

annual impact report 2019



Photo: Phil Sinn

FRESHWATER  50  YEARS

Freshwater's mission is to inspire and empower people to value and preserve our freshwater resources



John Linc Stine
Executive Director

Letter from the director

Water connects us. At Freshwater, we believe clean water solutions should connect us, too. More than 50 years ago, from humble beginnings and a grand vision led by our founder Dick Gray, Freshwater began engaging people from many perspectives — research, policy, business, and community — to form science-based solutions for clean, reliable water. Today, that remains the heart of our work for safe drinking water and healthy lakes and rivers for Minnesotans.

People like you make our research, policy, and community engagement programs possible. Your dedication and financial investments help spread our message to new audiences and deepen our impact. In this report, we have included a sampling of our work from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019 – our 2019 fiscal year. It was a special one, in which we celebrated our 50th anniversary and said farewell to outgoing Executive Director Steve Woods. With your ongoing support, we look forward to the next 50 years of preserving freshwater.

Sincerely,

John Linc Stine, executive director

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.

FY19 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



Safeguarding drinking water for Minnesotans

Minnesota's groundwater is used in a multitude of ways. Seventy-five percent of Minnesotans rely on it for the water they drink, while our economy draws on it to grow crops, manufacture products, and sustain public health. In some parts of our state, groundwater is being used faster than it is being replenished; in others, it's vulnerable to contamination. Read about our work to safeguard these resources.

Helping municipalities conserve water

In 2019, Freshwater introduced the Water Conservation Advisor (WCA) program – a new track within the Master

Water Steward (MWS) – program focused on the relationship between groundwater and surface water, and the increasing need to stabilize and restore groundwater levels in some parts of our state. Three out of four Twin Cities' residents rely on groundwater, and based on data from the Metropolitan Council, much of the region's future growth is expected to occur in areas that could have groundwater shortages.



MWS
by the numbers*

- 35 partnerships
- 342 stewards certified
- 9,000+ hours volunteered
- 28,000+ people reached
- 18 million gallons water filtered

Learn more about MWS on page 4 and at freshwater.org

* 2013-2019

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Ensuring safe drinking water and reliable groundwater for future generations

From 2015-2018 Freshwater researched and summarized the current status of groundwater in Minnesota, publishing its findings in *The Water Underground*, a series of three reports focused on municipal use, agricultural use, and extending groundwater supply through conservation, reuse, and recharge. We found that parts of the state were going to feel the groundwater pinch before others and would need immediate intervention to ensure sustainable supplies. One option is Aquifer Storage and Recovery, pumping clean water into an aquifer and then recovering it for later use, typically with additional treatment. In 2019, Freshwater successfully drafted and helped pass legislation – in record time and with bipartisan support – to fund a study of Aquifer Storage and Recovery, to explore where it is most needed and what barriers to consider. The eighteen-month study, led by Freshwater, kicks off July 1, 2019 and includes an academic team and stakeholder engagement.



Preserving surface water

Minnesota is home to over 11,000 lakes and borders one of the largest freshwater bodies in the world. Our state's name is rooted in the Dakota phrase Mni Sota Makoce, meaning "sky-tinted water." We're a headwaters state in which more than 98 percent of the water we have falls from the sky rather than flowing in from neighbors. Yet, much of our water leaves Minnesota for downstream communities more polluted than it should be. Freshwater initiatives are turning the tide on this challenge.

Tending our shared waters: community leadership with an equity lens

Freshwater's MWS program equips and empowers community leaders to help keep our surface waters clean. In 2019, we graduated a new cohort of 65 water stewards who are hard at work in their watersheds, cities, and neighborhoods building raingardens, installing rain barrels, and involving their neighbors in actions to limit stormwater pollution. In addition, MWS program staff collaborated with Water Bar and Public Studio in a series of five story circles led by artists and community leaders to explore the many ways of knowing about and caring for water. These circles created space for transformative conversations and engagement around the myriad ways different cultures, communities, and individuals relate to water. Long-term, this project is part of Freshwater's growing commitment to increase our cultural competency and ensure our programs include all Minnesotans.

