

FROZEN POND | KALLA LARSON | 2018 MINNESOTA WEATHERGUIDE ENVIRONMENT CALENDAR



December 2018

December monthly normals from the Minnesota Weatherguide Environment™ Calendar:

Temperature: Max 27.1°F Min 12.3°F

Precipitation: 1.16 in. (Snowfall 11.5 in.)

SEE PAGE 2

for an important message from
Executive Director Steve Woods

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FRESHWATER

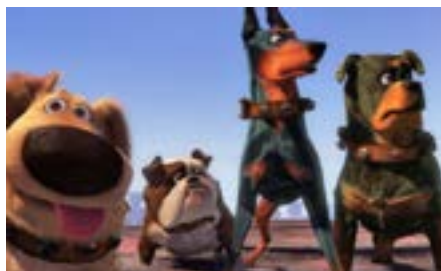
Distracted by squirrels

by Steve Woods, executive director



Distractions. The movie “Up” has a wonderful recurring joke where the entire cast of dogs is distracted by someone yelling “squirrel!”. It also happens to work

on my father as he engages in his own 30-Years War with the rodents plaguing his backyard bird feeder.



Desktop squirrels.

I just put a note on top of a pile of papers I, apparently, have deemed as too important to toss but not important enough to act on or file. The note says, “Extra s*** laying around is distracting and makes me lose sight of what the priorities are.”

The hope is that I first think about the priorities and then slay the pile. I think a similar mindset would be useful as the current and incoming occupants of the Capitol complex in St. Paul filter out the distractions from the essential.

Gubernatorial squirrels.

As the “Water Governor” leaves office there will be plenty of changes as Governor Walz’s team expands to include Commissioners of Agriculture, Natural Resources, Health, and Pollution Control. There will also be new chairs for the Met Council and the Board of Water and Soil Resources

Squirrels, continued on page 2

Freshwater is a nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring and empowering people to value and conserve our freshwater resources.

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FRESHWATER

2424 Territorial Road Suite B
St. Paul, MN 55114
651-313-5800 | freshwater.org
freshwater@freshwater.org

Squirrels, continued from cover

— plus members of other boards, commissions, and councils.

There will also be individuals asserting reorganization is needed to "fix water." These are loud individuals rather than organizations who have studied the issue closely. Freshwater believes the state's water system is an example of what Midwestern modesty would rate as being "pretty good," so it would be unfortunate to let the tired refrain of "we need to reorganize" distract us from addressing the real problems.

How refreshing would it be for the Executive Branch to work together to tackle a few of our thornier problems by enabling and expecting the agencies to achieve a FEW goals that none of them can accomplish on their own?

We suggest having them address:

- rising flood flows across Southern Minnesota
- shrinking supplies of safe groundwater threatening economic and human health in several regions

Legislative squirrels.

Last session's pennywise and pound foolish raid on \$164 million of lottery funds was a bad way to do a good thing (pay for needed treatment plant upgrades). Freshwater's board is on record as expressing gratitude to the handful of groups who have filed a legal challenge because the fiscal maneuver would likely violate the Minnesota Constitution and state statute while definitely violating Minnesotans' wallets by wasting \$35 million in additional interest payments. Here's hoping the 2019 session finds legislators willing to quickly do the right thing again — but this time without the distraction of doing it the wrong way.

We've watched the Legislative Water Commission methodically work its way through a long list of issues over the past year. We hope their pruning of that long list down to a short one produces

bipartisan support for a few priorities. Having some new idea spring forth that was thought up on Tuesday and introduced on Thursday would be the equivalent of yelling "squirrel."

In closing.

The reason I'm thinking about priorities and avoiding distractions is that I recently told the Freshwater board that I will be stepping back from my executive director leadership role in 2019.

Everything's great here — really! — and I have loved being able to wed my experience to the nimbleness and transformative power that nonprofits bring. We have a pragmatic staff with field and policy experience that has made us a sought-after partner by other non-profits, citizen groups, and many state and local governments. And our Board! Check out our board members to see how we have these fantastic intellects willing to help steer this organization! I literally bounce out of bed most mornings eager to get to the office.

A decision this weighty took some time to make. What it ends up looking like will likely keep evolving, but I know how it starts. The Board wants me to overlap with my successor just like Gene Merriam and Joan Nephew did for me five years ago. OMG that was a lifesaver for me and Freshwater never missed a beat as I stomped on the gas and played with the steering wheel. They, and the legendary Dick Gray, were supportive while gently dispensing advice and answering a zillion questions.

Ideally stepping back means working part-time because I still have a lot of ideas and relationships I'm not ready to let go of. There will be special projects I'll carry out as long as people want me around. I'm looking at my local watershed district board or other appointments as a way to continue working for water.

