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DNR WATERS STRATEGIC PLAN



A Guide for Addressing Water Resource Management Issues into the 21st Century October 1998

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources



DNR Waters

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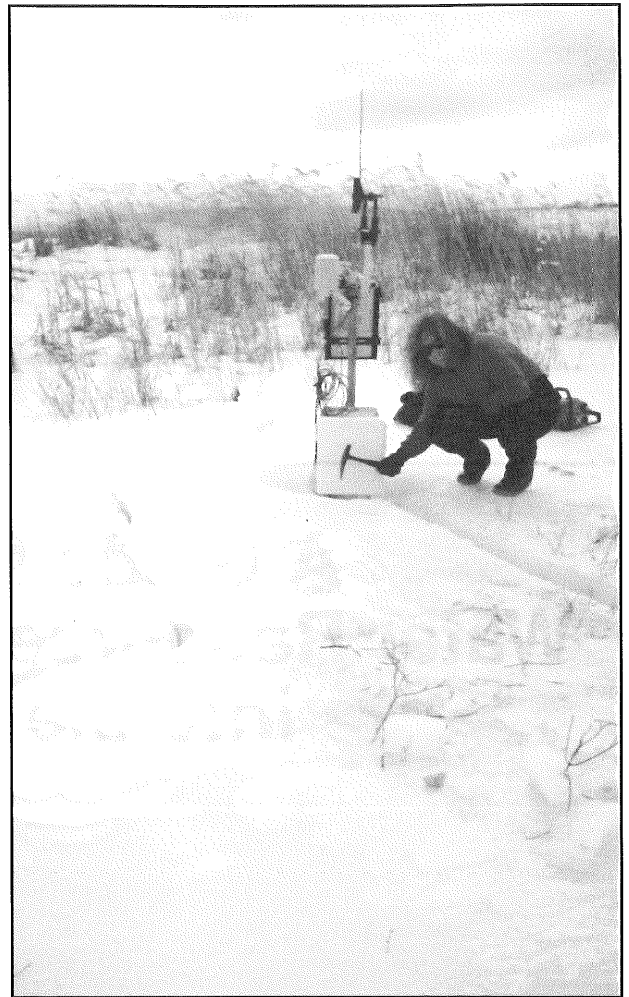
DNR WATERS STRATEGIC PLAN

A Guide for Addressing Water Resource Management Issues into the 21st Century

**St. Paul, MN
October 1998**

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources



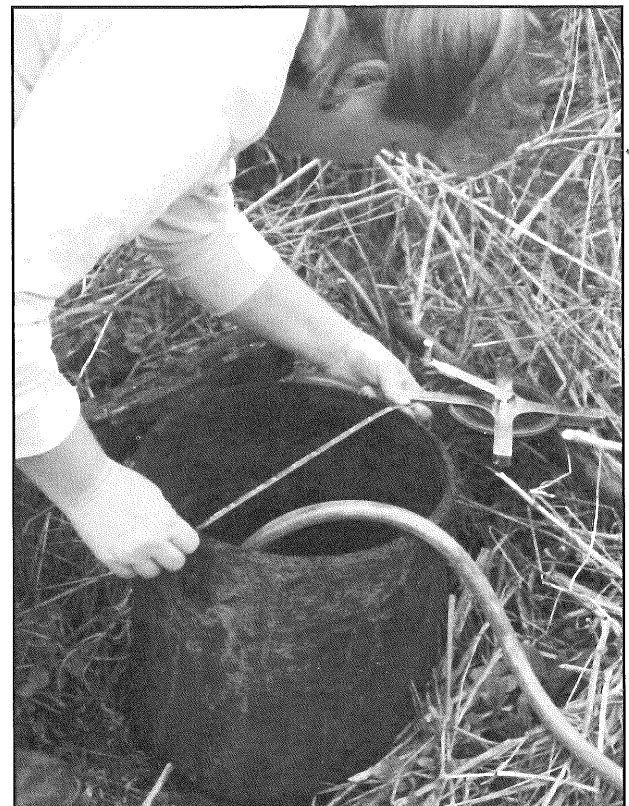


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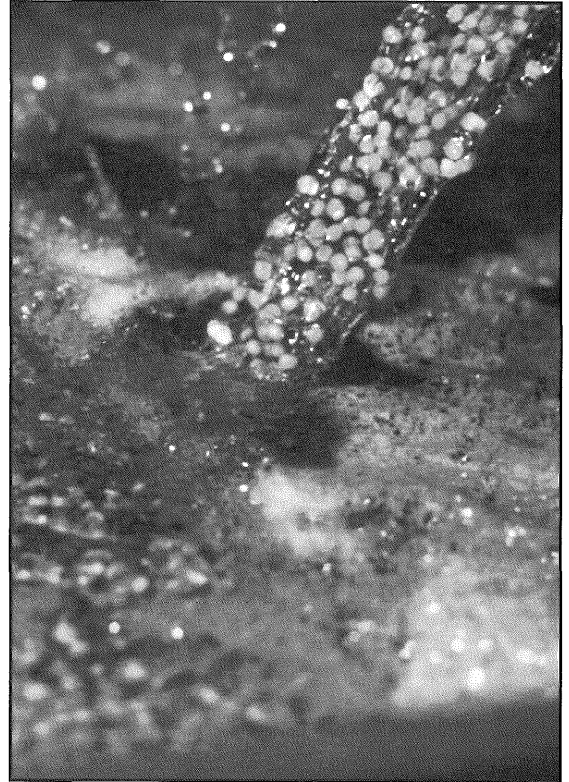
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STRATEGIC PLAN

A Guide for Addressing Water Resource Management Issues into the 21st Century

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Minnesota's water legacy would have you thinking of 10,000 lakes, clear clean water, abundant ground water supply, and some periods of floods and drought. The state's long term social, economic, and environmental well being will be determined by how well the state's waters are managed by agencies, local governments and by individual landowners.