Protecting waterways in Hennepin County and the health and safety of Minnesotans

In recent years, precipitation-driven landslides in the Twin Cities have threatened public health and safety, and even cost human life. Recent and projected increases

in precipitation will continue to impact both the natural and built world. To address these challenges,

“ I wouldn't be who I am today if I weren't a steward. ”

Mary Hammes, Cohort '14

in 2019 Freshwater completed a first-of-its-kind landslide inventory for Hennepin County Emergency Management (HCEM) for inclusion in their Landslide Hazard Atlas. The inventory identified historic slides and linked them

to prior precipitation; mapped slides of unknown age, and documented geologic and human factors impacting susceptibility. The goal of HCEM is to better predict these hazards, and to mitigate or avoid them. Additionally, Freshwater wants to reduce sediment loading to streams caused by landslides. This joint project received an Environmental Stewardship Award from the Minnesota Department of Transportation.



Building careers, confronting contaminants

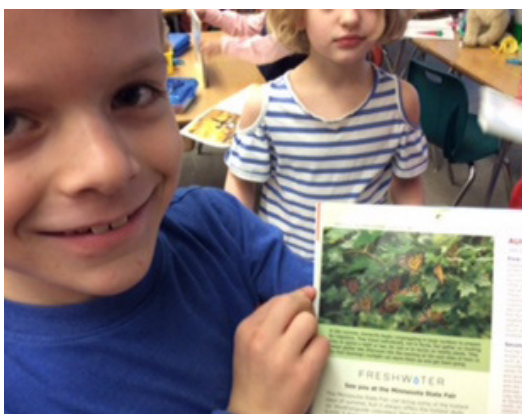
In 2019, Freshwater worked with student intern Rob McManus from St. John's University to lead research in four Twin Cities' lakes on a contaminant of emerging concern, which poses a threat to human and aquatic health. Continuing into next year, he will raise money for lab work, conduct lake coring and synthesize lab results into a report for state lawmakers and for publication.

Empowering change statewide

Empowering people is the heart of what we do across programs in research, public policy, and community engagement. In 2019, we provided wide-ranging engagement and education opportunities for Minnesotans. Our vision of lasting change means empowering us all, from the grassroots to top policy makers.

Inspiring Minnesotans of all ages

Freshwater has published Minnesota's favorite calendar for more than 40 years. The Weatherguide provides an abundance of information on weather, phenology, astronomy, and issues that affect water in our backyards and beyond. Stunning regional photography makes the calendar both an almanac and an art gallery. It's on the wall of over 20,000 homes, and, thanks to a long-time partnership with the Jeffers Foundation, is used in elementary classrooms across the state to enhance environmental education curriculum.



Bridging science and society

We often rely on science and technology in our water work, and overlook the power of people. Knowing who to involve and when, as well as who is not included and why, are critical to achieving our clean water goals. In May, 2019, the inaugural Metro Water Summit explored new and innovative ways to protect our surface and groundwater resources while spotlighting the key role people play in the success of these projects and programs. Over 200 engineers, city planners, local government and watershed district staff, private industry representatives, students, and community leaders attended the day-long summit that included a plenary, breakout sessions, keynote speakers, networking, and free admission to the Science Museum of Minnesota.

Preserving Minnesota's Legacy, moving the needle for water statewide

In 2008, Minnesotans overwhelmingly approved the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment to the state constitution, including the Clean Water Fund (CWF). This year marked the ten year anniversary of the Legacy Amendment and a decade of statewide investments. To mark the occasion, Freshwater hosted a celebration at the Minnesota History Center and published a summary report.

In 2019, we also wrapped up a yearlong process convening representatives from state agencies, interest groups, and the Clean Water Council to ensure that Minnesota stays on a clean water trajectory, and is making the best use of the CWF. We published a report with the group's recommendations and spent the 2019 Legislative Session meeting with legislators, testifying in committees, and coordinating with state agencies to advance the recommendations. Several are now in motion or already complete.



Financials FY 2019

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

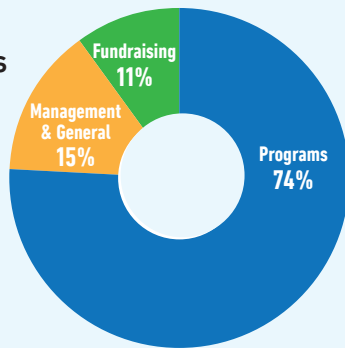
Liabilities and Net Assets

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

Expenses



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



Freshwater is proud to be a member of the Minnesota Environmental Fund, which supports workplace giving that benefits the environment.

Thank you to our members, donors and supporters for investing in healthy water for Minnesotans.

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 Environmental Services
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 Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources
 Minnesota Environmental Fund
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FRESHWATER **50** YEARS

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“
Water is life
and Freshwater
advocates on my
behalf to leave
water and life
healthier than
we found it.
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”