

FACETS of Freshwater



June 2015

Summer Lake by Michael Cervantes

Weather Facts and Photo from *MN Weatherguide Environment Calendar*
JUNE MONTHLY NORMALS
Temperature: Max 78.8 F Min 58.8 F Precipitation: 4.25 in.

 FRESHWATER SOCIETY

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Waiting



Steve Woods

Water management is afflicted with lag times: Decrease vegetative ground cover in a watershed and, eventually, lakes and rivers degrade; Spend tax dollars to make things better, and results take years to become measurable. Apply less road salt now and eventually we'll see stream biota recover.

And so it is with legislative and budgetary processes. We submitted two proposals to the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources for money that won't be awarded until July 2016; we're teaming with local governments now to co-develop proposals for fall submission for Clean Water Funds; and, our watershed district partners start their July budget discussions knowing funds won't be available until next January.

Assuming language remains in the last version of the Legacy Omnibus Bill, we will have had some success at the legislature. Working with a coalition of legislators and organizations, we've helped add language to address barriers faced by farmers and conservationists who want

to do more. These barriers were cited in our recent *Farm to Stream* report, which captured attention in agencies and Capitol hallways before the session started.

Good legislative policy usually follows a long build-up and improvement period before it becomes real. We did not see this with the Governor's buffer proposal, or a number of legislative proposals that attracted a veto of the Agriculture and Environment Omnibus bill. We hope the recently revived Legislative Water Commission will take the time to examine ideas – good and bad – before next session.

As former Speaker of the House, Steve Sviggum, told me during my Hamline University days, "We have to remember that the same forces that thwart good policy also thwart bad policy."

So we wait.

Regards,



Executive Director
Freshwater Society

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.



Brett Eidem-MCWD, Deirdre Coleman-Freshwater Society, Telly Mamayek-MCWD, Peggy Knapp-Freshwater Society

Award Given to Master Water Stewards Program

The Freshwater Society is proud to announce that the Master Water Stewards program has received the *2015 Environmental Initiative Award for Environmental Education*. The Freshwater Society partnered with Minnehaha Creek Watershed District in 2012 to launch the Master Water Stewards program. Funded by a Clean Water Grant, the Master Water Stewards program recruits, educates, and certifies community leaders who work in their communities to increase water infiltration on private properties and provide advice and support to neighbors and friends who understand that caring for water is something everyone can do.

Partnerships are at the heart of the Master Water Stewards program. The Freshwater Society is thankful for the long list of partner organizations that have generously contributed to the success of the program:

- Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD)
- Metro Blooms/Blue Thumb
- MN Green Corps (an AmeriCorps program hosted by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency)
- University of Minnesota Water Resources Center
- University of Minnesota Extension
- Wenck Associates
- Waterdrop Design
- Hennepin County Environmental Services' Green Partners program
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - Aquatic Invasive Species
- Jeffers Foundation

As the program nears the end of its third year, 84 residents of the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District will have completed the rigorous certification process. For more information, or to learn how you can become a Master Water Steward, contact Peggy Knapp, pknapp@freshwater.org

Upcoming Events

JUNE 16 – Water Quality Lecture by Robert Runkel, 10 AM, [USGS Minnesota Water Science Center](#)

JUNE 30 – [AIS Detection Training](#), 6:30 – 9 PM Hennepin Co. Sheriff's Water Patrol, Spring Park

JULY 26 – [9th Annual Minnehaha Creek Clean-Up](#), Hiawatha Park and St. Louis Park

AUGUST 15 – [Big Island and Back 10k Paddle](#), 9 AM Excelsior Beach, Excelsior

At the State Capitol

"It ain't over till it's over." —Yogi Berra

When talking politics it's easy to turn to sports for quotes and analogies. As the 2015 Minnesota Legislative session heads into extra innings, the quote above from Yogi Berra seems appropriate. The regular session ended at midnight May 18 but by then everyone knew a special session was going to happen due to a promised veto of the Education Bill. A special session date has not been set.

Many of Freshwater Society's top priorities will be part of the special session. The Legacy Omnibus Bill (HF 303), which appropriates about \$600 million from the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment over the biennium, was passed by the House but not in time for the Senate to act. The Agriculture and Environment Omnibus Finance Bill (HF 846), which includes part of the Governor's Buffers Initiative, was narrowly passed by both bodies but the Governor vetoed citing several harmful environmental policies that were included.

Buffers

Governor Dayton's Buffer Initiative, requiring 50 foot vegetated buffer strips around all of MN's surface water, generated a lot of attention during the legislative session. Buffers are a management practice that has been well-proven. Freshwater Society staff met multiple times with agency staff, legislators, and other stakeholders to provide input on how best to implement the Governor's idea. The Governor's proposal wound its way through the legislative process – often behind closed doors – and emerged during the last days of the session. The version included in the final Agriculture and Environment Finance Omnibus Bill requires buffers for far fewer miles of streams than the Governor's original proposal, yet, it is a step forward to improving enforcement and accelerating implementation of buffers around public waters and ditches currently in law. Twenty million dollars from the Clean Water Fund to Soil and Water Conservation Districts for staffing was also included in the Legacy Omnibus Bill. The Legislature will take up both bills during the special session. The Governor has asked that the buffers proposal not be changed.