The role of state agencies has changed throughout the years and specifically our Division has seen evolution from advocating land drainage in the 1st half of this century, enhanced land use regulations (both floodplain and shoreland) in the 1960's, to comprehensive wetland management in the 1990's. Change has occurred as outside influences have changed.

Because the factors shaping our responsibilities change, it is wise that every 5 years or so, we take a hard look at the external factors and determine how we can best structure our organizational resources to meet those major issues. The product of that reexamination is a strategic plan and the implementation of its recommendations.

The 1998 DNR Waters Strategic Plan - A Guide to Addressing Water Resource Management Issues into the 21st Century will provide an important tool for improving and enhancing the services that are necessary to meet our collective goals for Minnesota's natural resources.

This strategic plan was created with considerable involvement from both staff and customers and as a result, it represents an excellent framework to meet the emerging issues and challenges in the upcoming years.

Thank you for your energy and ideas and I am looking forward to your continued involvement as we move into the implementation of this plan.

Kent Lokkesmoe
Director
DNR Waters



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DNR WATERS VISION

"We will work with people to manage the state's diverse natural resources for a sustainable quality of life."

DNR WATERS MISSION

"Helping people ensure the future of our water resources."



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DNR WATERS GOAL

DNR Waters Goal: "DNR Waters will promote water resource conservation and sustainability by working with others to develop a common understanding of water resources and improve its programs and decision making"

The greatest challenges facing DNR Waters are the fair and wise allocation of a fixed supply of water in light of increasing demands for its use and protecting water resources from activities that impair these resources. Water resources include the water and the physical feature that holds the water such as lakes, streams, wetlands, and aquifers. The competing demands include withdrawals for public water supplies, domestic uses, irrigation, industrial processing or power production, and maintaining adequate stream flows and lake levels for recreation, fish and wildlife habitat and aesthetics. Related land uses such as shoreline development, public open space and public access also compete with other uses. Increasing impacts include development of watersheds and floodplains and improvement and expansion of drainage systems, etc. As these competing demands and impacts increase, public policy and user conflicts will become more frequent, complex and more difficult to solve.

Because it is not feasible to significantly increase the amount of water that is available for competing needs, it is critical to better manage the expectations and the demands placed on water resources. This can be best accomplished by applying conservation measures and encouraging people to make wiser decisions based upon resource sustainability for economic, social and environmental needs. Those activities that impair water resources can also be addressed by applying the goal of sustainability and the principles of conservation.

In order to achieve this, DNR Waters has established an overall goal to "promote water resource conservation and sustainability by working with others to develop a common understanding of water resources and improve programs and decision making processes."

This goal will help bind together our collective energy, vision, values, and science. Once aligned and focused with the goal, the work of DNR Waters will better serve the public, the water resources and address the major issues facing water resource management into the 21st century.

Sustainability

Sustainability means protecting and restoring the natural environment while enhancing economic opportunity and community well-being. Sustainability addresses three related elements: the environment, the economy, and the community. The goal is to maintain all three elements in a healthy state indefinitely.

Sustainability is the expected result of all DNR resource management activities. DNR will work with partners to protect and restore ecosystems so that their resources can be used indefinitely by present and future generations.

Cooperative partnerships will seek options to reconcile human needs and demands with the capacity of ecosystems to meet those demands.



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STRATEGIC ISSUES AND GOALS

1. **Strategic Issue: Using Social, Economic and Environmental Information**
Goal: DNR Waters will work with others to improve the information that measures social, environmental and economic values of water resources and will make better use of this information in water resources decisions.
2. **Strategic Issue: Regulatory Effectiveness**
Goal: DNR Waters will provide greater regulatory effectiveness by aligning the objectives for its permits with the goal of sustainability while also providing more flexibility to tailor regulations for geographic differences.
3. **Strategic Issue: Information and Technical Assistance**
Goal: DNR Waters will improve access to information and provide appropriate interpretations to use the information and other types of technical assistance about water resource issues.
4. **Strategic Issue: Education**
Goal: DNR Waters will provide quality environmental educational opportunities to a broad spectrum of the public and train resource managers to increase the awareness and understanding of water resource issues.
5. **Strategic Issue: Clarify and Integrate Responsibilities**
Goal: DNR Waters will improve services to the public by promoting and implementing efforts to clarify and better integrate responsibilities among resource agencies and local governments.
6. **Strategic Issue: Accountability**
Goal: DNR Waters decisions will be timely, communicated to stakeholders, made by and with the right people, and at the appropriate level consistent with our mandates.
7. **Strategic Issue: Communication and Outreach**
Goal: DNR Waters will communicate effectively with the people we serve.
8. **Strategic Issue: Partnerships**
Goal: DNR Waters will cooperate and join stakeholders in efforts to improve and protect water resources.



