



impact report **2018**

Photo: Sara Simma

FRESHWATER

Freshwater Society works to inspire and empower people
to value and preserve our freshwater resources.



Steve Woods
Executive Director

mission

Our mission is to inspire and empower people to value and preserve our freshwater resources.

guiding principles

We advocate for policy in a factual and evidence-based manner.

We are a knowledgeable and collaborative convener and catalyst for systemic change.

We focus on Minnesota and regional water issues and are globally aware.

We partner with and leverage the work of other organizations that align with our mission.

We model sustainable practices in our operations.

thank you from the director

As we wrap up this fiscal year, we look forward to our upcoming 50th anniversary and the chance to celebrate with supporters old and new for an entire year. We will be looking back at decades of Freshwater accomplishments and the supporters who made them possible, and hope to share with you these important people who inspired us on our pragmatic path.

From the beginning, we've taken the time to get the science right. The special sauce that sets us apart from other organizations though is the belief that everyone has a right to clean water *and* everyone has a role in finding clean water solutions. Minnesotans know that — heck, they've voted for environmental spending multiple times and have directly supported what we do for 50 years.

We're inspired by how much citizens have accomplished for water. It's not easy work but the progress is there to see. We are building the case for a bill that will fund a study of how and where enhanced recharge of groundwater makes sense. We are optimistic this bill will be passed into law, supported by four years of groundwater policy and coalition building work we have accomplished in recent years.

For surface water, we've minted 277 Master Water Stewards who are effecting neighborhood-scale changes that improve the water reaching streams and lakes. We've also seen payoff from our five-year push to bring attention to increasing stream flows in southern Minnesota. Landowners along these rivers are suffering from the doubling of flows that are damaging their land. We're seeing the agencies and legislature begin moving toward restoring flows in the Minnesota River watershed to levels more in line with historical rates. It'll be hard, but Minnesotans have shown a willingness to accomplish hard things and we will be there to help.

Look inside for more stories of progress. We have many to share thanks to the ongoing support of people and organizations that care. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Steve Woods

our impact

Research and Public Policy:

We produce well-researched, practical reports that influence people and impact public policy.

Programs: We equip people and communities to improve water quality and advance groundwater sustainability.

Events: We educate and inspire people to understand, value, and wisely manage our water resources.

HIGHLIGHTS



3+M

gallons of water redirected and soaked in each year through Master Water Stewards program



277

Master Water Stewards certified since 2013



50

YEARS OF FRESHWATER!



877

volunteer hours donated to support Freshwater programs



883

people reached through educational events such as the Moos lecture series and Road Salt Symposium



1,000

students served by Weatherguide Calendars in the Classroom

spotlight: research & public policy

Freshwater conducts research and promotes public policy that protects and preserves Minnesota's water resources, both surface water and groundwater. Our grounding principle is that restoring natural landscapes will have many positive impacts such as:

- reducing river erosion caused by high flows that increase sediment loads and impair habitat,
- minimizing farm and urban runoff flowing to lakes and rivers and keeping chemicals from soaking into the ground and polluting groundwater, and
- replenishing groundwater and managing pumping and other practices that interfere with water flow.

“All of us who care about Minnesota's water should be grateful for Freshwater Society's success with sound study and advocacy for progress.”
Watershed district official

impacts



14 presentations, workshops, and other outreach to influence groups like these:

- Hennepin County Emergency Management
- Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance
- Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Minnesota Groundwater Association
- Legislative Water Commission
- Interagency Reuse Workgroup



Reached wide audience through public presentations, comment letters, white papers, reports, and radio interviews

Addressed issues that include nitrogen fertilizer, chloride in groundwater, risk of precipitation-driven landslides, sustainable use of groundwater, and small-town wastewater treatment



59 partnerships with local/ regional governments and lake associations

- Worked with 32 local and regional governments and 27 lake associations



Increased understanding of local groundwater picture

More informed citizens concerning history and scope of water problems



18 interest groups engaged in year-long conversation about outcomes of Clean Water Act

- Published summary report of results, *Putting Minnesota on a Clean Water Trajectory*



Convened 17 stakeholders to assess progress on Clean Water Act goals

Provided guidelines for the next ten years to the Clean Water Council and executive branch agencies



