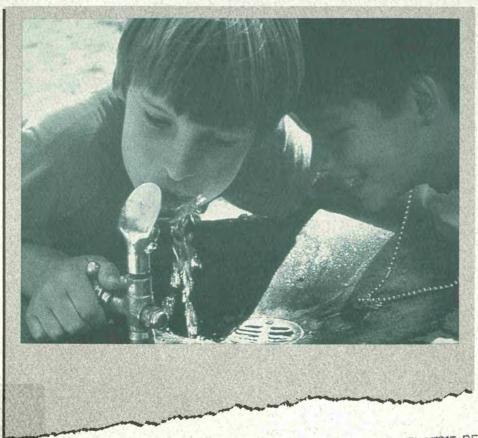
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Protecting Minnesota's Waters

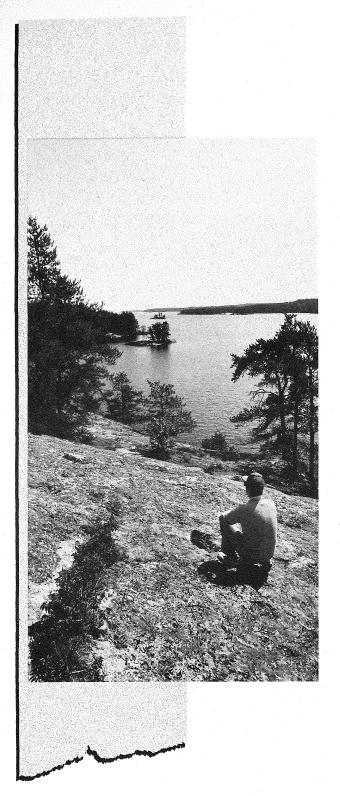
PRIORITIES FOR THE 1989-1991 BIENNIUM



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Forward

The quality and abundance of Minnesota's water resources have often been taken for granted. While Minnesota has led the nation in developing innovative resource protection measures, we are today faced with serious water-related problems that demand our attention.

The past two years have vividly demonstrated that Minnesotans cannot become complacent about water matters. The year 1987 brought a record flood to the Twin Cities. The hot, dry summer of 1988 brought record drought. We have discovered that our ground water is being contaminated by the waste we discard in landfills and by the pesticides and fertilizers we use to produce food and to make our lawns attractive.

The Minnesota Ground Water Protection Strategy and the Strategy for the Wise Use of Pesticides and Nutrients were developed to address these concerns. As cooperative efforts of the Pollution Control Agency, the EQB Water Resources Committee, the EQB Advisory Committee on Ground Water Protection, and others, the strategies chart a responsible course of action for safeguarding Minnesota's waters and the health of its citizens. Carrying out the priority recommendations in these two strategies must be the major state thrust for the 1989-1991 biennium.

Minnesota's high quality of life is dependent on both a clean, diverse environment and a thriving economy. Both goals depend upon the wise use and management of our land and our water resources. We believe that carrying out the actions recommended will ensure the quality and availability of water resources that Minnesotans have rightly come to expect.

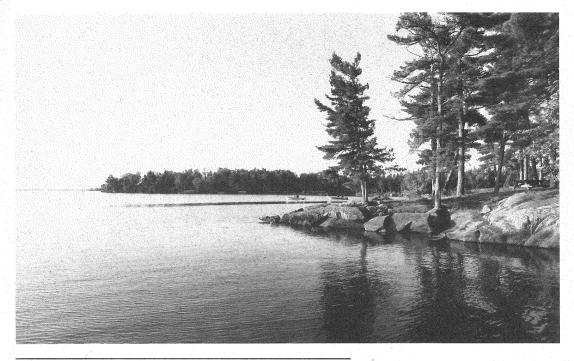
The recommendations summarized in this brochure provide the foundation for the proposed *Comprehensive Water Resources Protection Act of 1989.* It is our hope that these recommendations convey the urgency and necessity of positive legislative action on this important initiative. With this legislation, we feel that the state can continue charting a course leading to a healthy, safe, beautiful environment in the year 2000.