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STRATEGIC ISSUES/ GOALS/APPROACHES

1. Strategic Issue: Using Social, Economic and Environmental Information

Goal: DNR Waters will work with others to improve the information that measures social, environmental and economic values of water resources and will make better use of this information in water resources decisions.

DNR Waters efforts to manage water resources on a sustainable basis depends on its capability to better use social, environmental, and economic information in its water resource decisions and recommendations. If decisions result in losses of natural resources, losses should be compensated. Compensation will minimize the cumulative effects of actions on lake, river, wetland and ground water resources.

A lack of information is also a major barrier in efforts to adequately measure social, environmental, and economic values of water resources. Losses frequently occur to the environment because society cannot adequately measure and weigh the long term effects in decision making.

The need for better information is particularly evident in the allocation of surface and ground water resources for commercial, agricultural and domestic uses. At times, because of supply problems, these uses subtract from or conflict with fish, wildlife and recreational values. During periods of low water flows or levels, reassessment of the water allocations occur and DNR Waters must attempt to balance and mitigate the resulting losses. This is difficult and often very controversial because information is not readily available to support decisions.

Another example involves impacts on lakes from adjacent development. Development and resulting use of some lake riparian zones without adequate measures to protect or buffer the littoral zone or water quality and quantity have had significant adverse effects on fish and wildlife, water quality and related recreational activities. Attempts to calculate and compensate for the losses to fish and wildlife and recreational uses have proven difficult. As a result, environmental losses may threaten the sustainability of lake resources.

Approaches

- Expand efforts to establish and monitor environmental indicators.
- Measure the effects of land use practices outside of riparian zones on water quality and quantity.
- Monitor long term trends of human effects on land and water resources in benchmark watersheds.
- Develop means to measure cumulative effects of decisions at a site level such as individual lakes and on a regional basis such as a river or watershed.
- Research and develop techniques to establish environmental thresholds.
- Apply cumulative effects analysis to existing water resource regulatory programs. Develop techniques and processes to better assess the long term social, environmental, and economic effects of water resource management programs and projects.



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2.

Strategic Issue: Regulatory Effectiveness

Goal: DNR Waters will provide greater regulatory effectiveness by aligning the objectives for its permits with the goal of sustainability while also providing more flexibility to tailor regulations for geographic differences.

Water resource laws and regulations need to be goal and objective driven to ensure that resource values are maintained while also meeting community needs and dealing with changing conditions. For regulations to be effective, it is important to establish clear standards, form stronger cooperative bonds with local units of government, streamline regulatory processes, and improve conflict resolution. Regulations must address water resource problems as part of a whole system and not as free-standing situations.

A common criticism of DNR Waters regulations and minimum standards is that they were developed for statewide application and do not offer enough flexibility to deal with water and related land resource problems where local circumstances do not fit with the requirements of the regulations. This is a problem with almost all types of regulations because it is almost impossible to imagine all of the situations where the regulations or standards will need to be applied.

DNR Waters regulations are also criticized because they generally apply to a specific site and are not designed to address problems that are caused by many similar actions around or in a particular water body or in the larger contributing watershed or downstream watershed. Lake planning, river planning and watershed planning may offer opportunities to address problems in a more comprehensive manner and identify larger scale solutions to common problems rather than relying on site-by-site permits or other regulatory decisions.

Approaches

- Establish clear objectives for all aspects of regulatory programs including performance measures or standards that support the goal of sustainability.
- Investigate alternatives to current means of implementing regulations including, but not limited to, deregulation, general permits, increased delegation to area hydrologists or local government units, privatization, and recognition of differences in regional conditions.
- Establish monitoring programs to measure effectiveness.
- Update laws, regulations, and minimum standards to establish greater flexibility and capacity to address long term cumulative impacts.



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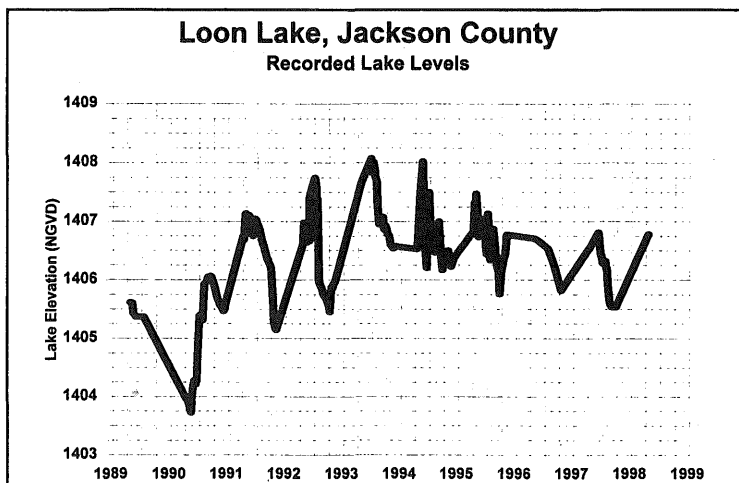
3. Strategic Issue: Information and Technical Assistance

Goal: DNR Waters will improve access to information and provide appropriate interpretations to use the information and other types of technical assistance about water resource issues.