160 hours spent on direct field work research to inform policy efforts

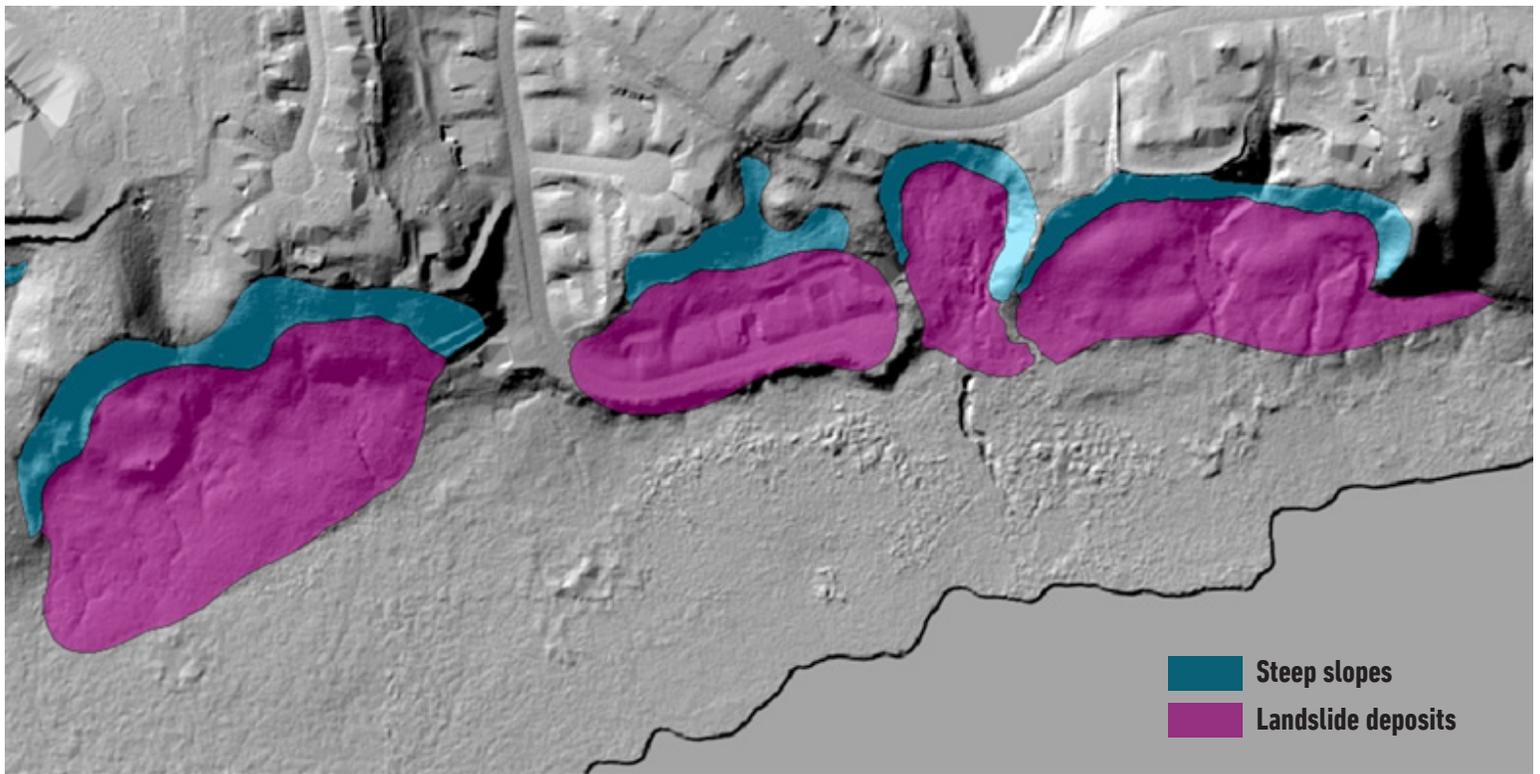
- Engaged by Lower Minnesota River Watershed District to document changes in sediment loads in Minnesota River Basin
- Mapped landslide-prone river bluffs in Hennepin County in cooperation with four watershed organizations



Provided evidence on how returning river to more natural flow can improve upstream and downstream conditions

Demonstrated how using water storage to reduce peak flows, instead of applying spot fixes, can reduce overall costs

Informed cities of how improved storm water management on bluffs can reduce sediment loading to river and decrease risk to homes and infrastructure



Steep slopes
 Landslide deposits

Large landslides mapped along the Minnesota River bluffs that occurred prior to settlement demonstrate how bluff materials fail when saturated.

a closer look

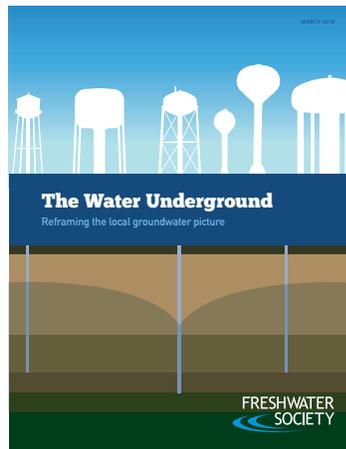
Aquifer recharge as a tool to replenish groundwater reserves

Minnesotans want and need assurances that they will have dependable groundwater supplies. Replenishment of groundwater should keep up with withdrawals. Where groundwater is overdrafted, we may need recharge as a tool to augment groundwater supply.