John C. Dinon

John C. Ditmore Chair Environmental Quality Board

Martha C. Brand
Chair

Chair Water Resources Committee



The Water Resources Priority Recommendations

This report summarizes the 1989-91 Water Resources Priority Recommendations report of the Environmental Quality Board (EQB). Recommendations are highlighted that are considered most pressing for legislative action. They respond to the following state goals:

- ♦ Safeguarding the Public Health
- ♦ Enhancing Environmental Quality
- ♦ Fostering Wise Economic Development
- ♦ Improving Governmental Support

Recommendations from the Minnesota Ground Water Protection Strategy and the Strategy for the Wise Use of Pesticides and Nutrients provide the emphasis for the 1989-1991 biennium. These strategies were coordinated by the Water Resources Committee (WRC), with extensive public input. The EQB Advisory Committee on Ground Water Protection was established to provide the EQB and WRC the advice from diverse interests likely to be affected by the strategies.

Addressing the various water-related issues highlighted in this report is ambitious, but necessary. New initiatives are needed, and many other important activities need to be strengthened or continued.

An understandable, governmental framework is in place and needs to be strengthened to work at its best. An ongoing effort to coordinate and communicate between all levels of government and citizens is crucial.

Priority Issues for the 1989-1991 Biennium are:

- ♦ Protect Ground Water
- ♦ Use Pesticides and Nutrients Wisely
- ♦ Control Nonpoint Source Pollution
- ♦ Manage Water Quantity Wisely
- ♦ Improve Coordination and Communication
- ♦ Strengthen Local Water Management
- ♦ Improve Water Information Systems
- ♦ Finance Water Protection

The Environmental
Quality Board
established the EQB
Water Resources
Committee in 1985 to
help coordinate and
guide state water
management activities.

Committee (WRC):

Commissioner of Agriculture

Commissioner of Health

Commissioner of Natural Resources

Commissioner of Pollution Control Agency

Chair of Board of Water & Soil Resources

Representative of the University of Minnesota

EQB Citizen Members: Robert Dunn Martha Brand, WRC Chair

PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERNS

Over 125,000 tons of hazardous wastes are produced annually in Minnesota.

139 hazardous waste disposal sites have been identified for priority clean-up activity.

About 40,000 underground storage tanks are located in Minnesota and many are leaking.

Volatile organics have been found in 8 percent of community water supply wells tested.

Over 100 lake and river segments have fish consumption advisories due to contamination by mercury, PCBs or dioxin.

One or more pesticides have been detected in 39 percent of wells sampled in susceptible areas of the state.

42 percent of 199 private wells tested and 7 percent of 395 public wells tested had nitrate levels exceeding the standard for drinking water.

Priorities For The 1989-91 Biennium

Protect Ground Water

Minnesota's ground water is a vital resource of immeasurable value. Prevention of further contamination must be the cornerstone of Minnesota's ground water protection efforts.

Ground water is an essential resource providing safe drinking water for most Minnesotans. In many parts of the state, however, ground water quality has been impacted by human-induced pollution. The Ground Water Protection Strategy establishes the following directions that the state needs to pursue to protect and manage ground water.

Prevention...preventing contamination is more cost-effective and likely to produce a greater level of success than cleaning up. "No impact" may not be a practical reality now for some types of practices, but it is important that there be continued movement toward reducing the impacts of land use on ground water quality.

