November 2017

November monthly normals from the Minnesota Weatherguide Environment™ Calendar:
Temperature: Max 41.2°F Min 26.2°F
Precipitation: 1.77 in.

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Leaders who matter
by Steve Woods, executive director

At the end of November I’ll be part of a team preparing newly appointed watershed district managers to tackle their demanding roles as public officials. I love doing this because their unique experience and aspirations made them compelling enough for their appointing county boards to tap them for the job. They will hear me talk of the late Dave Moran.

Dave Moran served a decade on the board of the Prior Lake Spring lake Watershed District in the 1990s following a distinctive and long career as an executive with the old North Central, then Northwest Airlines.

I’d heard former employees of Northwest absolutely rave about the man’s authentic and energetic leadership.

The district was a client of mine back when I was a consulting engineer. Dave was the best board member I have ever encountered. That’s a bold assertion, but the man was a force when it came to pitching in to move people, minds, or dirt. He often spoke of being a “board member who mattered”. Dave figures prominently in the stories I share during training.

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Freshwater Society is a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating and inspiring people to value, conserve, and protect water resources.

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**Looking for answers underwater**

by Carrie Jennings, research and policy director

As part of Freshwater’s ongoing work to address the problem of nonpoint source pollution, we are collaborating with LacCore of the University of Minnesota to help the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD) answer the question: are sedimentation rates on the Minnesota River floodplain increasing?

We think that the answer lies hidden in the sediment at the bottom of floodplain lakes between Chaska and Bloomington. To study that sediment, we spent a brisk week in early November taking core samples from two lakes in the Minnesota River National Wildlife Refuge: Big Rice and Coleman.

The process required putting an unwieldy, motorless coring platform on the water and pushing a tube into the mud at the bottom. We spent two days on each lake, taking a transect of six cores per lake.

The cores are being processed and examined by Drs. Vania Stefanova and Mark Shapley, researchers at LacCore, who will date them by distinctive layers: preserved pollen, which shows a ragweed pollen spike immediately after settlers cleared the land, and centuries of other distinctive layers including those deposited by floods. We expect to estimate rates of sediment accumulation over key periods, including the last couple of decades when agricultural drainage intensified and large rainfall events increased.

We know that flows have increased on the river, so it makes sense that the sediment load being delivered is also larger. LMRWD staff members think it has increased a lot.

The consequences of unchecked sedimentation have more than an ecological impact. Communities that lie along the river may be losing some level of the flood protection their levees provide, increasing their vulnerability to flooding.

This is a working stretch of river and dredging sand from the channel to keep the ports accessible is expensive. LMRWD is finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with dredging. They hope to better document the change in sediment accumulation so they can advocate for policies that address the cause.

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Left to right, Dr. Mark Shapley, Dr. Vania Stefanova, (standing), and volunteers, Johnny Swieciechowski and Dan Scheeler coring Coleman Lake, Bloomington.
A confluence of stewards
October 17, 2017 proclaimed Master Water Stewards Day!

by Connie Lanphear, communications manager

This year’s class of Stewards celebrated their graduation at Confluence, an annual gathering of certified stewards, partners, instructors, and program supporters. Capstone projects were on display and attendees celebrated the year’s projects and volunteer efforts. More than 190 certified Stewards are improving their neighborhoods and soaking in nearly 2 million gallons of rainwater each year!

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Assistant Commissioner Rebecca Flood gave the keynote speech to recognize the collective work of all of the Master Water Stewards and presented a proclamation from Gov. Dayton, making October 17, 2017 Master Water Stewards Day.

In October, 82 new Steward candidates attended the first of twelve in-person classes covering a wide variety of topics including hydrology, water policy, community engagement, and residential stormwater planning. When coursework is completed, candidates are guided through a capstone project, which includes the installation of a water management project and a public outreach campaign.

Leaders, continued from cover
— even those stories about when he surged ahead of everyone else a little too far!

I had to be careful when discussing ideas with Dave. More than once I would mention a potential project while “stabbing a bean” (his term for lunch), only to find that he had taken the idea to dinner with someone else. A couple days later I’d get a call that he had talked to the mayor, a landowner, or a county commissioner and they were on board and ready to go. Since little was on paper yet, sometimes it wasn’t clear what had been sold or bought!

He coordinated with everyone and made things happen.

I can’t help but wonder what people would think of their local, state, and federal governments if most officials were this willing to risk working with whomever it took to achieve progress. I know several dozen individuals will hear about Dave next week and hopefully will follow his lead.

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New board member

Ryan Godfrey, PhD

Dr. Godfrey is senior vice president of Operations at Tonka Water, an industry-leading designer and manufacturer of custom water treatment systems. He also serves on the Environmental Technologies Trade Advisory Committee, which advises the Secretary of Commerce and the Environmental Trade Working Group on the development and administration of programs and policies to expand U.S. exports of environmental technologies.

Ryan’s interest in serving on the Freshwater Society board of directors stems from a lifelong experience of valuing water. He spent much time on and in the water at his grandparent’s cabin on Little Birch Lake near Melrose. His environmental education started early there, as he fished, boated, swam, and looked under rocks.

The Chesapeake Bay is another body of water that resonates with Ryan. When he lived in the D.C. area, he rented a room from and older couple. The husband was a retired fishing boat captain and together the couple had seen directly how the Bay deteriorated and the fisheries collapsed. The rebound of the Bay is a great story of recovery. Yet he’s making sure his kids realize that the pristine Boundary Waters Wilderness we paddle needs an ounce of prevention rather than a pound of cure.

Ryan takes the place of Jim Manolis, who served on the board with distinction and will continue doing good work at The Nature Conservancy.
Upcoming events

FREE LECTURE The Lake Effect: Protecting water through innovative collaboration
November 14, 2017
U of M, St. Paul Student Center Theater
Hear Kathy Lake of the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District discuss her innovative approach to address watershed-wide pollution issues.
Register here: bit.ly/2lhU2xP

FreshFocus: Celebrating Minnesota Weathugide Photographers
November 16, 2017
The Hook & Ladder Theater, Minneapolis
See details at left.

Give to your Max
November 16, 2017
Are you ready to give to your max?! Give any day through November 16 and a portion of all donations will be matched. Don’t wait: pledge your gift today at bit.ly/1E8MJX1 and protect Minnesota waters!

2017 MAWD Annual Conference
November 30-December 2, 2017
Arrowwood Resort, Alexandria
On November 30, our Steve Woods will be facilitating a discussion about the leadership skills needed for a watershed organization to excel at what it does.
Learn more: bit.ly/2AL4UZu

17th Annual Road Salt Symposium
February 8, 2018
Plymouth Creek Center
Registration is now open for the annual symposium! Hear the latest innovations, trends, and best practices for reducing salt use while maintaining safe roads.
Learn more and register: bit.ly/2xB64Jk

The State of Water Conference
April 12-14, 2018
Breezy Point Resort
Get ready for a summer of action to protect the health of Minnesota’s lakes, rivers, and wetlands! Now accepting RPFs for conference presentations through December 1.
Learn more: bit.ly/2s1sFvd

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