Groundwater at risk

Some groundwater reserves are shrinking: groundwater is being used faster than it is being replenished by rainfall.

Minnesota needs to fund an aquifer recharge study to understand the range of options and costs involved to enhance and replenish our groundwater resources.



Freshwater Research & Policy Director Carrie Jennings testifies before the Minnesota Legislature.

Building groundwater resilience

Three sequential steps build groundwater resilience:

- 1) Reduce groundwater use
- 2) Reuse groundwater before discarding it
- 3) Recharge groundwater

We are already working on the first two but some parts of the state may need to have the third tool — recharging groundwater — in place in order to avert an economic crisis.

Given the uneven distribution of groundwater across the state, each region requires its own solutions. Freshwater is planning to ask the Legislature to direct the Water Resources Center to conduct a two-year, interdisciplinary study including a stakeholder process to identify areas where groundwater recharge makes both economic and geologic sense.

[Learn more about our policy work at freshwater.org](https://freshwater.org)

spotlight: programs

Freshwater programs equip individuals and communities to become active participants in protecting and preserving water resources. From on-the-ground community engagement to facilitation services that coordinate the work of statewide agencies and water groups, we multiply the impacts to our water resources.

“I was amazed at the great turnout and the great discussion that was had by everyone. A lot of good information was discussed and collected by the group. By far the best stakeholder event I have been a part of in my 20 years at the SWCD.”

Attendee at facilitated event

impacts



78 Master Water Stewards certified in the 2017-2018 program year

- Twelve classes on hydrology, water policy, community engagement, and landscaping for water quality held at five locations
- Developing partnership with Water Bar & Public Studio to host listening sessions with culturally diverse partners to gain knowledge and understanding of cultural perspectives around water
- 277 Master Water Stewards certified to date



Messages on water health shared with hundreds of people in steward communities

Water, climate, and habitats benefited from new on-the-ground capstone projects

More than three million gallons of water redirected and soaked into the ground each year



26 facilitation events and projects statewide to help protect water resources

- Supported northeastern Minnesota agency staff to help farmers identify solutions that protect agricultural economies and groundwater supply
- Convened 18 interest groups to find agreement on policy and funding changes that will put — and keep — Minnesota on a clean water trajectory
- Helped a local watershed district navigate challenges with implementing a recent rule change



More projects in the ground, strategically placed to improve water quality

Enhanced collaboration among partners

Increased resilience to climate change impacts

More efficient delivery of conservation and technical assistance statewide



150 individuals attended biennial State of Water Conference

- Community members, lake and river associations, and staff from water resource organizations and agencies built relationships and learned about new ways to care for our waters



Stronger individuals and groups with additional and more durable capacity

Productive relationships that support clean water outcomes

a closer look

Master Water Stewards

Freshwater's Master Water Stewards program educates and trains community volunteers on local water issues. These certified volunteers engage others in their own communities to protect and improve water quality. In the 2017-2018 program year, we certified 78 additional stewards, for a total of 277 certified to date.

Facilitation Services

Freshwater provides consulting facilitation services for water resource professionals, neighborhood groups, lake associations, and decision-makers. These services move entities from conversation to action. We help them develop and implement public input processes, set goals, plan collaboratively, resolve organizational conflicts, and manage difficult conversations, resulting in stronger organizations and more work completed.

[Learn more about our programs at freshwater.org](https://www.freshwater.org)



Stewards celebrate end of the program year with a gathering that included sharing capstone projects.



Water, climate, and habitats benefit from on-the-ground projects of Master Water Stewards.



Water Conservation Advisor training includes practice developing strategies using Art of Hosting techniques.

spotlight: educational events

Freshwater hosts annual and biennial events that educate stakeholders and engage them in critical dialogue around water issues, including current trends, new science and technology, policy and research needs, and more. Topics include:

- innovations in chloride management for winter maintenance staff
- policy development for reducing chloride liability issues
- trends in green infrastructure and urban planning
- the role of community members in lake management and protection

Events are held throughout Minnesota to reach varied and targeted audiences.