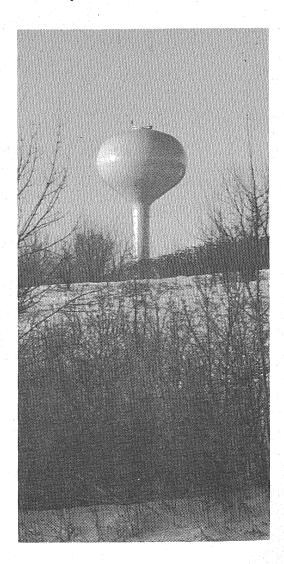
Controlling pollution...pollution sources should be managed to ensure that the ground water is protected and appropriate action is taken to improve ground water quality in areas already impacted.

Developing limits...limits are necessary for situations where contamination has already occurred. These limits should be based on human health and environmental concerns. They would:

1) serve as a consistent upper limit on the allowable impacts from those practices where ground water effects cannot currently be avoided; and 2) serve as a goal for cleanup if contaminated ground water cannot be restored to still cleaner conditions.

Delineating sensitive areas...due to the large degree of geologic diversity

across the state, the sensitivity of ground water to contamination is greater in some areas than in others. This means that some areas need different and stronger measures to protect ground water resources from pollution sources.



Protecting drinking water...although Minnesota has had a Water Well Construction Code since the mid-seventies, it has been neither effectively enforced nor adequately staffed. Improperly located wells; improperly cased wells; wells with casings which have deteriorated over time; and unsealed, abandoned wells are all sources of ground water contamination.

Information and education...an informed and educated public is essential in protecting ground water resources. Ground water protection requires not only the enforcement of regulatory programs but bringing about voluntary changes in individual habits and behavior.

Local governments...some types of ground water contamination sources, such as septic systems, feedlots, and aggregate mines, can be more effectively regulated locally than by the state. State technical and financial support are needed to establish these programs locally.

Research and evaluation...our current state of knowledge about ground water in Minnesota is not adequate. The extent of existing contamination is not well-documented, minor aquifers are not adequately mapped and recharge areas of major aquifers are not fully understood nor clearly delineated. Research is lacking on alternative technologies needed to replace current practices which impact ground water.

Recommendations For Legislative Action

Provide an adequate state framework aimed at preventing contamination of ground water by:

- ♦ Confirming that nondegradation (meaning prevention of further ground water contamination) is a state protection goal;
- Ensuring that pollution sources are controlled and that there is appropriate cleanup;
- Directing the state to develop numerical limits for ground water

- pollutants to protect human health and the environment; and,
- ♦ Providing for delineation of sensitive areas of the state.

Ensure that ground water used for private and public water supplies is adequately protected by:

- ♦ Improving water well management activities by promoting delegation to counties, enacting better enforcement tools, adopting well permit requirements, and instituting wellhead protection efforts;
- Initiating a program to encourage the identification and sealing of priority abandoned wells through the county; and.
- ♦ Requiring identification of wells at the time of property transfer.

Assist efforts to promote ground water education and information dissemination by:

- Supporting state agency efforts to develop and maintain effective information dissemination programs;
- ♦ Supporting efforts to provide educational opportunities for children and adults; and,
- Supporting formation of a University of Minnesota Ground Water Center.

Enhance local government participation in water protection by:

- Establishing grants to local government to develop and implement comprehensive local water plans; and,
- Providing adequate state technical assistance to local governments.

Support ground water resource evaluation, monitoring and research including the following:

- Mapping minor aquifers and delineating recharge areas of major aquifers;
- Developing alternative technologies to replace current practices which degrade ground water; and,
- Documenting extent of existing contamination.

HEALTH RISK NEEDS

Expand health risk assessment activities.

Develop disease and exposure registries to help monitor and manage risks from toxic substances exposure.

Improve water well construction and well protection activities.

Fund research to prevent nonpoint source pollution.

Increase efforts to monitor for pesticides, nutrients, and other pollutants.

Research how to reduce waste and immobilize and detoxify toxic materials.

THE EQB WILL ASSIST GROUND WATER PROTECTION EFFORTS BY:

Coordinating a statewide inter-agency and intergovernmental ground water monitoring plan;

Coordinating agency efforts to evaluate regulatory programs;

Developing events and opportunities for communication and information exchange; and,

Identifying priorities for research.

