

Minnesota Water Sustainability Framework

Water Resources Planning for Minnesota's Future

Overview

The Legacy Amendment Funding Bill (2009 Minn. Laws. Ch. 172, Art. 2 § 30 at 45-46) included funding for the University of Minnesota Water Resources Center to develop a Statewide Water Sustainability Framework. The following paragraphs summarize the legislative language.

- **Project Goal:** Develop a comprehensive statewide sustainable water resources detailed framework to protect, conserve, and enhance the quantity and quality of the state's groundwater and surface water. The long-range, 25-year detailed framework shall include an implementation schedule and associated benchmarks, for policy, research, monitoring, and evaluation in order to achieve sustainable groundwater and surface water use, including the ecological benefits provided by water resources to humans and fish and wildlife habitat. For the purposes of the detailed framework, water use is sustainable when the use does not harm ecosystems, degrade water quality, or compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- **Work Cooperatively:** Tap the knowledge, expertise, and existing plans of the Departments of Natural Resources and Agriculture, the Environmental Quality Board, the Pollution Control Agency, the Board of Water and Soil Resources, Clean Water Council, watershed management districts, watershed management organizations, soil and water conservation districts, and other federal, state, and local government and private nonprofits with expertise in water resources.
- **Issues to Address/Project Outcomes:** Include, but not be limited to, identification of infrastructure needs, drinking water, groundwater and surface water, storm water, agricultural and industrial needs, the interfaces of climate change, development and land use, and demographics. Identify best practices and methods for determining the effectiveness of those practices for wastewater treatment, drinking water source protection, pollution prevention, conservation, and water valuation.

The UM Water Resources Center is responsible for the final Framework to be delivered to the Legislature by January 2011. The project will proceed with the following general steps:

- Identify and describe guiding principles and values for water sustainability
- Identify major uses of water, water-related issues, and drivers of change in water resources
- Collect and analyze existing technical information on water issues
- Form a guiding committee, the Headwaters Council, to provide advice to the UM Water Resources Center throughout the overall process
- Form a Stakeholder and Citizen Advisory Group to ensure that citizens and stakeholders are included and consulted throughout process
- Form Technical Work Teams around the major uses to define water needs over time, identify knowledge gaps, identify threats and impacts
- Form a cross-cutting team, the Framework Synthesis Team, to integrate information from the Technical Work Team across issues and develop draft recommendations
- Develop the overall framework for sustainably managing our water resources