

# FRESHWATER SOCIETY

## 2015 Annual Report



*Photo: Jonathan Mortenson*

To friends, partners, and members:

Freshwater Society continues to be a clear voice, called upon for our ability to translate knowledge into ways of making big impacts at the state and local levels. Inside you will find program descriptions, accomplishments, fiscal information, and a look at who we collaborate with to accomplish our work.

Thanks to all the organizations, corporations, volunteers, community leaders, and agencies who work together with us to propel the best water policy and research into action, in Minnesota and beyond.



**Steve Woods**  
Executive Director



**Master Water Stewards, Joan Freese & Laurie Bruno**



**Raingarden installation, 2014**

The Master Water Stewards program was launched in 2013 as a partnership between Freshwater Society and Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, funded by a Clean Water Fund grant.

Each Steward completes 50 hours of training and undertakes a capstone project to install stormwater management projects and community action campaigns, to reduce runoff volumes and increase awareness about water quality issues in the Minnehaha Creek watershed. Capstone projects from the first two years include: 19 raingardens, five rain barrels, two cisterns and one permeable driveway.

Collectively, these projects capture and infiltrate 887,326 gallons of urban runoff annually, keeping pollutants out of the lakes, streams, and rivers in the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District. Once Stewards are certified, they continue their work, developing new projects that reduce salt use in their neighborhoods, working with small businesses to change their practices, and creating ways to soak more water into the ground.

The next step for the Master Water Stewards program is expansion into watershed districts throughout the Metro area. Six watershed districts are moving ahead with plans to recruit Steward candidates in summer 2015. A fully-online version of the curriculum is in development, adding to our ability to offer the program statewide. With the help of many partners, Freshwater Society is developing an entirely new base of concerned, committed advocates for water. Master Water Stewards are working alongside cities, counties, watershed districts, and agencies to reach out to neighbors and enlist their efforts to work for water.

Small steps make a big difference. There are things you can do today — and long-term — to be part of the solution.



To learn more about becoming a Master Water Steward, visit [masterwaterstewards.org](http://masterwaterstewards.org)

## CELEBRATE YOUR LAKE

Freshwater Society teamed up with Michelob Golden Light in 2013 to organize the Celebrate Your Lake contest, a Facebook campaign where Minnesotans voted for their favorite lake to receive a \$50,000 conservation award. The first winner was Albert Lea Lake. We are currently working with the 2014 winner — the Fairmont Chain of Lakes — to develop their award program, and partnering with MGL to get the 2015 contest underway.



2014 Winner, Fairmont Chain of Lakes

## HEALTHY LAKES AND RIVER PARTNERSHIPS

The Healthy Lakes and River Partnership (HLRP) leverages the unique resources of volunteer-led organizations like lake associations to deliver a unique training and action-planning program. After applying for and receiving funds from the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources, we started recruiting in Otter Tail County in late 2014. In 2015, we began working with eight lake groups to provide training on building a successful community-based lake management plan. Our partners at the West Central Initiative generously provided grant dollars for each participating group to use toward implementing a priority project .



Watershed Association Initiative, 2014

Freshwater is a vital asset in Minnesota. Conserving and preserving our fresh water is essential to our physical and economic health.

## WATERSHED ASSOCIATION INITIATIVE

Through a unique partnership with the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, Freshwater Society provides training, support, and connections for lake and stream communities. During 2014, we provided networking and educational opportunities through events such as the Shallow Lakes Forum and the Metro Summit for Lake and River Groups. Some great work done by our citizen partners. One lake group worked through a successful negotiation with a neighbor to get farm land set aside for conservation, preventing what had been problematic runoff. Another group began working closely with local city staff on a lake improvement program, providing valuable connections between the municipality and the general public. In 2015, we have continued to provide networking and educational resources, and we are seeking out new opportunities for groups to increase their knowledge and become more involved in protecting their waters.

# MOOS FAMILY SPEAKER SERIES

*on water resources*

Since early 2010, Freshwater Society and the University of Minnesota College of Biological Sciences have co-sponsored a stimulating lecture series on water and the environment. The Moos Family Speaker Series has drawn nationally-respected scientists and policy advocates who have delivered memorable lectures on cutting-edge topics. Lectures typically draw 140 and 200 attendees with additional people watching them online. Each lecture pairs the speaker with a panel of Minnesota experts, who add local perspective and join the speaker in taking questions from the audience. In 2014, we also held lectures in Duluth and Mankato.



