota Statutes*, section 103A.43, which directs the two agencies to coordinate a biennial assessment of the availability of water to meet the state's long range needs.

The project findings suggest Minnesota's reputation as "water rich" may be at risk. Counties in the Twin Cities-St. Cloud growth corridor already place significant demands on their water resources, making water supply management a special concern. In the remainder of the state, because water is not evenly distributed, care must be taken by local and state officials in planning to meet new demands.

Determining how much water exists in Minnesota is a challenge, because the state's

water resources have not been fully quantified. Since 1980, the state has supported a county geologic atlas program vital to understanding water resources. However, because of limited funding, only 15 of the state's 87 counties have completed their atlases, and critical hydrogeologic characteristics have not been measured. Thus, the EQB analysis relied on the best science available for estimating water resources on a county scale, with methods focused on the characteristics of system recharge and discharge.

The work looked at water permit information for the period 1995-2005 and estimated consumption trends to the year 2030. The results conclude that one county – Ramsey – appeared to use more water than considered sustainable in the long term, reporting use at 135 percent of renewable levels. The study also concluded that water use in the vast majority of counties was less than 50 percent of renewable levels. In particular, the Greater Minnesota story was less dramatic, with the range from less than 1 percent in seven counties to 46 percent in Wright County.

2030 Net Water Use as a Percent of the Renewable Resource

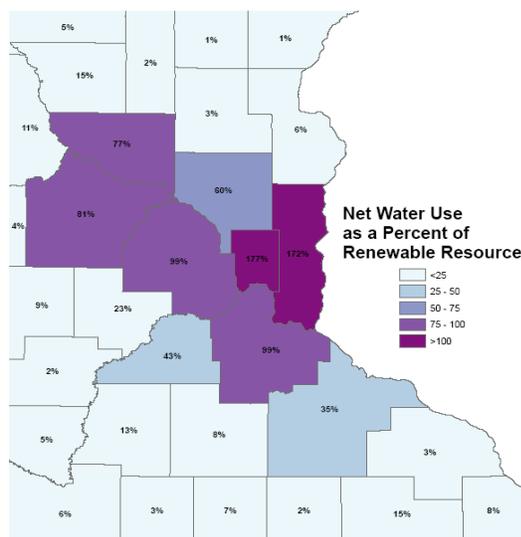


Figure 3. Estimated metropolitan area 2030 water use²

The report calls for better information about Minnesota's water resources, including accelerated research to map and evaluate ground waters and define important connections to surface waters. It also argues for better understanding of how land use activities and water quality may affect future water supplies.

The metropolitan area and adjacent developing areas are overdue for water-level measurements of major aquifers collected on a regional basis. Last done in 1990, these regional water-level measurements provide essential data for water supply analysis and modeling. The U.S. Geological Survey is leading a multi-agency effort to conduct two mass water-level measurements in 2008 of the major water supply aquifers in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The data will be compared to historical regional data and will provide a current picture of water supply conditions in the region's most used aquifers. These measurements are needed at least every 10 years to provide accurate information on the status of aquifers. The agencies involved should plan and commit resources to routinely acquire these data.

² From *Use of Minnesota's Renewable Water Resources: Moving toward Sustainability*, A report of the Environmental Quality Board and Department of Natural Resources, April 2007.

Recommendations

Future economic growth and quality of life in Minnesota hinge on having adequate water supplies to sustain economic growth, maintain a high quality of life, and preserve ecosystem health.

The Clean Water Cabinet and Environmental Quality Board recommend that the Legislature:

- Support research to:
 - Better define the location and characteristics of ground water resources, giving priority to areas subject to ethanol or population demands
 - Understand what volume of water is renewable; that is, how much can be taken for use on a long-term, sustainable basis without drawing down the resource
 - Understand the impacts of drainage or other land use practices on rates of recharge and means to quantify these impacts
 - Understand the impacts of global warming on climate, rates of recharge and water demand
 - Characterize the interactions of surface and ground waters, including the implications of water quality and quantity
 - Quantify the timing, amount and quality of water to better understand ecosystem needs
- Support the evaluation of how public water suppliers integrate sustainability into the second generation of water emergency and conservation plans
- Support completion of mass water-level measurements of the major water supply aquifers in the Twin Cities and associated developing areas in 2008 and once each decade thereafter.
- Use the biennial water availability assessment as a benchmark for what we know or need to know about the allocation of Minnesota's water resources and the policies and priorities that guide allocation decisions, supporting EQB and DNR efforts to enhance the analysis and apply the findings of future editions

Wetlands

Minnesota has approximately 10 million acres of wetlands, half the amount that existed at the beginning of European settlement. The state Wetland Conservation Act was enacted in 1991 to halt these losses. The law has been successful in dramatically slowing losses, but the act's goal of no net loss remains unattained within the scope of regulatory programs. Changes to the existing WCA law and rule should be pursued to reduce wetland losses, improve administrative efficiency and improve data.

In addition to the efforts of the regulatory programs to reduce wetland losses, numerous state and federal conservation programs are actively engaged in restoring wetlands on the landscape. These programs have restored thousands of acres of wetlands throughout the state.