Over 90 percent of Minnesota's public water supply systems and nearly 75 percent of all Minnesotans get their domestic supplies from ground water. 90 percent of the water appropriated for agricultural irrigation comes from ground water.

Use Pesticides And Nutrients Wisely

Wise use of nutrients and pesticides is essential in order to safeguard public health while ensuring that economic development and environmental protection objectives are met.

The widespread use of pesticides and nutrients poses threats to surface and ground water quality. A Strategy for the Wise Use of Pesticides and Nutrients outlines the actions which should be taken to protect water resources from pesticide and nutrient contamination.

The strategy provides an approach that brings together initiatives for education, research, incentives, and regulation within a policy framework aimed at sustaining the land and water resources. It emphasizes the importance of individuals and their actions in resource protection.

Minnesota has a strong history of environmental protection, and has many authorities and programs which serve to prevent contamination of our water resources. These include the pesticide control, safe drinking water, and water

pollution control laws and programs. These authorities provide the framework for the state's efforts to address pesticide and nutrient contamination.

Recommendations For Legislative Actions

Provide information and education needed to promote wise use of pesticides and nutrients by supporting:

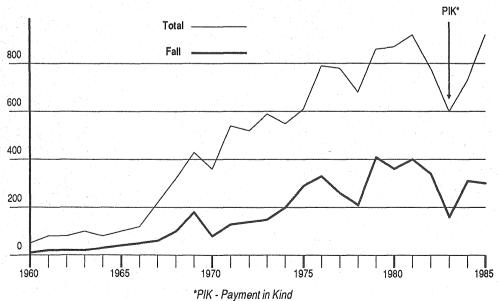
- ♦ Expanded information and educational efforts on fertilizer use, pest control, and water-related impacts;
- Increased information on disposal, handling, home and urban uses, alternative management practices, and sustainable agriculture; and,
- ♦ Increased funding for demonstration projects and pest surveys.

Provide for efforts to understand and prevent pesticide and nutrient contamination problems by supporting:

♦ Regular surveys of pesticide use in the

Annual Nitrogen Use in Minnesota

In thousands of tons



state:

- ♦ Increased efforts to monitor pesticides and nutrients in the environment;
- Continued development of biological controls; and,
- Research on integrated pest management, best management practices, and alternatives to current pesticide and nutrient use.

Enhance preventive planning, corrective actions and regulatory efforts by:

- Requiring and funding preparation of a State Pesticide Management Plan to guide state efforts;
- Requiring integrated pest management and planting regimes by state government to minimize the need for state use of pesticides and nutrients;
- Regulating the use of fertilizers in irrigation systems;
- Supporting programs to improve container and product disposal;

- Tying weed and algae control in lakes to comprehensive lake management; and,
- Urging the federal government and Congress to incorporate resource protection into federal farm programs and amendments to the federal farm bill.

Provide for increased efforts and stable funding by:

- ♦ Continuing to fund enforcement efforts related to the state Pesticide Control Law through fees;
- Considering creation of funds for cleanup (possibly a pesticide "superfund," or a reduced liability cleanup program similar to the Underground Storage Tank Program) and for pesticide/container disposal; and,
- Funding protection efforts by imposing taxes or fees on products and non-returnable containers.

KEY ELEMENTS OF A NONPOINT POLLUTION PROGRAM

Understand the existence and economic impact on water quality resulting from nonpoint source pollution.

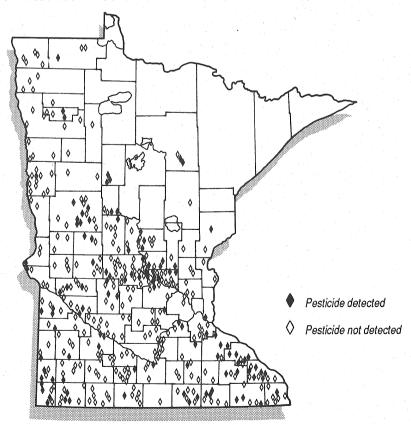
Individual land manager knowledge of the best management practices available to protect water quality.