Dr. Jay Famiglietti, September 2014

We are a trusted leader.  
Our experience and reputation  
for integrity provides us  
opportunity to be heard and  
collaborate with others.



Peter Wilcock panel, 2015

## POLICY WORK

The Freshwater Society Board has a growing focus on bringing the recommendations from our reports and analysis into real policy discussions with state agencies, local government, and the legislature. In 2014, the Board formed a policy committee to dig deeper into some of the most pressing issues facing Minnesota's water resources and provide advice based on the policy work of the organization. Freshwater Society continues to prioritize its work on water pollution associated with urban regions and agricultural operations, and groundwater sustainability.

## ROAD SALT MANAGEMENT

Our annual Road Salt Symposium continues to shape minds. It features research on chloride in Minnesota's ground and surface waters, and innovative programs and new methods to maintain safe roads while lessening impacts on water. Our Chloride Management Program works with the cities of Rochester, Mankato, and St. Cloud to address chloride pollution through training, workshops, and management plans.



Road Salt Symposium, 2015

We help others solve problems. We expand the capacity of organizations and individuals to make an impact.

## ICE OUT/LOON IN FUNDRAISER

Each year, Freshwater Society holds an annual gala fundraiser to celebrate the ice going out on Lake Minnetonka and the loons returning. Loons are significant to the ice going out because they will only return to lakes with good water quality. The fundraiser includes live and silent auctions, food, drinks, live entertainment, and a short program to honor the Clean Water Champion of the year.



Ice OUT/Loon IN fundraiser, 2015



Environmental Initiative

## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

In 2015, the Master Water Stewards program received the *Environmental Initiative Award for Environmental Education*. Each year, Environmental Initiative honors innovative projects that have achieved extraordinary environmental results by harnessing the power of partnership. The Master Water Stewards also won the 2015 Minnehaha Creek Watershed District *Watershed Heroes Award for Citizen Engagement*, which recognizes exemplary stewards of our water resources.

## BALANCE SHEET

<b>Assets</b>	
Cash/Cash Equivalents	\$453,089
Receivables	\$131,044
Prepaid Expenses	\$5,635
Inventory	\$10,640
Fixed Assets	\$11,195
Investments	\$619,015
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$1,230,618</b>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	
Accounts Payable	\$32,867
Accrued Liabilities	\$29,227
Deferred Revenue	\$16,380
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$78,474</b>
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$905,026
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	\$188,743
Permanently Restricted Net Assets	\$58,375
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$1,152,144</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>\$1,230,618</b>

## INCOME STATEMENT

Support and Revenue	<u>\$972,027</u>
Program Expenses	
Citizen Nonpoint	\$346,150
Nonpoint Policy	\$154,622
Calendar	\$83,942
Communications/Web Programs	<u>\$32,460</u>
Total Program Expenses	\$617,174
Management & General Expenses	\$212,765
Fundraising Expenses	<u>\$59,000</u>
Total Expenses	<u>\$888,939</u>
Change in Net Assets	<u><u>\$83,088</u></u>

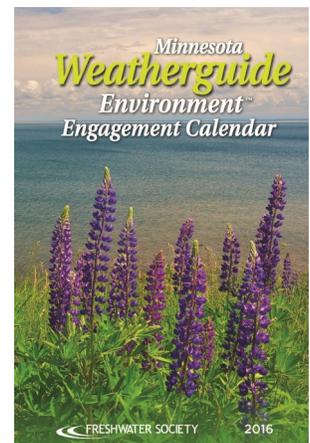
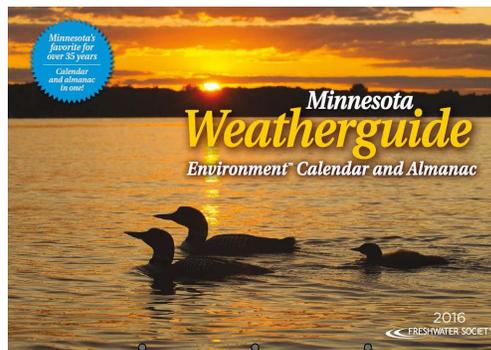
## MINNESOTA WEATHERGUIDE ENVIRONMENT CALENDARS

In 1977, Freshwater Society produced the first Minnesota Weatherguide Environment Calendar. It quickly became Minnesota's favorite source for weather information, phenology, astronomy, and stunning regional photography. More than 35 years later, the calendar has a loyal following and strong sales.