Budget

Freshwater Society worked successfully with legislators to include language in the final Legacy Omnibus Bill (HF 303) to help implement a number of recommendations in our [Farm to Stream](#) report. The new language would allow the Department of Agriculture to train local government staff in agricultural economics so they can talk to farmers about conservation in the same context as farmers make financial decisions.



Additional language allows the Board of Water and Soil Resources to prioritize wellhead protection easements for lands leaving the federal Conservation Reserve Program

and to use funds to help local governments share resources eliminating unnecessary administrative costs. Freshwater Society also supported 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. The Initiative received full funding for the next fiscal year but remains unfunded after that. The Legacy Omnibus Bill containing all of these provisions was not voted on by the Senate before the session ended. Governor Dayton has asked that this bill be passed during the upcoming special session.

Microbeads



Microbeads in Toothpaste

Many hand soaps, toothpastes, and facial scrubs contain small plastics pellets that pass through wastewater plants and contaminate our water. The Legislature proposed to phase out the use of microbeads in Minnesota but fell short of final passage. The authors withdrew the primary bill after efforts by industry were successful in weakening the legislation.

The Governor's Veto Pen

Environmental groups led by the Minnesota Environmental Partnership found an extensive array of provisions in the Agriculture and Environment Finance Omnibus bill that threatened the environment and public health. These provisions ranged from elimination of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Citizen's Board to redirection of dedicated environmental funds to permitting misleading pollinator-friendly labeling to limitations and unfunded mandates on the Pollution Control Agency. An item that caught the eye of Freshwater Society was the last minute, surprise removal of a compromise agreement on next generation biofuels. The bill departed from a signed agreement among energy, agriculture and environment stakeholders (supported by Freshwater Society) that would establish next-generation biofuels in Minnesota and help increase perennial crops in nearby areas.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR
AND REGISTER TODAY!**



2nd Annual Big Island & Back 10K Paddle

Sat., August 15, 9 AM

Tune-up your canoe, kayak, or paddleboard and head over to Excelsior for a friendly race around Big Island and back. The race starts near the swim area at Excelsior Beach Park. Paddlers of all ages and skill levels are encouraged to come out on Lake Minnetonka for a great community event and fundraiser.



Don't miss the after-party at Excelsior Brewing Company, beginning at 10 AM, for refreshments from the Suburban Restaurant, music, and of course, beer! Awards and door prizes at 11 AM. Make a day of it and explore beautiful Excelsior!



Proceeds from race entry fees will be donated to the Freshwater Society and ICA foodshelf.

Lakes Chosen – *Let the Voting Begin!*

The third Celebrate Your Lake contest has begun, and the winning lake will receive a \$50,000 conservation award to do something to keep it clean, healthy, and vibrant.

The winners of the first two rounds have proven that you don't have to be a "resort" lake to win. Albert Lea and Fairmont showed their love of what water brings to a community by reaching out and letting people know that their vote would count. Albert Lea undertook a shoreline restoration and created a launch point for non-motorized water-craft. Taking home the prize in the contest's second year, Fairmont chose to increase access to the chain of lakes by installing three new fishing piers.

What will this year's winner do? Go to the [Michelob Golden Light's Facebook](#) page or Freshwater Society's [webpage](#) to see the list of contestants, vote, and follow the excitement!



Support Our Programs Enjoy the Wonders of MN



Photo by Tom Samuelson

Become a member or renew your Freshwater Society [membership](#) and you'll receive a [complimentary](#) hot-off-the-presses 2016 Minnesota Weatherguide Environment Calendar!

Enjoy amazing regional photos, Nature Notes by Jim Gilbert, weather history, KARE 11 and MPR meteorological information, gardening tips and much more. Your purchase supports the protection of freshwater resources!

Ice-OUT/Loon IN Celebration, Awards and Fun!

Our 5th Annual Ice OUT/Loon IN fundraiser and Clean Water Champion Awards were a major success! The new home of the St. Paul Saints, CHS Field, was a great location to hold the event. St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman accepted our Clean Water Champion Award on behalf of the City, Capitol Region Watershed District and Metropolitan Council for their leadership and funding in the water conservation elements of the stormwater re-use project of CHS field.

The attendees helped the Freshwater Society raise money to support the continuation of our successful programs while enjoying the auctions, dinner, and music!



Julie Blackburn, Darrell Gerber, and Mayor Chris Coleman



Event Emcee, Paul Huttner



Susan Woods



Theresa Bland and Blyth Brookman

Thank you to those who attended and supported the event!

Moos Family Speaker Series



"Dr. Sterner gave an inspired look at the world's freshwater resources."
—Duluth lecture attendee

Dr. Robert W. Sterner, the Moos Speaker this spring, attracted many professionals, students and citizens in both Duluth and the Twin Cities. Sterner's lecture, *The Outsized Role of Earth's Largest Lakes*, was an exciting topic especially as we are entering a season of severe flooding or drought.

[Watch the video](#) of the St. Paul lecture.

Do you have ideas for future speakers or ways to improve the lecture series? Take a [survey](#) and let us know.

Thank you to the Canadian Consulate for partnering with us to bring this lecture to the public.

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