Cooperative management of water resources requires that high quality information be available in a useable format for water and related land resource managers, interest groups and the general public.

Water resources information is now available in many forms and from many sources, such as print and visual media, electronic shared data bases, videotapes, radio broadcasts, and web pages. Making sure that the information provided is accurate, timely and presented in an understandable manner is critical to creating an informed citizenry and to helping technical staff make sound land and water resource decisions.

DNR Waters is currently updating, improving, and expanding its use of media resources. Some examples of the information that are now or will soon be available include: lake levels, ground water levels, climatic data, streamflow monitoring data, technical models of flooding, lake and watershed information, and special reports during flood or drought situations. Some of these reports present raw data about water resources, but others include analysis and interpretations of raw data to help people better understand the implications of the data that are presented.



Approaches

- Establish data bases for storage, analysis and dissemination of water resources data.
- Expand efforts to analyze and interpret data.
- Develop additional means of disseminating water resources information using a variety of media types.
- Improve the availability of technical assistance and information to land and water managers.
- Work with the MIS Bureau to improve access to data and information via the Internet.
- Explore opportunities to disseminate information to stakeholders.



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4.

Strategic Issue: Education

Goal: DNR Waters will provide quality environmental educational opportunities to a broad spectrum of the public and train resource managers to increase the awareness and understanding of water resource issues.

Greater awareness and understanding of the hydrologic cycle, water resource supplies and uses, conservation issues as well as the environmental, economic and social values of water resources are essential to public acceptance and support for the goal of water resource sustainability.

Knowledge of these subjects by land and water managers, individual citizens, legislators and other public policy makers is necessary to encourage people to make the right choices or take the desirable actions to use and protect Minnesota's water resources on a more sustainable basis.

Also important to the overall goal of natural resource sustainability is the proper education of our children. As future decision makers, it is critical that they have an understanding of water, other natural resources and the issues challenging the future management of these resources.

The ecosystem based management approaches that are being applied by DNR staff and Minnesota citizens can be more effective if all participants understand basic principles of ecology, natural resource management and natural resources sustainability.

In addition, complex water resource issues require that DNR train its staff to learn and apply new skills. Staff must be adequately trained so they can provide scientific data to the public and partners so that they can apply the principals of ecosystem based management.

Approaches

- Expand efforts to broaden water resources education to K-12 students.
- Develop an environmental education plan that clearly defines the types of information needed by the public and strategies for delivering that information effectively. Focus information development on basic concepts of sustainability, the hydrologic cycle, ecosystems based management, interactions between surface and groundwater, and issues relating to lakes, rivers and wetlands.
- Expand opportunities for specialized water resources and related training for DNR Waters and other water resource management agency staff.
- Develop a better understanding of surface/ground water interactions and inform the public about them.



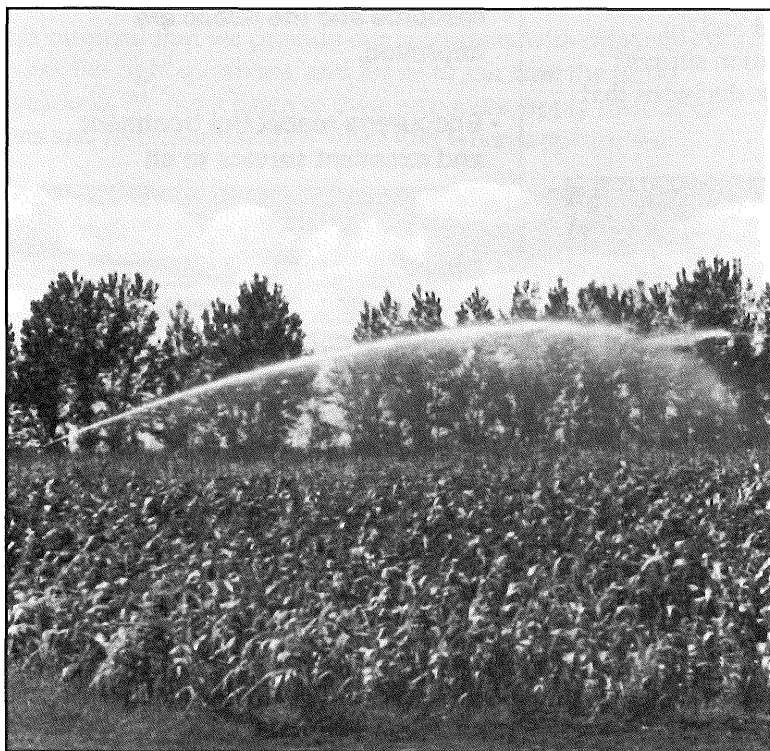
5.

Strategic Issue: Clarify and Integrate Responsibilities

Goal: DNR Waters will improve services to the public by promoting and implementing efforts to clarify and better integrate responsibilities among resource agencies and local governments.

Water management and protection responsibilities are divided among many federal, state agencies and local governments. This often results in public confusion about how to seek and obtain services. In addition, the services rendered can sometimes be contradictory, duplicative or ineffective.

