

Freshwater News

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Facets of FRESHWATER



ON THE NEST | MYRA SMISEK | 2018 MINNESOTA WEATHERGUIDE ENVIRONMENTAL CALENDAR

June 2018

June monthly normals from
the Minnesota Weatherguide
Environment™ Calendar:

Temperature: Max 78.8°F Min 58.8°F

Precipitation: 4.25 in.

Vote for the cover!



Voting open through June 18 at freshwater.org.

FRESHWATER

Awful lot going right. Lot of awful attempted.



by Steve Woods,
executive director

This is our first chance to relate what went on this past legislative session. As you can tell from the title above, the

story (see page 2 for summary) is not particularly satisfying for anyone. Before we get to that, we have some news to share.

Sharp-eyed readers may have noticed we have quietly trotted out a new Freshwater logo over the past month. It was a birthday gift to ourselves. Now in our 50th year, we are stepping up our communications to provide deeper perspectives and find interesting ways to make a difference.

We're nearing the end of wonderful *pro bono* effort by Bolin Marketing to modernize our website from one held together by duct tape and baling wire. We took a step toward a better message and web presence back in 2016 with the *pro bono* help of Woychick Design but the current work is a complete rebuild. One thing unearthed during our work is that an extraordinary amount of our site's web traffic is driven by people wanting specific actions they can take to protect water, as a homeowner, landowner, professional, or official. You'll see more of that information from us in months to come.

Our attention is now on preparing for a Minnesota River boat cruise next week, organizing for the 2019 session, and designing the 2019 Weatherguide. It accounts for a fraction of our work, but it is my favorite part of the job. Reviewing hundreds of images that

Awful lot, continued on page 3

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

Session summary

by Steve Woods, executive director

To quote Steve Morse of Minnesota Environmental Partnership, "It was short, intense and accomplished little."

The session ended in mid-May. There seems to be no call for a special session at this time. And the Guv'na is done working his pen to make laws or vetoes. Summaries abound, with a quick Google search yielding many results. Here are some highlights, in our book:

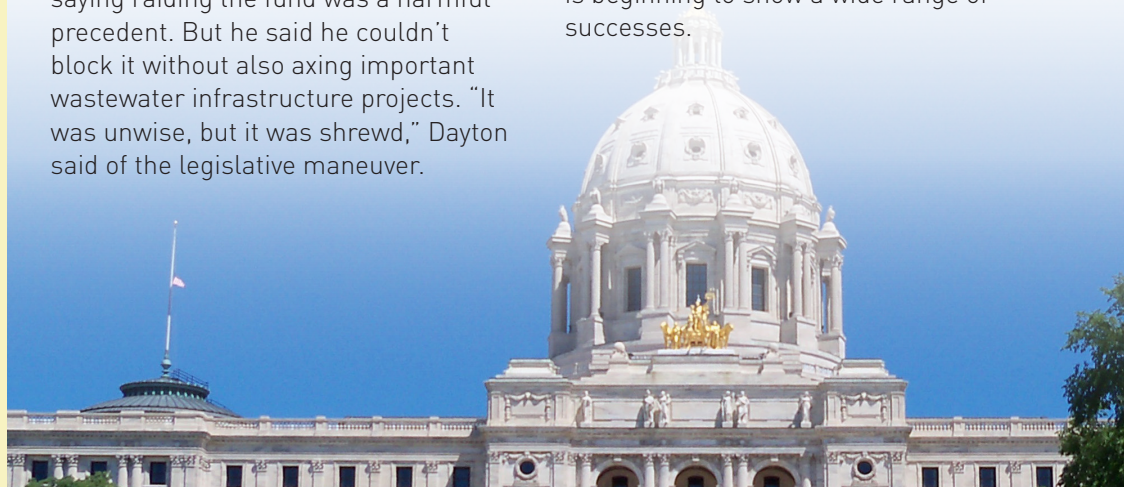
1. Dayton signs bonding bill. Gov. Dayton signed a public works package that will spend \$1.5 billion on projects like road construction, treatment plant upgrades, and campus repairs. The state will borrow \$825 million of that total. He line-item vetoed one provision from the bill, \$1 million for analyzing Minnesota Pollution Control Agency water regulations. The governor made it clear he was not 100 percent happy with the bill he was signing, stating that the legislation, "underfunds critical investments in higher education, state parks, and water infrastructure, and assures that those needs will become more urgent and more expensive in the future."

Disturbingly, the bill uses \$98 million from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, a lottery-funded source approved by voters back in 1998. That funding source had been hinted at for several weeks and popped up in the final hours. Dayton said he didn't like it, saying raiding the fund was a harmful precedent. But he said he couldn't block it without also axing important wastewater infrastructure projects. "It was unwise, but it was shrewd," Dayton said of the legislative maneuver.

We would have liked to see more money in the bonding bill for conservation easements but hope some off-year bonding next session will allow the state to capture the rest of the federal match. It wasn't entirely clear whether the state could even spend the full requested amount in time so we're tending to view this as a cash flow decision that additional bonding next year *can* rectify.

2. Clean Water Fund restored. Last year the legislature pulled \$22M out of the Clean Water Fund, after an agreement that was enacted two years ago designated it would come from the general fund. It was a bait and shift — emphasis on the shifty — maneuver that was sour for many groups since it amounted to about 20% of the annual appropriation. In a bit of good news, it was "paid back" this session. However, the inability to pass a Legacy bill this session means the money will just sit in an account all year.