Adequate public and private funding to implement best management practices.

A comprehensive approach, implemented through a coordinated federal, state, and local partnership.

Reliance on existing programs to the fullest extent, with refocusing of programs to better address nonpoint problems where needed.





THE EQB WILL COORDINATE POLICIES TO ENSURE LAKES ARE MANAGED COMPREHENSIVELY

LAKE PROBLEMS:

High and low levels

Polluted runoff

Shore Erosion

Deteriorating game fish populations

Expanding rough fish populations

Excessive aquatic plant growth

Algal blooms

Polluting sewage systems

Fish kills

Limited public access

Unwise shoreland development

Recreational conflicts

n 1986, 71,000 tons of copper sulphate were applied to Minnesota lakes to control algae and other pests.

Control Nonpoint Source Pollution

Nonpoint sources of pollution must be controlled to protect Minnesota's lakes, streams, and ground waters.

Nonpoint pollution covers a wide range of pollutants generated by a large number of diffuse sources and degrades surface and ground water quality across the state.

Nonpoint sources of pollution have been identified as affecting over 5,000 of Minnesota's surface and ground water bodies. Many human activities and land uses result in pollution as nutrients, sediment, bacteria, and toxic chemicals are carried from agricultural and urban areas into surface and ground waters.

The 1987 Session of the Legislature enacted the Clean Water Partnership to provide matching grants to local units of government for projects to control nonpoint sources of pollution and for the state to develop a plan for control of nonpoint sources. Other cost-sharing programs are also available from state and federal

sources to address nonpoint problems.

Frequent violations of water quality standards in the Minnesota River point out the difficulty resolving nonpoint pollution problems. A 40 percent reduction in organic nonpoint sources (e.g., manure, sediment, leaves) upstream of Shakopee would be needed to ensure water quality standards are met down-stream during low flows in the summer.

Recommendations For Legislative Actions

Increase funding for implementation of the Clean Water Partnership Program.

Support assessment of nonpoint source pollutant loading to the Minnesota River so that implementation programs such as the Clean Water Partnership, State Cost Share, and RIM Reserve can be targeted to problem areas.

Manage Water Quantity Wisely

The state needs to develop and maintain a sound water quantity management program to reduce its vulnerability to drought, and to serve as the basis for wise use, development, and protection of water resources.

The drought of 1988 has served to highlight the importance of water to our economic well being, environment and way of life.

It became apparent that some adjustments are needed in the state priority schedule that regulates surface water withdrawals.

There has been little progress in developing water supply contingency plans. Yet demand is growing and supply problems are increasing. More attention needs to be given to water conservation measures.

The ability to maintain efficient and effective surface and ground water management programs depends on a capability to monitor surface and ground water sup-

plies. Yet, monitoring has been cut back. In addition, most instream flow protection limits have been set as the result of crisis situations and are only available for a few streams.

Clearly, increasing water use demands show the need for looking ahead.

Recommendations For Legislative Actions

Support water conservation and water shortage contingency planning.

Modify the current water appropriation priorities schedule to better address conflicting uses of water.

Accelerate efforts by the Department of Natural Resources to establish flow protection limits for streams and ordinary high water (OHW) levels for lakes.



The Pomme de Terre River dried up in 1988.

Twin Cities streets were flooded in July 1987.



Support expansion and upgrading of surface and ground water quantity monitoring programs to improve the state's capability to manage water

availability, maintain protected stream flows and lake levels, plan for and evaluate floods, and establish drought contingency programs.

EFFECTS OF THE 1988 DROUGHT

Nearly 200 surface water irrigation permits were suspended along 17 Minnesota rivers.

