

# FACETS of Freshwater



March 2015

Weather Facts and Photo from *MN Weatherguide Environment Calendar*

March Monthly Normals:

Temp. Max: 41.3 F Min: 24.3 F Precip: 1.89 in. Snow: 10.2 in.

 FRESHWATER SOCIETY

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## Up for a little fun?



Steve Woods

**Up for a little fun after work on April 23? Be the first to “inspect” the new St. Paul Saints Stadium and support the work you read about each month in this newsletter!**

The Freshwater Society's Ice OUT/Loon IN fundraiser celebrates the ice going out and the loons coming back to lakes with good water quality. Spring is also the beginning of outdoor baseball, and when the St. Paul Saints begin their season in May it will be in a stadium that helps conserve water by reusing stormwater! Our fundraiser is the first public event to be held at the stadium and tours will be available early in the evening.

It took considerable effort for St. Paul's leadership and a host of clever designers, inspectors, suppliers, and builders to incorporate rainwater re-use features into the stadium. Additional funding from the Met Council and the Capitol Region Watershed District helped make the project a reality. These efforts have earned them the Freshwater Society's 2015 *Clean Water Champion Award*.

Please [register](#) and spend an eventful evening with Mayor Coleman, our emcee Paul Huttner of MPR, and other like-minded Saints who want to make a difference.

Regards,



Executive Director  
Freshwater Society



Paul Huttner  
*Emcee for the evening*

## FRESHWATER SOCIETY

The Freshwater Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating and inspiring people to value, conserve and protect water resources.

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Visit the Freshwater Society web site at  
[www.freshwater.org](http://www.freshwater.org).

## Ice OUT/Loon IN Fundraiser

Come to see the stadium – stay for the fun!

**April 23, 2015 5:30pm - 9:00pm**

SECURIAN CLUB AT CHS FIELD  
360 North Broadway Street, Saint Paul

This is a memorable, fun experience to support the Freshwater Society's important work – Emcee Paul Huttner (MPR), Mayor Chris Coleman, food, bluegrass band, Clean Water Champion Award, silent and live auctions, and more!

EVENT TICKETS  
Unreserved Tickets: \$95.00

Register and reserve tables at  
[Freshwater.org](http://Freshwater.org) or call (952) 314-8134

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BRONZE SPONSORS



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at a Home Game!



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Just a few of the AUCTION items:



Tow Boat Tour for Four



4 Night Stay at the Village Lodge at Mammoth Mountain



# At the State Capitol

The Freshwater Society has a long history of using scientific information to educate and inspire people to value, conserve, and protect water resources. This includes a number of influential reports that have caught the attention of numerous decision-makers across the state. The Freshwater Society Board has made a strategic decision to bring recommendations from our reports to discussions at the State Capitol. In 2014, the Board formed a Policy Committee to dig deeper into some of the most pressing issues facing Minnesota's water resources and provide advice based on the policy work of the organization.

We are having a more active but measured presence at the Legislature. Below is a summary of some of the key issues we are following or working on.

## Buffers

Governor Dayton's announcement at the January DNR Roundtable to launch an initiative



**Vegetated buffer strips help to protect water quality.**

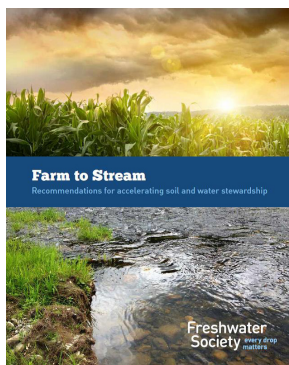
requiring 50 foot buffers around all of MN's water has generated significant attention. The Governor and agencies worked quickly to meet with stakeholders to present a bill to the Legislature during the current session. Freshwater Society staff met multiple times with agency staff and other stakeholders to offer suggestions on how best to implement the Governor's idea. Two bills have been introduced (HF15 34/Torkelson and SF1537/Marty) that currently:

- 1) require a 50 foot buffer of perennial vegetation around all public waters and those flowing for most of the year based upon maps the DNR will develop,
- 2) will not restrict the use of the perennial buffers by the landowners (they can graze, hay, or mow them, etc),
- 3) allow alternative practices if they would provide better water quality benefits than buffers,
- 4) put the implementation with Soil and Water Conservation Districts,
- 5) give state level oversight and accountability to ensure acceptable local implementation,
- and 6) provide an enforcement mechanism. The bills continue to progress through the legislative process.

**Freshwater Society has testified in support of the bills' general approach to using buffers.** Buffers are a management practice that has been well-proven in countless field research plots over the decades. We will continue to push for amendments to make the application of the concept more flexible and practical as recommended in our *Farm to Stream* report.

## Budget

The *Farm to Stream* report outlines a number of recommendations related to program design and



language" – bill language the legislature uses to give general direction to how agencies can spend money. The Clean Water Fund, the portion of the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy sales tax dedicated to water, is a particular interest since many of the programs targeted by Farm to Stream are funded from it. The Legislature's bills (HF1781/Torkelson and SF1754/Scalze) currently follow closely with the recommendations of the Clean Water Council, which are **supported by the Freshwater Society**. We continue to work with the bills' authors and agency staff to incorporate our recommendations in the final version. Other bills (HF693/Bly and SF579/Dahle) related to *Farm to Stream* recommendations provide full funding for the Forever Green Initiative at the University of Minnesota. The Initiative does research and development of economically viable alternative crops for MN that have water quality benefits.