The public expects excellent customer service and professional natural resources management. This expectation can be met by DNR Waters taking a stronger role in clarifying water management responsibilities and in finding ways to better integrate services. By integrating services, DNR Waters can improve interagency relationships, communication, coordination, cooperation and can increase the public's faith and investment in joint partnerships.



Approaches

- Identify with stakeholders problems resulting from jurisdictional overlaps, lack of service coordination or integration and intensify coordination both within and among agencies.
- Promote clarifying the roles and responsibilities of water management agencies to the public and find creative ways of communicating that information to the public.
- Expand efforts to improve interagency and interdisciplinary core service planning and redesign.
- Encourage interdisciplinary staff mobility in order to enhance staff understanding of other programs.
- Utilize local water planning and management approaches as a first step towards water resource sustainability.



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6. Strategic Issue: Accountability

Goal: DNR Waters decisions will be timely, communicated to stakeholders, made by and with the right people, and at the appropriate level consistent with our mandates.

During the last decade, the public has been demanding more accountability from agencies in terms of developing and meeting established performance standards, as well as ensuring that decisions and actions are consistent with mandates and long term natural resource management goals.

DNR Waters is held accountable to balance the public's ongoing need and right to use water resources with the long term sustainability of water resources. Societal, regional and resource variability also needs to be taken into consideration. Actions, policies, goals, visions and programs need to be periodically evaluated to insure that this dual commitment is met.

Customers expect DNR staff to make timely decisions at the appropriate level. The decisions and the reasons for the decisions need to be communicated to those involved and/or affected. It is equally important that the organization support decisions made by its employees, especially those decisions that are controversial.



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Approaches

- Develop and apply a model to evaluate and improve core services. This shall include explicit goals, objectives, measurable outcomes and a means for ongoing evaluations of services.
- Develop more ways to recognize employee performance.
- Evaluate DNR Waters structure to ensure that strategic issues are addressed and services to the resource and the public are improved.
- Encourage respectful treatment and excellent service to all customers.
- Provide necessary training to improve staff effectiveness in conflict resolution, facilitation, planning, leadership, partnering, human relation skills, consensus building and team building.
- Continue to improve DNR Waters strategic and operational planning functions.
- Improve staff and public access to decision making processes and improve communication about decisions that have been made.

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7.

Strategic Issue: Communication and Outreach

Goal: DNR Waters will communicate effectively with the people we serve.

DNR Waters has improved its ability to communicate and listen to stakeholder opinions and needs. These stakeholders include the general public, people who derive direct benefit from DNR Waters programs or grants, other governmental units as well as with other units in the DNR. Our stakeholders want information about the critical issues facing water resources and DNR Waters as an organization. They also want to know more about the services that DNR Waters provides and how to access those services.

DNR Waters needs its stakeholders to participate in ongoing strategic and operational planning efforts. An informed public that is involved in identifying and supporting service improvements and expansions can contribute significantly to meeting the goals identified in this strategic plan as well as those developed for the operational planning processes.

It is essential that we provide our customers with opportunities to ask the right questions, and for us to ask *them* the right questions. We must listen to their responses, apply their opinions and recommendations when and where appropriate.



Approaches

- Create more opportunities for listening to the public and other land and water managers about strategic issues facing water resources at the local, regional, state, national and international level. This can include informal discussions such as open dialogues in town meetings or formal discussions such as those created in the DNR Waters strategic planning process.
- Communicate with stakeholders about the mission and responsibilities of DNR Waters.
- Enhance the capability of DNR Waters to communicate with its customers through computers and communication technology.
- Provide training for staff to help them effectively communicate with our customers.
- Expand professional communication services in DNR Waters.



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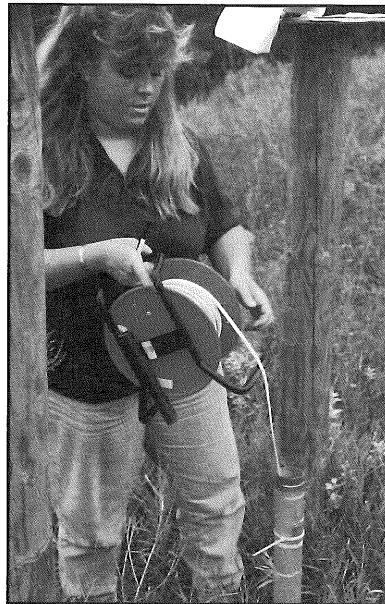
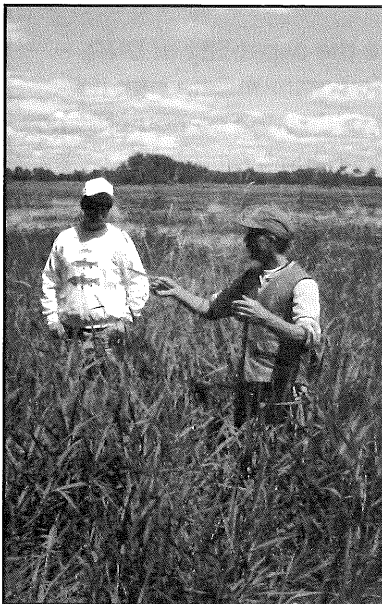
8.