40 homes left without water in Sherburne County when two wells went dry.

The Tamarac River supplying water to the Red River town of Stephen had to be supplemented at a cost of \$2.50 per thousand gallons.

Controversy surrounded proposed release of water from the Headwaters Reservoirs.

Minneapolis instituted its first ban on outdoor water use.

W HILE IN JULY 1987, THE TWIN CITIES HAD ONE RAINSTORM THAT...

Provided enough water to fill Lake Calhoun eighty times, and

Caused over \$39 million in damages.

LOCAL-STATE

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)

Members:

Representatives of counties, watershed districts or water management organizations, soil and water conservation districts, and unaffiliated citizens.

Purposes:

Provide a close link between local and state governments on resource issues; and,

Give local governments a forum at the state level for discussion of local concerns.

Improve Communication And Coordination

Minnesota must continue to improve coordination and communication among all levels of government and with the public to effectively protect and manage water resources.

Minnesota's approach to organizing its Water Resources Program is to keep several key agencies involved as advocates for various facets of water resources protection and management. These agencies are coordinated through the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) and its Water Resources Committee (WRC).

The new Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) was designed to strengthen the local-state partnership. The BWSR is a member of the EQB and its WRC. This provides a strong voice for local perspectives in state policy debates.

The Minnesota Environmental Education Board (MEEB) coordinates water-related environmental education efforts.

At the local level, comprehensive water plans provide the coordinating focus for

water management. The county, and in the metropolitan area both the county and the watershed management organization, provide the focus for coordinating water-related activities through these plans.

The best way to ensure that the needed communication and coordination occurs at each level is to understand and reinforce this organizational structure.

Recommendations For Legislative Actions

Strengthen state coordination by requiring that EQB report to the Governor concerning water-related legislative priorities and agency budgets.

Strengthen coordination locally by:

♦ Encouraging county boards in greater Minnesota to assume the responsibility intended in M.S. 110B for coordinating local water and land management



efforts through development of comprehensive water plans; and,

 Encouraging county boards in the metropolitan area to assume the responsibility for ground water planning

Strengthen MEEB's role in coordinating state water education efforts.

Strengthen Local Water Management

The local-state partnership for comprehensive local water planning and plan implementation needs to be supported and expanded.

Local water planning and management is a vital part of the state water resources strategy.

Fifty-two counties are developing comprehensive water plans under grants from the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR). The remaining counties need similar state assistance to plan, and all counties need help to carry out their plans. At least two counties in the Metro area are developing ground water management plans.

State and local governments need to work cooperatively to ensure that complex

water-related issues are addressed with the full range of information and analysis available. Effective local programs on ground water protection, nonpoint source pollution, and comprehensive lake management require state support through technical assistance and financial incentives.

Recommendations For Legislative Actions

Help local units pay for developing and implementing comprehensive water plans. Funding would be geared to:

- Counties presently not eligible for LCMR funding;
- Updating metropolitan water management plans to comply with any rules promulgated; and,
- ♦ Implementing elements of approved comprehensive water plans.

Ensure that state agencies have staff capability to provide adequate technical assistance to local government for comprehensive water planning and implementation.

Require the linkage of local water-related state programs to comprehensive local water plans. By July 1, 1991, ensure that state assistance is directed to requests consistent with a comprehensive local water plan prepared pursuant to M.S. 110B, 112, or 473.

Ensure consistency with planning conducted by counties under M.S. 110B, by adoption of plan content guidelines by BWSR for water plans developed under the Watershed Act, and for amendments to plans developed under the Metropolitan Water Management Act.

LOCAL COORDINATION

Local policy directions set through Comprehensive Local Water Plans

Under the...

Comprehensive Local Water Management Act;

The Metropolitan Water Management Act; or,

The Watershed Act.

By DEVELOPING COMPREHENSIVE WATER PLANS, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS CAN...

