



GREAT EGRETS FEEDING | DAVE MAGNUSON | 2018 MINNESOTA WEATHERGUIDE ENVIRONMENT CALENDAR

## March 2018

March monthly normals from  
the Minnesota Weatherguide  
Environment™ Calendar:

**Temperature:** Max 41.3°F Min 24.3°F

**Precipitation:** 1.89 in. (snowfall 10.2 in.)



**Don't miss *Ice OUT, Loon IN!***

**April 28, 5-9 p.m.**

**The Metropolitan Ballroom**

**See back page for details.**

FRESHWATER

## When Kirby defied the odds

by **Steve Woods**, executive director



**Mr. Puckett**

Sixteen interest groups you wouldn't think had a lot in common got together 14 years ago to work on something they DID all care about — avoiding the economic

stagnation and legal entanglements that would afflict Minnesota if we couldn't find a way to accelerate compliance with the federal Clean Water Act.

Last year we approached those participants, plus a couple additional ones, to see if they would like to reconvene. Every single one did, including eight people who were part of the original process. It was pretty

amazing to see their faces at the first meeting when we noted that 27 of their 31 previous recommendations were either done or nearing completion. That just doesn't happen in public policy work. It was like Kirby Puckett going 10 for 11 against the Brewers in 1987!

There is a lot going right with Minnesota water management yet the people in the group had an uneasiness about them. It became clear why — the 14-year-old vision was pretty much done. The state had embarked on a better path but had not yet produced an updated vision about how the system would work now that basic federal compliance has been substantially achieved.

We wrapped up the workshops just before the legislative session began. Freshwater is compiling a report of their findings and recommendations for use after the session ends in May.

**Kirby, continued on page 3**

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

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FRESHWATER

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

## Freshwater to release groundwater report, third in series

***The Water Underground: Implications for Agriculture and Opportunities for Change* focuses on sustainable use of groundwater through an agricultural lens**

by Carrie Jennings,  
research and policy director

*Implications for Agriculture and Opportunities for Change* is the third and final report in Freshwater's *The Water Underground* series that focuses on Minnesota's groundwater future. In this final report we consider the sustainable use of groundwater through an agricultural lens and focus on two main issues: the quantity and quality of available groundwater in agricultural parts of the state.

Scarcity of groundwater is driving innovation among Minnesota producers who use irrigation practices on their farms. We highlight where they have developed efficient practices that protect groundwater. We suggest how those approaches can be furthered by state investment in training and irrigation scheduling tools currently under development.

In the larger percentage of farmed acres that are drained rather than irrigated, tiling redirects water and alters recharge. We don't yet know the long-term impact of this practice on groundwater quantity and recommend that it be studied.

Nitrogen contamination was identified as a top concern across Minnesota in a recent survey of water professionals who work for local and county governments. Nitrogen fertilizer leaches from agricultural areas where

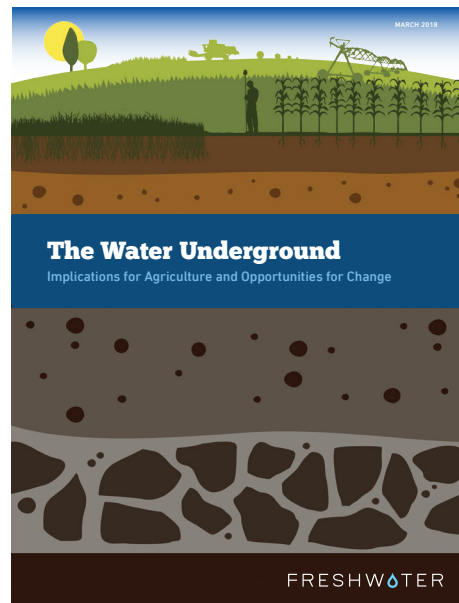
soil is sandy and irrigation is common. In areas that are not irrigated but instead are drained, tile water is the largest source of nitrogen that pollutes surface water, which in turn recharges groundwater. The increasing number of towns with water supplies that require treatment to remove nitrogen

is a concern for all Minnesotans because it burdens the state's limited tax dollars.

State agencies have different roles in water protection but no agency prevents the pollution of clean groundwater. This is especially significant in parts of the state that are being converted from forest to crops for the first time, like our northern sandplains.

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture is charged with controlling agricultural pollution. Testing and rulemaking regarding nitrogen contamination are currently focused on townships deemed vulnerable. Reversing contamination trends will require full adoption of significant alterations to current nitrogen management practices, beyond those codified by these rules.

To ensure a safe water supply for all Minnesotans, we need to better understand the health impacts of pesticides in groundwater. State support of new practices will be essential for the transition to a more sustainable agricultural system.





Freshwater and Fortin Consulting have co-hosted the Road Salt Symposium for 17 years.

## Road Salt Symposium success Icy liquids, liquid deicers, and urban legends

by Connie Lanphear, program manager

This year's Road Salt Symposium drew a record crowd of more than 300 on February 8. Participants learned about the latest innovations in road salt application technology, long-term chloride trends in over 500 lakes in North America and Europe, recent advances in understanding the performance of liquid deicers, and reusing water softener discharge for winter maintenance.

See sidebar about recipients of this year's Environmental Leadership Awards and read more about their work here: [bit.ly/2FPN65k](http://bit.ly/2FPN65k).

Some excellent media coverage by MPR ([bit.ly/2GwOVS9](http://bit.ly/2GwOVS9)) about the effects of road salt on water quality made news in the weeks leading up to the symposium.