Strategic Issue: Partnerships

Goal: DNR Waters will cooperate and join stakeholders in efforts to improve and protect water resources.

Citizens and other non-governmental water management organizations want to form long term, productive working relationships with DNR Waters to solve complex water management problems. DNR Waters wants partnerships because they are an effective tool to improve and protect lakes, rivers, wetlands, and ground water resources. Partnerships are also effective when dealing with droughts or floods, in planning for the long term allocation of surface and ground water resources, when developing joint proposals to construct water management structures and in the collection and analysis of water resources data.

The value of partnerships is clearly evident. When partners build lasting relationships, improved communication, cooperation, understanding and trust results. In this spirit of cooperation, complex water management problems can be solved. Partnerships help to clarify roles and responsibilities, improve the sharing of human and financial resources, and reduce the potential for conflicts.



Approaches

- Seek opportunities to involve stakeholders as partners in managing lakes, wetlands, rivers, and ground water resources.
- Elevate the priority of staff participation in community based planning, local water planning, zoning administration, lakeshed and watershed based projects.
- Seek partnerships with other water and land managers and develop joint funding and policy proposals that address water resource issues in a comprehensive manner.
- Work with stakeholders in interdisciplinary, interagency processes to develop common goals for lakes, rivers, wetlands, and ground water resources.
- Eliminate organizational barriers that limit the capacity to join and succeed in cooperative efforts.



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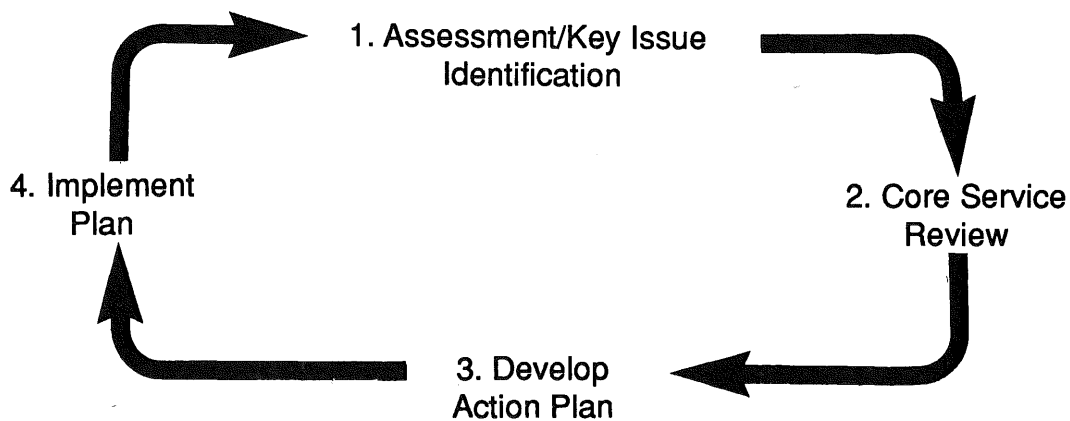
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PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

DNR Waters will implement the 1998 Strategic Plan by using an operational planning and issue analysis model. This model has been used successfully to re-develop several services in DNR Waters during the last year, such as the Flood Damage Reduction Program.

The model generally consists of the following steps:

DNR Waters Operational Planning Model



1. DNR Waters Management Committee, in consultation with staff, will annually conduct an operational assessment of its previous years performance and the key issues affecting its organizational success into the immediate future. Issues can be those identified in the strategic plan, programmatic or operational issues or issues related to known or anticipated performance problems. The assessment process will identify and rank key issues in priority order for a specific timeframe.

2. Based upon the issues and the ranking, the Water Management Committee selects the related core services that will be examined during the next fiscal year. Core services provided by DNR Waters include assuring clean and adequate water supplies and sustaining the values of lakes, rivers, wetlands, and groundwater. Core services also include the programs delivered by Waters, such as surface and ground water appropriation permits, ground water monitoring, dam inspections, shoreland and wild and scenic rivers management, and flood damage reduction. In addition, core services include business functions that cut across most DNR Waters products, programs and activities such as information management, training, planning and budgeting, decision and policy making and personnel management.