Pull together existing data on water and related land resources;

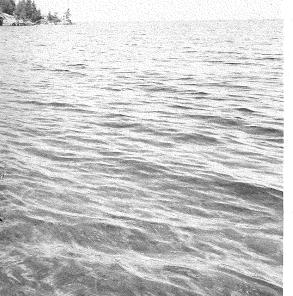
Estimate future demands on water and land resources;

Identify problems and opportunities;

Define local goals and objectives; and,

Establish a plan of action for local water resources management.





DATA NEEDS FOR SOUND DECISION MAKING

Regular and consistent collection that shows trends.

Automated routinely to be accessible to all users.

Integrated with data from other sources so connections between land and water, use or quality, can be explored.

Good quality control.

Improve Water Information System

Minnesota needs better information about its water resources and better access to this information.

Minnesota agencies have made great strides in both collecting and automating water information. However, important data is not computerized, is missing, or is out of date.

Data collected for a particular program is seldom made available for other uses. Data integration has been required only when activities are funded by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources. The evolution of information systems toward more decentralized collection, automation, and management, through the increased use of personal computers and data collection activities of local governments greatly complicates the job of overall data coordination.

Recommendations For Legislative Actions

Support accelerated efforts in ground and surface water data collection, data automation, data integration, and delivery to users.

Enact minimum compatibility standards for data collection and automation and designate EQB as the agency responsible for ensuring that standards are followed.

Support integrating stream and watershed information into an automated stream information system, and improving integration of ground water quality and quantity information to provide better information for state and local water planning activities.



Finance Water Protection

Stable funding is essential for sound management of water resources. Without it, Minnesota's attempts to protect public health and enhance environmental quality will continue in a fragmented, "hit or miss" manner.

Budgetary problems at all levels, as well as a change in philosophy about the role of the federal government, have begun to seriously strain the state's ability to meet water resources needs. Combined federal spending for water resources declined by 44 percent from 1980 to 1985, while aggregate state and local spending increased by 17 percent.

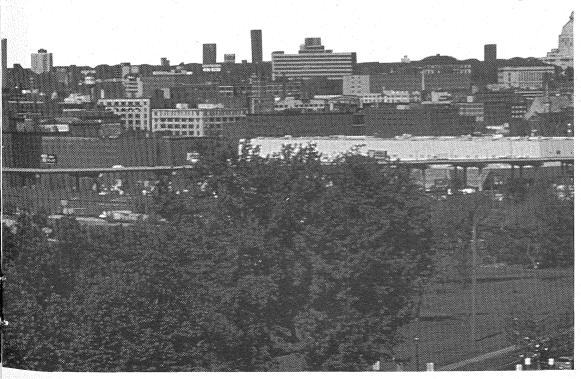
Piecemeal cutbacks in such areas as long-term monitoring and data analysis have had a particularly serious effect on the state's ability to "get out in front of" problems. Additionally, permanent funding has not been secured for the Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) program, the Clean Water Partnership program, and the Flood Mitigation program.

In 1988, a constitutional amendment

was passed that provides for an Environmental Trust Fund. The Trust Fund legislation calls for convening of a "Resources Congress" every two years, and development of a strategic funding plan to identify funding needs and priorities. The related efforts of the Environmental Quality Board's Environmental Congress, its biennial *Water Resources Priority Recommendations*, and its Water Resources Funding Plan will need to complement the Trust Fund work of the Minnesota Future Resources Commission (MFRC).

An important challenge will be to determine, not only what needs to be funded in the water resources arena, but where the funds should come from. Possible funding sources include the Trust Fund, the General Fund, fees and dedicated accounts, and other sources like the MFRC natural resources acceleration account, and federal funding.

Initiatives critical to water resources management and protection in Minnesota have been identified. The challenge is to The EQB will adopt comprehensive water resources funding plans for submission to the Governor each biennium. Funding plans should be tied to the EQB Ten-Year Agenda for Protecting Minnesota's Waters and the biennial report of Water Resources Priority Recommendations.