Up next? Our attention has turned to preparing for the 2019 session. Wondering what's on our minds? We completed a trio of stellar groundwater policy reports this year that address urban, rural, and overall water supply issues Minnesota should be preparing itself to tackle. We also convened 18 interest groups last winter to help envision how the Clean Water Fund and state programs should alter course, now that the original vision for the fund has been largely put into place and is beginning to show a wide range of successes.





Installing a rain garden allows water to soak into the ground and filter pollutants while adding native beauty to your landscape.

Water Conservation Advisor pilot program

by Kristen Meyer

Freshwater will soon pilot a new opportunity in volunteer education: Water Conservation Advisor training. This volunteer certification program, developed in collaboration with the Metropolitan Council, offers continuing education in water conservation and drinking water protection to certified Master Water Stewards, Master Gardeners, and Master Naturalists.

Water Conservation Advisors will be equipped to engage landowners and businesses in water conservation best practices and implement projects to lower water use. Examples include conducting home water audits for residents, developing water conservation plans for small businesses, and providing guidance on plantings and irrigation best practices for landowners. Since certified volunteers report and record their activities, they can demonstrate the value of their work in their communities.

For more information, contact Kristen Meyer at kmeyer@freshwater.org or 651-313-5815.

Awful lot, continued from cover

are better than I'll ever take myself is a real treat! The Weatherguide has been a wonderful product for 42 years of our 50-year journey.

I make sure to take time on and in the water to recover and remind myself *why* we do what we do. There's an awful lot going right in this state. There is also a lot of awful attempted each legislative session. You can shape the future by making time this summer to find out what candidates for office believe about valuing and

protecting **your** water. Your influence is amplified by voting in the primary and taking a second bite of the apple in November.

As an organization dedicated to protecting and conserving freshwater, we've accomplished our original mission and several subsequent missions in our 50 years. You can count on us to inspire and empower people to value and protect freshwater in the decades to come. Thank you for your support!

Join your neighbors to protect your water

by Deirdre Coleman

We are now accepting applications for the next class of Master Water Stewards! Since Freshwater launched the Master Water Stewards program in 2013, 250 Stewards have gone through the program and are volunteering their time for watershed districts, cities, and environmental groups; participating on city and local government boards; influencing policy; and improving the health of our waters. To date, they have:

- Connected with thousands of people through outreach and educational events
- Installed or planned over 100 projects, including rain gardens, rain barrels, cisterns, dry creek beds, permeable pavers, lakeshore and habitat restorations
- Prevented millions of gallons of polluted stormwater runoff from entering our lakes, rivers, and creeks each year!

Ask us to talk to your neighborhood, church, or club to find out more about Master Water Stewards.

[Learn more and apply.](#)



Stewards Tal Simchoni, Kris Meyer, and Arun Hejmadi work on Monarch Mile planting project.



Egads how we've grown: Freshwater is fifty!

You may have heard the news: Freshwater turns FIFTY this year! And we're rolling out changes and special events to celebrate. One is our brand new logo. Later this year we're launching a new website equipped with the tools you need to stay informed on pressing clean water issues. Stay tuned for this and more — including a Freshwater birthday party. Think balloons and CAKE. Together, we've protected clean water for fifty years. Together, we'll keep it up for the next fifty!



Proud to announce: accepted to MEF

by Mary Salisbury, development officer

Freshwater is pleased to announce we've been accepted as a new Associate Member of the [Minnesota Environmental Fund](#) (MEF). MEF is like a United Way for the environment.

As Minnesotans, it's safe to say many of us feel deep pride and connection to our abundant natural resources. MEF helps organizations like ours connect with employers and employees who want to support those resources through payroll donations and volunteerism.

We want to hear from you. Do you participate in workplace giving? Why or why not? Donating through a paycheck deduction? Volunteer opportunities? Events like a lunch and learn on a clean water topic? We'd love to learn more.

Contact [Mary Salisbury](#) with your thoughts. And please reach out anytime to learn about fostering a workplace culture of giving for the environment.

Upcoming events

Big Island and Back Paddle Event

August 11, 9:00 a.m.

Excelsior Commons Beach

Tune up your canoe, kayak or paddleboard and head to Excelsior for a friendly race around Big Island. Includes an after-party at Excelsior Brewing Company. Proceeds support Freshwater.

[Learn more.](#)



Weatherguides at Minnesota State Fair

August 23-September 3, 2018

KARE 11 Barn across from DNR Park

Come visit us at the State Fair and get your best deal on new 2019

Minnesota Weatherguide Environment Calendars! Buy one and get one half off, and you might get an autograph by calendar dignitaries such as Jim Gilbert and KARE 11 meteorologists. Pick up one for yourself and get a start on your holiday shopping!



Running for water at Lake Minnetonka Half Marathon

This year, Freshwater's connection to the [Lake Minnetonka Half Marathon](#) multiplied. Not only was Freshwater lucky enough to again receive proceeds from the May 9th race, but our own Theresa Friendshuh competed with friends. Theresa has long been a runner and, with a degree in environmental studies and biology, has a deep passion for the natural world. As Freshwater's administrative assistant, she supports our board, staff, and the community for their water-related needs.



We are proud to partner with the Half Marathon on protecting Lake Minnetonka, and to continue our statewide work. Thanks to races like this one, we advance the health of our citizens *and* its waters. Join us next year!

This summer: three ways you can take action for water

Contact Mary Salisbury to sign up: msalisbury@freshwater.org

Volunteers needed

- [Office volunteer](#)
- Big Island and Back pre-race and day-of event

Freshwater paddle team

Love to kayak or canoe? Join the Freshwater Big Island and Back paddle team. Proceeds benefit two charities including Freshwater.

Donate or become a member

Freshwater relies on members and donations to propel our work for clean water forward. [Join or donate today](#) and YOU become part of the solution.