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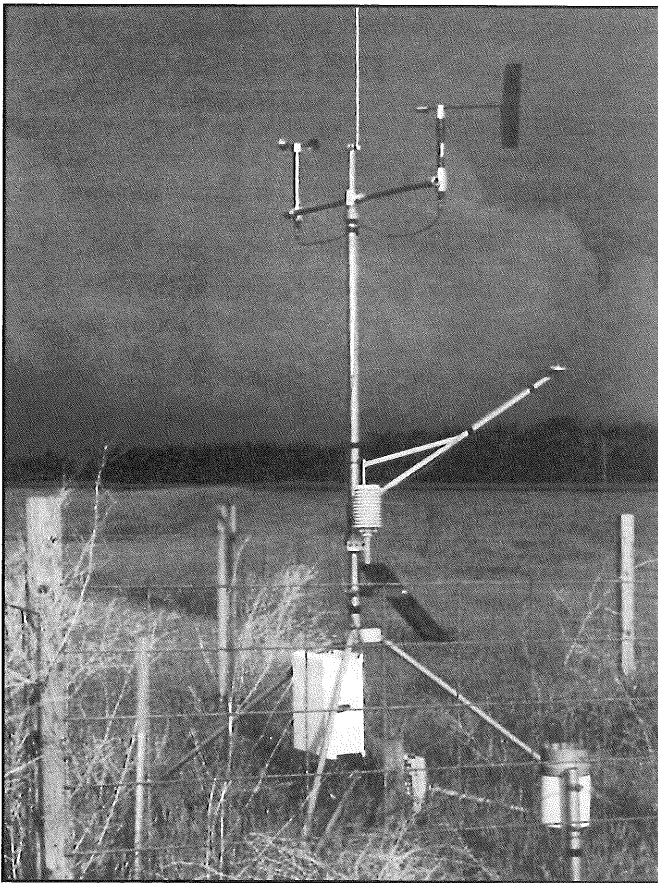
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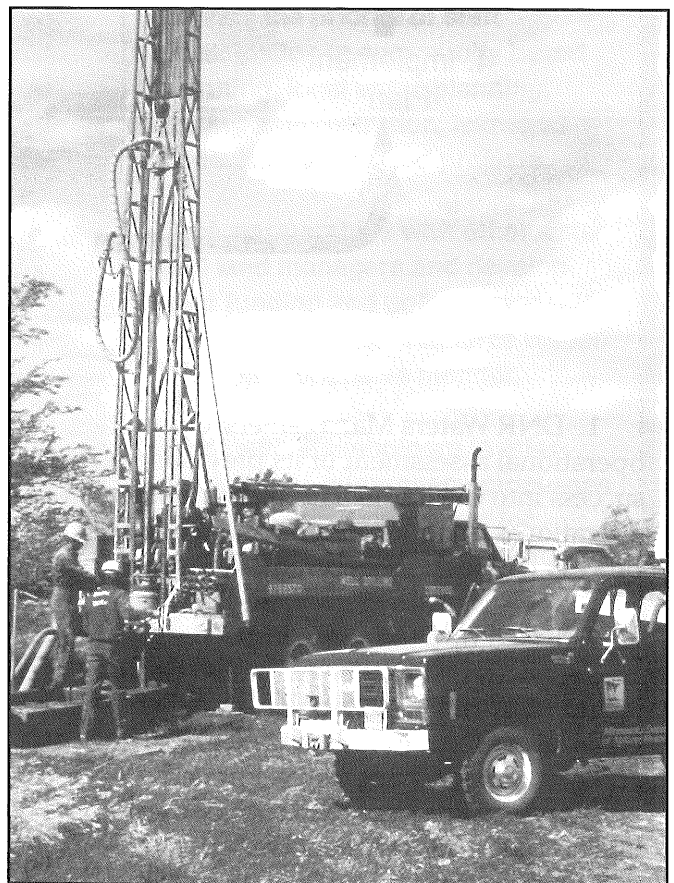
The purpose, goals, objectives, performance standards, performance measures and means of evaluation for the core service are identified by a steering committee and approved by the Water Management Committee. Depending on the service and the scope of the examination, the steering committee will include membership from Waters, other DNR disciplines and perhaps the clientele served.

3. The specific steps, time lines, funding and staff necessary to achieve the goals, objectives, performance standards and measures to determine outcomes are identified in the action plan that is prepared by the steering committee and approved by the Water Management Committee. In some instances, a new program or activity will be designed as identified by the approaches in the strategic plan or as a result of legislative requirements.

4. The action plan is implemented following the assignment of necessary resources by the Water Management Committee.



Photograph courtesy of North Dakota State Climatology's Office



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PLAN CONTEXT

The purpose of the 1998 DNR Waters Strategic Plan is to provide guidance to decision makers as they address the major issues facing Minnesota's water resources into the 21st century. This plan will also help align DNR Waters decisions with the overall strategic direction of the Department of Natural Resources as identified by **Directions 1997**. The plan will also improve the application of ecosystem based management principals in the delivery of DNR Waters services.

DNR Waters has used strategic planning as an essential management tool since the mid 1980's. Strategic plans prepared in 1986 and 1993 have been used to improve DNR Waters core services and to move DNR Waters towards its goal of being the state's primary water experts. Changes, as a result of strategic planning, have been made in DNR Waters structure, what services are provided and how core services are delivered. For example, DNR Waters role as a "regulator" has changed to being more of a provider and interpreter of water management information.

In 1995, the Department of Natural Resources enhanced its strategic planning to provide greater organizational direction towards the goal of natural resource sustainability. As a result, the DNR is committed to helping lead in the maintenance, enhancement and restoration of Minnesota's ecosystems so that they can continue to serve environmental, social, and economic needs. DNR's **Directions 1995** and **Directions 1997** summarize the products and recommendations of these strategic planning processes.