“The work done by Freshwater has been invaluable to me as I serve as a Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor in rural Minnesota.”
Project partner

impacts



300

people attended
annual Moos Family
Lecture series



Educated hundreds of people on water issues facing communities both local and global

Expanded collaboration among regional partners, such as the University of Minnesota College of Biological Sciences, for greater collective impact

- Kathy Lake, pollution prevention manager for the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District, shared her innovative approach to address seemingly intractable, watershed-wide pollution issues
- Dr. Jennifer Francis, senior scientist at the Woods Hole Research Center, explained new research that links increasing extreme weather events with the rapidly melting Arctic



308

people attended
annual Road Salt
Symposium



Better understanding of road salt impacts on our water resources and environment

Greater awareness of innovative practices, tools, and equipment to manage icy road conditions

Actionable steps resulting in reduced chloride used on roads and entering water bodies in Minnesota

Model Show and Ice Policy developed to help cities and counties create policies and minimize risk

- Speakers from across the country discuss their approaches and innovations, such as solar roads and using pickle brine
- Environmental Leadership Awards presented to organizations and individuals whose exemplary work and innovative solutions protect water quality
- Target audience is public works employees so practices can be implemented right away

a closer look

Moos Family Lecture Series

Freshwater partners with the University of Minnesota College of Biological Sciences to co-sponsor these engaging, free, public lectures that bring new research and innovations, important water issues, and captivating stories from across the country to Minnesota. We aim to educate and motivate our audiences with the knowledge and tools to better protect our water resources.

Road Salt Symposium

Wise use of road salt creates a win-win situation that protects the environment, reduces community expense, and ensures safe roads. Each year about 300 participants attend this annual symposium to learn about the latest innovations in road salt application and technology, and consider new challenges on the horizon. Co-hosts Freshwater and Fortin Consulting present Environmental Leadership Awards to recognize innovation and advancement in chloride reduction and best practices.



Kathy Lake (center) took audience questions during a Moos Lecture event, along with Freshwater's Carrie Jennings and Paul Nelson of Scott Watershed Management Organization.



2018 Road Salt Symposium attendees learn about the latest practices and technology to protect water.

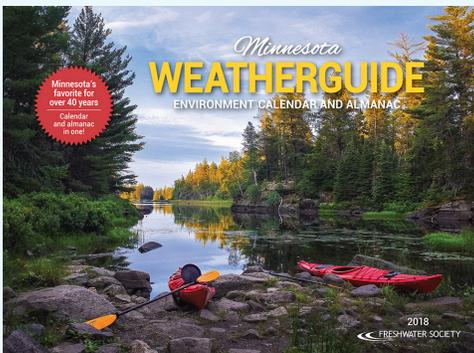


Minnesota Weatherguide Environment Calendar/ Almanac

For more than 40 years Freshwater has published the Minnesota Weatherguide Environment Calendar/ Almanac, a favorite source for weather information, phenology, astronomy, and stunning regional photography. Calendars are in **20,000 households** and are used in classrooms throughout the state to teach kids about meteorology, phenology, and astronomy.



weekly planner



wall calendar

financials

FY 2018

Balance Sheet

Assets

Cash/Cash Equivalents	\$468,114
Receivables	286,659
Prepaid Expenses	14,774
Inventory	14,100
Investments	4,364,588
Fixed Assets	71,665
Total Assets	\$5,219,900

Liabilities and Net Assets

Accounts Payable	\$48,198
Accrued Liabilities	65,459
Total Liabilities	\$113,657
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$4,780,068
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	267,800
Permanently Restricted Net Assets	58,375
Total Net Assets	\$5,106,243
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$5,219,900

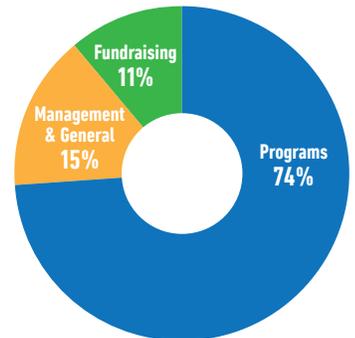
Income Statement

Support and Revenue	\$1,483,711
Program Expenses	\$925,295
Management and General Expenses	188,192
Fundraising Expenses	131,924
Total Expenses	\$1,245,411
Change in Net Assets	\$238,300



Freshwater Society meets all the accountability standards of the Charities Review Council of Minnesota.

Expenses



Thank you to the generous donors, sponsors, and funders who make critical freshwater protections possible.

Freshwater is a member-supported organization. Contact Mary Salisbury to get involved: msalisbury@freshwater.org.

board of directors

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Alex Van Loh, *Program Assistant*

Steve Woods, *Executive Director*

Leslie Yetke, *Program Director*

INTERNS

Brian Bohman, *Research & Policy Intern*

Ethan Kurak, *Research Intern*

“

The most compelling and rewarding aspect of being involved with this organization is that we've been able to successfully adapt and evolve to address the needs of today while staying true to Dick Gray's original vision of preserving and protecting our freshwater resources.

Board member

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FRESHWATER

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