Questions for Minnesota...Year 2000

Choices made today will determine the answers to these questions:

Will we have written off use of many of our aquifers for drinking water?

Will water-related exposure to pesticides and hazardous wastes become recognized as a major health threat in Minnesota?

Will Minnesotans still suffer preventable loss of life and property from floods?

Will we have adequate water supplies for needed uses within the state?

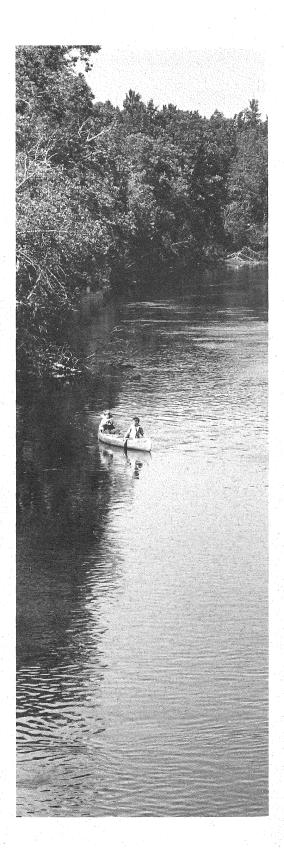
secure stable sources of funding for these most important initiatives in order to ensure continuation of the high quality of life that Minnesota's water resources provide.

Recommendations For Legislative Actions

That the Minnesota Future Resources Commission review the EQB's Ten-Year Agenda for Protecting Minnesota's Waters, and its biennial Water Resources Priority Recommendations and corresponding funding plan when setting priorities for the Environmental Trust Fund.

That a policy framework for consistent use of fees be developed and adopted across the board by the Administration and the Legislature, and used by the EQB as an assumption underlying funding plan recommendations of the EQB.

That long term stable funding be provided for water resources protection and management. ■



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Protecting Minnesota's waters

Highlights Of Actions Fro

The Board of Water and Soll Re Replaces the Soil & Water Conse Rivers Basin Council Simplifies the approach between : Helps coordinate the activities of c

managementorganizations

Pilot Comprehensive Local Wate Legislative Commission on Minne Six projects comprising 52 countie Strengthens state-local partnershi

Special Water-Related Legislatic
Clean Water Partnership
Flood Mitigation Act
Pesticide Control Act amendments
Laboratory Certification program

Metropolitan County Ground Wate

Strengthening Cooperation and Coordinated Minnesota Ground W.

Coordinated the Strategy for the W.

Underground storage tank regulati

Developed 1989-1991 Water Reso Developed the Minnesota Wetland

The Environmental Qualti intend to carry on the proc pressing state water resou and legislative action to ac will ensure that the state of health and preserving the TD 224 .M6 P77 1989/91

Protecting Minnesota's waters

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For more information about the issues and recommendations described in this report, or about the Environmental Quality Board and its Water Resources Committee, call:

(612) 296-1424, or write to:

Minnesota State Planning Agency 300 Centennial Building 658 Cedar Street Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155 Attention:

EQB Water Resources Committee

Credits

Design/Layout - Pat Ciernia
Minnesota Department of Health - cover photo; original source, map, page 5
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - both photos, page 7
Minnesota State Planning Agency - photo, page 2
Minnesota Department of Energy and Economic Development,
Office of Tourism - photos, inside front cover, pages 1, 8 - 9, 10 - 11, 12

THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

Chair appointed by Governor

Commissioner of Agriculture

Commissioner of Health

Commissioner of Natural Resources

Commissioner of Pollution Control Agency

Commissioner of Transportation

Commissioner of Public Service

Commissioner of State Planning Agency

Chair, Board of Water and Soil Resources

Five Citizen members

WATER RESPONSIBILITIES

Coordinates Inter-agency programs

Develops state water plan and strategies