DNR Directions 1997 identified a number of ecosystem based approaches to address priority natural resources issues such as protecting riparian areas, achieving a no-net loss of wetlands, managing shoreline development, protecting ground water resources and improving water quality. The major management responsibilities included:

- 1. Expand the development of the partnerships with organizations and other agencies to develop common resource management objectives.*
- 2. Promote integrated approaches to managing resources.*
- 3. Accelerate the collection, interpretation and dissemination of scientific information regarding Minnesota's ecosystems and natural resources.*
- 4. Expand efforts to provide technical assistance to citizens and local governments.*
- 5. Improve communication with all stakeholders and citizens.*



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6. *Establish environmental education as a cornerstone for developing a natural resource stewardship ethic among all Minnesotans.*
7. *Establish standards for evaluating and monitoring health and effectiveness of ecosystem-based management efforts.*
8. *Improve integration of budgeting and planning across area, regional and state levels.*
9. *Place more authority with area staff to manage budget and staffing priorities.*

Directions 1997 directed DNR disciplines to prepare strategic plans that were consistent with the strategic direction of resource sustainability. It was intended that discipline strategic planning improve core service integration within the DNR and with other agencies. Waters is the first DNR discipline to prepare a strategic plan as recommended in **Directions 97**.

The need for strategic planning is evident as the public continues to demand improved services and desired outcomes from state agencies. The public also expects to be much more involved in the processes that determine strategic direction.



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PLANNING PROCESS

In December 1997, DNR Waters started working to develop a new strategic plan to help guide staff as they make major water management decisions and organizational improvements and changes.

The first step involved evaluating staff response to the outcomes of the **1993 Strategic Plan** and to identify expectations for the 1998 planning process, the strategic plan document and its implementation over the next 5 years. Discussions were held with DNR Waters staff in each of the 6 administrative field Regions and the 3 central office Sections.

The following principles and objectives for the 1998 planning process resulted from these discussions and were adopted by the DNR Waters Strategic Plan Steering Committee (PSC). The PSC was formed to guide the completion of the strategic plan project. The PSC consisted of representatives from each of the three central office Sections and the 6 Regions, plus staff from DNR Waters Directors office and the DNR's Office of Management and Budget served on the PSC.

LEADERSHIP

- The 1993 plan provides a solid foundation and framework for the 1998 planning project. DNR Waters staff believe that it still addresses some of the strategic issues facing water resources and DNR Waters as an organization. Staff want DNR Waters leadership to ensure that the 1998 strategic planning project not be treated simply as an update to the 1993 plan.
- Commitment and leadership from all DNR Waters staff to complete and implement the plan is essential to success.

STAKEHOLDERS (Stakeholders include the general public, people affected by DNR Waters actions, and staff from other DNR and government units.)

- Stakeholder input into DNR Waters planning processes must be included from the start, up-front, ongoing and extensive if the desired levels of public and internal support for DNR Waters programs and its natural resource based objectives are to be achieved.

COMMUNICATION

- Effective communication regarding the planning process, its products and its implementation is critical to success.



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STRATEGIC ISSUES

- The plan must provide direction about how DNR Waters can better integrate the environment, community and the economy into its decision making processes
- The strategic issues, strategic goals and strategies must drive operational planning at the core services level (product, program, activity).

OBJECTIVES

- DNR Waters programs must be linked better to natural resource protection and management objectives if DNR Waters is going to achieve its water resource management leadership position.
- Resource use and protection objectives must be identified. More direction should be provided about how the objectives can be met through regulation, education, monitoring, information, and enforcement at the area, region, and central office levels.
- The objective setting process in core service reviews must include DNR staff as well as internal and external stakeholders.
- The objectives should be developed at the core service level and the process should be led by the program leaders.

VISION

It was decided by the Water Management Committee that DNRs vision statement be adopted by DNR Waters.

MISSION STATEMENT

During March and April of 1998, PSC members held discussions within their respective Region or Section to identify the key concepts that describe the purpose or meaning of DNR Waters services and mandates. The results of these discussions were compiled into mission statement themes that were drafted into mission statements by the PSC and DNR Waters Management Committee (WMC). Four ideas were presented to DNR Waters staff in a straw poll. The results of the straw poll indicated a strong preference for two of the ideas and the one with the slight edge was selected by the Director.



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A Guide for Addressing Water Resource Management Issues into the 21st Century

IDENTIFYING STRATEGIC ISSUES AND APPROACHES

On May 14th, DNR Waters conducted a strategic planning session for a broad vertical and horizontal cross section of DNR employees. Attendance was split about evenly between DNR Waters staff and other DNR disciplines. Representatives from the Commissioner's Management Team attended as well.

The purpose of this initial strategic planning session was to ensure adequate early involvement of other disciplines and provide a framework for discussions at future planning sessions. Several major water management and organizational issues facing DNR Waters were identified in the session.

To meet the DNR Waters objective for extensive constituent input, seven additional strategic planning sessions were held for DNR Waters staff, key internal and external stakeholders and the general public. The sessions were held on June 16th in Bemidji, June 17th in St. Cloud, June 18th in New Ulm and July 22nd in Two Harbors. Most DNR Waters staff attended one of the sessions and over 100 external customers also attended.

The results of the May 14th planning session were provided to DNR participants as background material. They were asked to identify what strategic issues or approaches were missing. External stakeholders were not provided the guidance materials. They were asked what were the major water resources issues and what actions DNR Waters should take to address them.

The comments, recommendations and suggestions from the strategic planning sessions were analyzed by the PSC and combined into major strategic themes or issues and approaches. The PSC developed goal statements for each strategic issue.

The public review draft of the strategic issues and approaches was posted on the DNR's Web Home page on September 18th for a two week comment period.



Minnesota DNR Waters