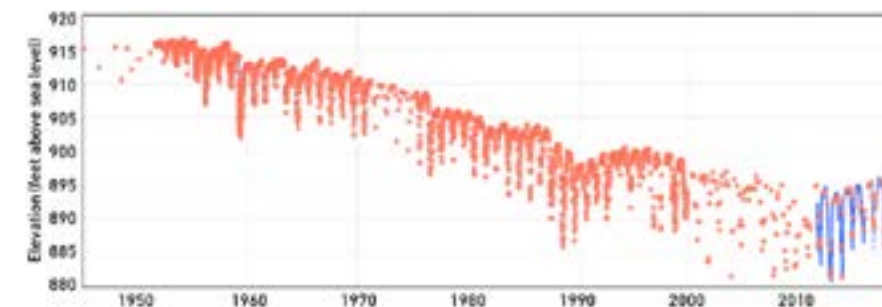
During the interview process with Freshwater back in 2013, I unearthed a deeply emotional sense that I owed this place something. Freshwater's groundbreaking work in the early 1980s expanded my water horizons and gave me perspectives that benefitted me through my private- and public-sector years. It has

been an absolute joy and privilege to bookend my career through a Freshwater lens. The Board has started a search process and is accepting resumes for my successor through the month of December. If you know somebody that should apply, tell them!



by Steve Woods and Carrie Jennings

The 2019 legislative session will find Freshwater out front advocating for a two-year study to inform safe and economic approaches to groundwater recharge. In those areas where groundwater reserves are shrinking, we must understand the range of options and costs involved to enhance and replenish it. In doing so, Minnesota's groundwater will continue to be a source of economic strength for communities, farmers, and businesses.



Water levels decline where groundwater is used faster than it is replenished by precipitation. Graph and photo: MnDNR

Our aim is for the legislature to direct the University of Minnesota Water Resources Center to conduct a two-year, interdisciplinary study to identify areas where groundwater recharge makes both economic and geologic sense and report back to the Legislature during the 2020-21 session.

Also of interest for us is raising the state water connection Safe Drinking Water (service connection) fee so the Minnesota Department of Health can continue to adequately monitor drinking water supplies; a voluntary salt applicator training program that can lessen the over application of harmful winter salts by (non-public) maintenance crews; and support for the slate of well-thought out recommendations from the Clean Water Council and Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council.



Freshwater and Water Bar gather water stories

by Deirdre Coleman, program coordinator

Master Water Stewards are gathering in circles this holiday season to share their water stories at the Water Bar & Public Studio (#Hygge). Freshwater is partnering with the Water Bar on Water Tender trainings, which teach people to serve drinking water from various sources while performing the traditional bartender duty of listening and inspiring people to share their own stories and experiences — with water!

Being a Master Water Steward is not just about educating communities and implementing water quality projects anymore. Master Water Stewards are in a great position to hear how people from all communities relate to water, and foster relationships that help conserve and protect Minnesota's water at an individual level.

Share your water story on our Facebook page at [facebook.com/FreshwaterSociety](https://www.facebook.com/FreshwaterSociety).

Thanks to all who joined us to celebrate 50 years of Freshwater!



Read more about our 50-year history: tinyurl.com/50yearsFW
And check out the event photo gallery: tinyurl.com/50freshwater

Renew your membership or make a year-end gift today!

Did you know that nearly 30% of all charitable donations made in a year are made in the month of December?

Freshwater is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and donations from individuals like you are at the heart of what we do. Members, renew NOW to receive your Weatherguide by December 22. Or, consider a year-end donation to Freshwater. Your donation makes a tangible difference for the lakes, rivers, and drinking water we value!

Renew your membership or make a year-end gift at freshwater.org/donate

give
TO THE
MAX
NOV. 15, 2018

Thank you!

Thank you so much to everyone who donated to Freshwater for Give to the Max Day.

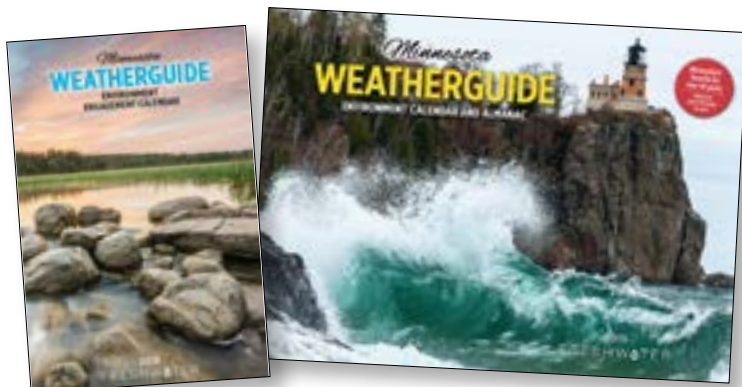
Thanks to you and our generous Board who provided matching funds, **Freshwater raised over \$16,700** for our programs and services through Give to the Max Day. Donations from individuals on Give to the Max are a major part of our annual operating budget and provide many of the resources our work for water requires. Thank you for making great things happen for clean and reliable water in Minnesota!



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Order by December 20 to guarantee delivery by Christmas.



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Upcoming events

18th Annual Road Salt Symposium

February 7, 2019 | 8:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.
Plymouth Creek Center, Plymouth



Make plans to attend the annual Road Salt Symposium, to explore current research and innovative best practices for use of road salt that ensures protection of our natural resources and our communities.

Registration now open: freshwater.org/road-salt-symposium

FREE PUBLIC LECTURE featuring Dr. David Montgomery

April 16, 2019

5:30 pm public reception | 7 pm lecture

Dr. David Montgomery, Professor of Earth and Space Sciences at the University of Washington has published a new book that makes the case for an agriculture that is profitable while also helping feed us all, cool the planet, and restore life to the land.

Stay tuned for details at freshwater.org.

Ice Out, Loon In Fundraising Gala

SAVE THE DATE! May 4, 2019

The Metropolitan Club & Ballroom
Golden Valley



Is it too early to think spring?! Mark your calendar for Saturday, May 4 for our next annual *Ice Out, Loon In* fundraising gala. Join us for a night of fun and great networking – all in support of a great cause.

To learn more about becoming a sponsor of the event, contact Mary at 651.313.5817 or msalisbury@freshwater.org.

Metro Water Summit

May 2019

Watch for details coming soon!