If you missed this year's event, check out the presentations at [bit.ly/2x641k](http://bit.ly/2x641k).

### BLOG | A Salted Lake: Lake Johanna

By Brian Bohman, policy intern

Even after the winter's snow has melted, our lakes and streams will not forget what we have done to move about at summer speeds during the winter months.

**Read the full post here:**

[bit.ly/2p7Wnvm](http://bit.ly/2p7Wnvm)

### Kirby, continued from cover

Our intent is to use the perspectives of the group to help inform deliberations during the 2019 session.

We are also releasing the third and final report in our *Water Underground* series this month (see story on page 2). Freshwater's work in the 1980s was critical to the passage of the Minnesota Groundwater Protection Act of 1989 and we are confident our groundwater reports of 2013-2018 will form a solid technical base refreshing this act for the next three decades to come. We aim to make this a priority during the 2019 session as well.

We are increasingly primed for the 2019 session, but you may be wondering what are we doing NOW during the 2018 session? We are voicing support as part of a coalition led by the Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association for a bill designed to reduce winter deicer application by private applicators, pressing for environmental bonding for conservation and water treatment, and seeking restoration of last session's unexpected \$22M shift of dollars onto Clean Water Funds from the General Fund.

## Road Salt Symposium 2018 Environmental Leadership Awards

We honored these individuals and organizations whose exemplary work has directly impacted the quality of our freshwater resources:



**Brooke Asleson:**  
Minnesota Pollution  
Control Agency



### City of Plymouth, Minnesota:

Craig Bechthold | Patrick Dehmer | John DesMarais  
Steven Forness | Ryan Gallagher | Robert Hebzynski  
Jeremy Jensen | Janine Kingsbury | Kraig Nowell  
Brian Oswald | Dustin Palm | Mark Sauter  
Michael Uecker | Torrey Keith | Derek Asche  
Michael Thompson | Ben Scharenbroich



### City of River Falls, Wisconsin:

Mike Stifter | Crystal Raleigh | Terry Kusilek  
Pat Yunker | Irv Peskar | Nate Croes  
Charles Larson | Troy Connolly | Joe Killian  
Scott Jensen | Jon Kusilek | Ray Curtis  
Bob Schwalen | David Holodnick | Tom Schwalen  
Ken Thill | Tom Dalton | Zach Regnier | Reid Wronski



**Mike Gresch:**  
Steve Brown Apartments



**Lloyd Law:**  
Minnesota DOT



## JOIN US AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**April 28, 2018 | 5-9 pm | The Metropolitan Ballroom | Golden Valley**

You are a caring and generous person who values Minnesota waters. Join more than 300 others like you for an evening to benefit freshwater resources.

*Ice Out, Loon In* celebrates the retreat of ice and return of loons to our Minnesota lakes -- signs of spring and healthy waters. The event raises more than \$60,000 for our waters each year. All this from generous supporters like you.

Plus, we've got the best charity auction in town — featuring food, travel, art, sports, and leisure. Join us for dinner, stories, and Clean Water Champion awards, all for the good of our lakes, streams, and wetlands.

**Learn more and get your tickets:** [bit.ly/2CSnHSq](http://bit.ly/2CSnHSq)

**Thank you for making a difference.**

**And thanks to our generous sponsor partners:**



**BEST & FLANAGAN**



Freshwater is a member-supported organization dedicated to educating and inspiring people to value, conserve, and protect water resources. To learn more, contact Mary Salisbury at 651-313-5817 or [msalisbury@freshwater.org](mailto:msalisbury@freshwater.org).

## Freshwater donates Weatherguide calendars to classrooms throughout Minnesota

**by Connie Lanphear, program manager**

Minnesotans love to talk weather and it's a topic of conversation in classrooms as well. Freshwater provides Weatherguide calendars to facilitate science-based classroom learning through its *Calendars in the Classroom* program, in partnership with the Jeffers Foundation.

Also this winter, students in grades 3-8 had a chance to learn more about the science of weather at Big Weather Experience — a Science Museum of Minnesota program that included film, hands-on exhibits, and an interactive theater program that demonstrated such weather phenomena as what causes lightning and thunder.

Freshwater donated more than 2,000 Weatherguide Environment calendars to the program, giving students and teachers the opportunity to extend their weather-learning experience into their classrooms and homes.



*Calendars in the Classroom* provides Weatherguides to Minnesota schools to enhance science-based instruction.

## Upcoming events



### The State of Water Conference

**April 12-14, 2018**

**Breezy Point Resort**

Ready to take on your next clean water challenge? Join more than 300 Minnesotans from across the state at the 2018 State of Water Conference to get the tools, resources, and connections you need to improve your community's water resources. What better time and place to gather information, inspiration, and energy than a few spring days in lake country at the beautiful Breezy Point Resort.

**April 12:** Pre-conference workshops that offer an opportunity to go into further detail on a host of topics.

**April 13-14:** The two-day conference, featuring six different sessions, access to professional information and resources, and opportunities to hear from leaders on the state on water resource issues.

**Learn more:** [bit.ly/2s1sFvd](http://bit.ly/2s1sFvd)

### *Ice Out, Loon In* Annual Fundraiser Gala

**April 28, 2018**

**The Metropolitan Ballroom, Golden Valley**

It's a Freshwater Saturday Night! Join us as we celebrate the retreat of ice and return of loons to our Minnesota lakes — a harbinger of spring and a sign of healthy waters. Join us to help raise \$60,000 for freshwater resources. See more above at left.