Background

Local units of government – counties, cities, townships, soil and water conservation districts and watershed districts – are primarily responsible for WCA implementation. The Board of Water and Soil Resources administers the program statewide and the DNR enforces it.

The law established a goal of achieving a “no net loss” of wetlands in the state. To work towards this goal, WCA requires anyone proposing to fill, drain or excavate a wetland to first try to avoid disturbing the wetland; second, to try and minimize any impact; and lastly, to replace the wetland acres, functions and values. Certain wetland activities are exempt, allowing projects with minimal impact or projects located on land where certain land uses are present to proceed without regulation.

WCA has been the frequent subject of legislation and has been amended in over half of the years since its enactment in 1991. Wetlands benefits for wildlife habitat, water quality and flood control have been an ongoing focus of attention.

Clean Water Cabinet Wetland Strategies

Minnesota is blessed with an abundance of wetlands. They help support diverse and abundant fish and wildlife populations and play an integral part in protecting water quality, replenishing ground water resources and minimizing flooding. An evolving recognition of wetland values and benefits has led Minnesota away from programs that encourage drainage and filling to those that restore wetlands and regulate impacts. Today the state and its partners are undertaking a number of initiatives to further protect and enhance wetlands.

Vision

We will protect, restore and enhance the values and benefits Minnesotans receive from wetlands, adding to their quantity, quality and biological diversity. We will do this by coordinating spending, policy and partnerships to implement our priority strategies.

Data Limitations

Current data do not adequately allow for determining if Minnesota is or is not achieving a “no net loss” in wetlands. Examining wetland data from public and private activities can provide an approximation of wetland change, but concerns over duplication and incomplete data impede analysis of the extent of compliance with the no net loss policy. To address these issues a group of federal and state agencies have collaborated to develop the Comprehensive Wetland Assessment, Monitoring and Mapping Strategy. This strategy calls for the state and its partners to:

- Develop and implement an integrated, geo-referenced online database for tracking wetland permitting and conservation program activities
- Update the National Wetland Inventory in Minnesota on a regular basis
- Initiate a statewide, random sample survey using remote sensing data to track wetland gain and loss

Of these items, the survey has been implemented using a mix of DNR and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency funding. This project will entail random sample surveying of the state in

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three-year cycles. The first three-year cycle (to be completed in 2008) will develop the base data. Future three-year sampling cycles will build on this base to analyze and identify wetland change. The first data on wetland change will be available in 2012.

Following the August 2005 issuance of the 2001-2003 Minnesota Wetland Report that documented an annual net loss of wetlands of 450 acres under WCA, Governor Pawlenty directed the Clean Water Cabinet to undertake an assessment of the WCA. In this directive, the Governor asked the CWC and BWSR to report to him on how to align policies more closely with the principle of “no net loss” of wetlands. The WCA assessment examined ways to:

- Improve wetland accounting and reporting
- Do more to limit the loss of wetlands by examining the existing WCA exemptions and replacement requirements
- Streamline regulatory efforts through changes to WCA and improved coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The BWSR led the assessment with the participation of more than 35 organizations. Key portions of the law were examined during a process that evaluated WCA data and reporting by local governments, the 10 categories of exempt activities, wetland replacement and administration.

The BWSR and the CWC reviewed the recommended changes to address the priority issues identified by the Governor. The most significant of the 21 recommended changes called for:

- Study of existing exemption data and improve local government reporting
- Amending the Agricultural Activities and Drainage Exemptions to reduce unregulated wetland impacts and improve administrative efficiency
- Amending the de minimis exemption to reduce unregulated wetland impacts

- Amending wetland replacement requirements to increase coordination with federal regulations, improve administrative efficiency and reduce wetland losses

The hope is that recommendations will be implemented via statutory amendments and rule changes. Full implementation of suggested WCA program changes should occur by summer 2009.

The proposed changes to the wetland law will reduce wetland losses, but increase state and local government administrative costs. In addition, current workloads are increasing even without changes to the program. From 2001-2003, local governments report an increased number of landowner contacts. Appeals to BWSR have also increased, as have enforcement activities by DNR conservation officers.

The Governor is recommending additional funding of \$1.12 million in FY2008 and \$1.06 million in FY 2009. This additional funding will increase the capacity of local governments and BWSR to work in partnership to protect wetlands and ensure quality replacement when impacts are unavoidable. This funding will also increase the ability of BWSR to collect and analyze data to measure trends in program effectiveness.

Recommendations

The Clean Water Cabinet and Environmental Quality Board recommend that the Legislature:

- Support changes to the existing Wetland Conservation Act and rule to reduce wetland losses, improve administrative efficiency and improve data; and provide funding for implementation
- Fund activities of the Comprehensive Wetland Assessment, Monitoring and Mapping Strategy

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Summary

Protecting Minnesota's waters is no easy task. Many people and agencies must be involved and much needs to be done to preserve the quality and availability of our waters for fishing, swimming, drinking and economic use. The Clean Water Cabinet and Environmental Quality Board recommend that the state focus efforts in three priority areas over the coming biennium.