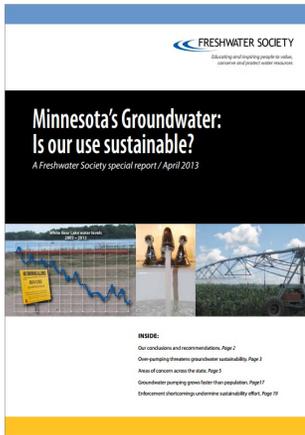
Back by popular demand, we reintroduced the Minnesota Weatherguide Engagement Calendar, a 120-page weekly planner with much of the same content as the wall calendar and more than 50 beautiful photos.

We are grateful to our partners — KARE 11 and Minnesota Public Radio — for supporting the Weatherguide Environment Calendar.

We sell many calendars at the KARE 11 booth at the Minnesota State Fair. They can also be ordered online at [freshwater.org/weatherguide-calendars](http://freshwater.org/weatherguide-calendars).

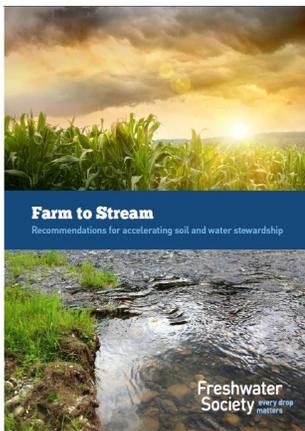


## PUBLICATIONS



### GROUNDWATER REPORT

In 2013, Freshwater Society published *Minnesota's Groundwater: Is our use sustainable?* The report includes data on groundwater use, estimates of increased pumping over time, expert opinions on the sustainability of that pumping, and discussion about problems with the Department of Natural Resources' enforcement of a law and rules that require permits for high-capacity pumping. Freshwater Society is using this report to facilitate workshops in Marshall, Otter Tail County, Rochester, and St. Cloud. The workshops — *Groundwater: Managing an Invisible Resource* — are sponsored by MASWCD and MDNR to incorporate groundwater into local county and SWCD projects and outreach. In 2016, we will issue a follow up report on accomplishments.

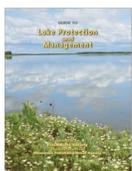


### FARM TO STREAM REPORT

More recently, Freshwater Society published *Farm to Stream: Recommendations for Accelerating Soil and Water Stewardship* (January 2015). The report takes a look at lessons learned from the FarmWise program, identifies the barriers in the social dimension of working with farmers, and develops recommendations on how to make our current agricultural conservation system work better. Recommendations include adjusting funding structures, and making investments in local capacity, relationships and partnerships, and research.

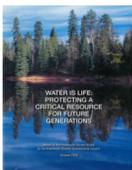
Progress requires insight and understanding. By turning credible research into clear action steps and engaging information, we drive systemic change.

## ADDITIONAL REPORTS



### Guide to Lake Protection and Management, 2009

This 27-page guide includes information on watersheds, the chemistry of lakes, exotic species, development of a lake management plan, and best management practices for preserving water quality. It was published in cooperation with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.



### Water is Life: Protecting a Critical Resource for Future Generations, 2008

This Freshwater Society report on Minnesota's ground and surface waters focuses on the sustainability of ground water and the pollution that contaminates many lakes and streams. The report was prepared by an advisory group, the Guardianship Council.

All reports are available online at [freshwater.org](http://freshwater.org)

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August 2015

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**Our mission**

Freshwater Society works to educate and inspire people to conserve, protect, and restore freshwater resources.

A big thank you to all of our donors and partners for their contributions to Freshwater Society. Your support makes our work possible.



**MINNEHAHA CREEK**  
WATERSHED DISTRICT

College of  
**Biological Sciences**

MINNESOTA ITAP



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
**Driven to Discover<sup>SM</sup>**



Responsive partner.  
Exceptional outcomes.