**Freshwater Society supports funding of Forever Green and similar initiatives that would provide cover for soils.**

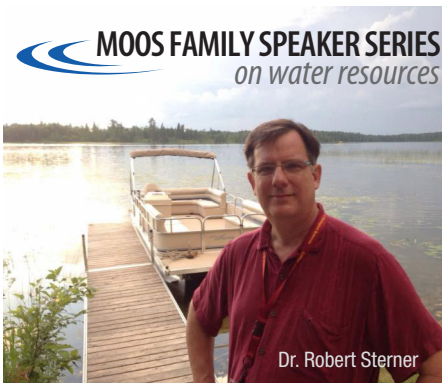
## Microbeads

Many hand soaps, toothpastes, and facial scrubs contain small plastics pellets that pass right through wastewater plants and contaminate our water. Added to soaps and other products as exfoliants or for decoration, microbeads are made of the same plastic used in pop bottles and garbage bags. Several bills have been introduced in the MN Legislature aiming to phase out the use of microbeads in the state. **The Freshwater Society supports these efforts.**

## Groundwater Sustainability

A bill (HF 1250/Fischer) has been introduced to allow local governments to collect additional fees for water use in the North and East Metro Groundwater Management Areas for projects to decrease groundwater use or increase groundwater recharge. **The Freshwater Society is supportive** of the goals of the bill and looks forward to working with the author to refine the idea and gain broader support next session.

funding at the state and local level. The State Budgeting process offers an opportunity to implement several of the short-term recommendations via "rider



## Lecture will Focus on Earth's Largest Lakes

Roughly two thirds of the planet's available surface freshwater is contained in just twenty lakes. Scattered around the globe, and diverse in almost every measurable respect, these immense "dimples" in Earth's surface have shaped human society and history. Their value continues to grow as freshwater scarcity increases. This talk will explore Earth's largest lakes, some of which are in our backyard, from the standpoints of hydrology, biogeochemistry, biodiversity, and geopolitics, using these approaches ultimately to ask what role these twenty places play in our lives. Join us for:

### THE OUTSIZED ROLE OF EARTH'S LARGEST LAKES

*Presented by*

**Dr. Robert Sterner**

**U of MN Duluth  
Large Lakes Observatory**

Two free lectures:

**3:30 p.m., April 29**

DECC Duluth, MN

*A reception follows  
at Canal Park Brewery*

**7 p.m., April 30**

University of MN  
St. Paul Student Center

**Register** to attend one of these lectures.

**Watch** the April 30 lecture live-streaming or our **past lectures**.

## Lake Communities Put Grant Award to Good Use

What would you do for your favorite lake with \$50,000? The Freshwater Society has been working with Michelob Golden Light through two rounds of the Celebrate Your Lake contest, and it has been great to see the ideas and enthusiasm that the winning communities have brought to the table.

Albert Lea Lake was the inaugural winner in 2013, and competing against more well-known lakes, demonstrated that you don't have to be big to win. Albert Lea Lake is located near the Iowa border along the I-35 corridor and has not traditionally topped the list when it comes to destination lakes in Minnesota – but that's changing. The community around the lake, including citizens and local government, has been working hard in recent years to improve and promote their water resources and the success is easy to see.

The Albert Lea Lakes Foundation, working closely with the Shell Rock River Watershed District



People lined up to with their canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards to test the new launch in Albert Lea last summer.

and local chamber of commerce, decided to use the funds to improve public access to the lake by creating an entry point for non-motorized watercraft. The construction also included needed improvements to the shoreline to help improve water quality. Well over a hundred people showed up at the ribbon cutting, many via canoes and kayaks.

The second year of the contest saw much more voting through the official Michelob Golden Light Facebook webpage, and Fairmont kept the southern Minnesota enthusiasm going and took home the prize in 2014. The Fairmont Chain of Lakes is located within the city of Fairmont and is made up of five separate lakes – Amber, Hall, Budd, Sisseton, and George Lakes. The Fairmont Lakes Foundation has been working with local partners over the winter to decide on how to spend the award and plans to leverage the conservation grant with other funds

to improve public docks and fishing piers in the lakes.

We're gearing up for another round of Celebrate Your Lake during the 2015 open water season, so stay tuned to the [Freshwater Society's webpage](#) and [Michelob Golden Light's Facebook](#) page for more details.

## Lake Minnetonka Ice-Out

The Freshwater Society and the Hennepin County Sheriff's Water Patrol are once again partnering to monitor and declare when the ice is officially off the lake. Open water on the lake is a welcome sign of spring and a good time to put the loons back in.

Last year, we declared the ice out on April 24 – ten days later than the median date due to the coldest winter in the last 35 years. The ice-out call for 2014 was made after several days of monitoring the ice from shore by the Freshwater Society and five trips into the lake with the Water Patrol. Tom Skramstad, a Freshwater Board member, accompanied a deputy sheriff on boat trips to the last places on the



Lake Minnetonka, April 22, 2014

lake where significant ice had been observed. Once they concluded it was possible to boat through all the bays and channels of the metro area's biggest lake the declaration was made.

The Freshwater Society web page has a [year-by-year](#) log of past ice-out dates, and a [calendar](#) showing the number of time the break-up has occurred on specific dates.

## Support Our Programs Enjoy the Wonders of MN



Photo by Dominique Braud

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