Recommendations for the 2008-2009 Biennium

Implement the Clean Water Legacy Act

- Increase the amount of water quality data collected by state, local and federal agencies, as well as citizens
- Direct significant new resources to the development of TMDLs in order to accommodate economic growth and provide the blueprints for effective, focused cleanup of polluted waters
- Provide additional landowner assistance for implementation of specific practices targeted at protection and restoration of waters
- Conduct additional applied research on best management practices effectiveness
- Continue providing technical assistance to small unsewered communities

Safeguard water supplies

- Develop a water supply interconnect between Minneapolis and Saint Paul
- Support completion of mass water-level measurements of the major water supply aquifers in the Twin Cities and associated developing areas in 2008 and once each decade thereafter
- Continue efforts to ensure metropolitan water supply reliability and proper water supply safety and security
- Evaluate how public water suppliers integrate sustainability into the second generation of water emergency and conservation plans

- Support statewide research to, among other projects, better define the location and characteristics of ground water resources, giving priority to areas subject to ethanol or population demands
- Use the biennial water availability assessment as a benchmark for what we know or need to know about the allocation of Minnesota's water resources and the policies and priorities that guide allocation decisions, supporting EQB and DNR efforts to enhance the analysis and apply the findings of future editions

Protect Minnesota's wetlands

- Support changes to the Wetland Conservation Act and rule, and fund their implementation to reduce wetland losses, improve administrative efficiency and improve data
- Implement the Comprehensive Wetland Assessment, Monitoring and Mapping Strategy



“More so than any other state, the quality and quantity of water in Minnesota is central to our way of life. It helps define who we are and what we value.”

Governor Tim Pawlenty, June 23, 2003, St. Cloud, Minnesota

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2005-2007 Accomplishments

Much has been accomplished in our state since the last biennial report, although much more remains. The Clean Water Cabinet and Environmental Quality Board recommended the following priorities for the 2005-2007 biennium:

- Protect core state water activities and meet strategic long range needs
- Make the commitment to restoring impaired waters
- Promote Twin Cities water supply sustainability

In response, Minnesotans took important steps.

For core water activities

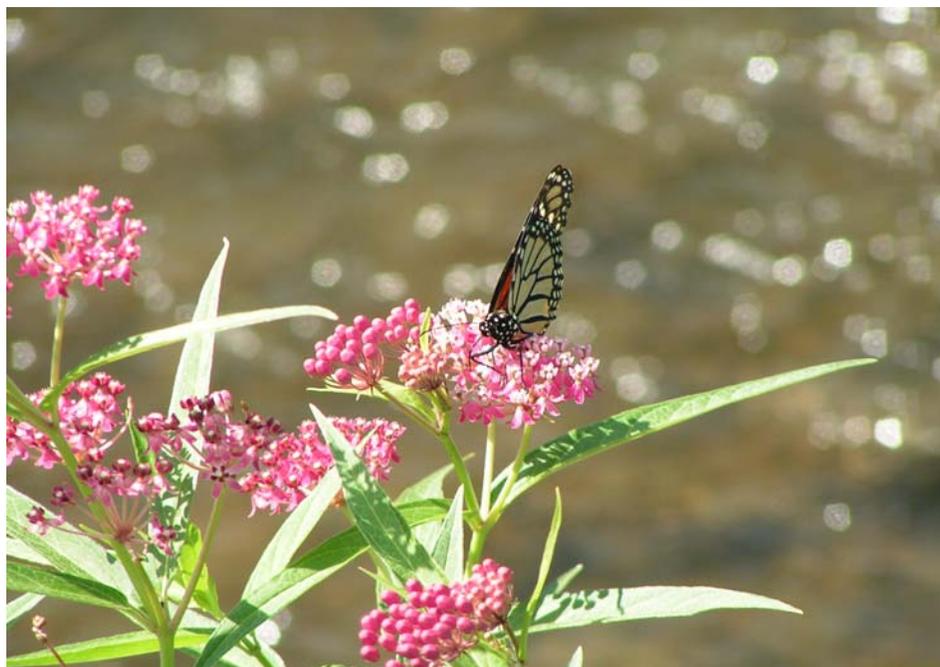
- Evaluated state wetland conservation efforts
- Protected core water functions funded through the General Fund
- Increased drinking water protection fees to fund needed water testing
- Brought citizens into Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund decisions, creating the new Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota's Resources

For impaired waters

- Enacted the Clean Water Legacy Act, providing a new operational framework, tools and first-year start-up funding to protect and restore water quality
- Created the Clean Water Council, a citizen/state advisory group charged with making recommendations on implementation
- Accelerated testing of Minnesota's waters
- Began to develop specific plans (TMDLs) to clean up Minnesota's most contaminated waters
- Targeted additional financial resources to existing state and local programs to improve water quality
- Leveraged additional federal, local and private resources

For water supply sustainability

- Adopted legislation directing Metropolitan Council to create a Metropolitan Water Supply Plan
- Created a Metropolitan Region Water Supply Advisory Committee
- Funded development of a regional water supply master plan
- Began work to understand the issue statewide



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