

Shared Water, Shared Responsibility: Engaging Minnesota's Communities, Students, & Policy-Makers

Thursday, March 23, 2017, 5:15-8:00pm
Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs
University of Minnesota



Electronically Submitted Questions for the Panel Discussion

- Public education is THE key to water sustainability. I'm sure that's why the "Year of Water Action in MN" was created. What resources are available to lake homeowner associations who want to take the lead on education of residents in their watershed?
- Governor Dayton's recently announced an accelerated "25 by 25" goal for improving water quality, far more ambitious than the 6-8% target set by the Clean Water Legacy Council. What new research will be required to improve BMPs to reach that goal efficiently?
- Accountability for meeting water quality standards at the outlet of a watershed is very limited unless there is a Watershed District for that watershed. How can the state expand coverage of Watershed Districts, especially in agricultural regions of Minnesota where water quality standards are not being met?
- How can we best decrease the non-point pollution entering the Minnesota River? If you could write the farm bill, what changes would you make to respond to erosion of banks and farmland and P and N run-off?
- Who should pay for the buffers?
- How can we address the chloride pollution issue (esp. by businesses) more effectively?
- How will funding and work in Minnesota remain steady in the midst of federal changes?
- How can we draw on Minnesota's shared cultural values to strengthen our water ethic and promote social change from the individual scale, community scale and system scale?
- Could Minnesota or could the University of Minnesota consider legally becoming Guardians of the Mississippi River for future generations?
The ideal that my group holds is for someday to have all states, and even the United States itself, to have an office for the Guardian of Future Generations.
- If we are successful with our work in protecting and restoring our water resources, what do you think that success will look like? What is the number one thing you think needs to happen in order to get there?
- How do we balance protecting the financial viability and profitability of our farms and rural communities and protecting our water resources?
- How do we better define and fund the specific roles of local, tribal, state, and federal agencies to better manage water resources?
- Minnesota has led the nation in assessing wetland quantity and quality through a variety of state led mapping and inventory projects. Given climate swings will make our water and wetland systems expand and contract over time, how can the state adapt and regulate our waters and wetlands using more modern four dimensional approaches such that all landowners can preserve and maintain our water and wetland systems over time?
- How do we better preserve the Great Lakes given it represents 20% of the planet's available freshwater...which will increase to 50% (even though the volume does not change!) as the arctic, Antarctic and Greenland ice sheet melt into the ocean?
- Why isn't there a requirement to map all drain tiles for watershed planning purposes?
- Given the current attitude of the federal government towards environmental protection, how can states and local agencies become leaders on issues associated with protecting clean water?

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- In your view, is there sufficient public support for improvements in water policy in Minnesota to overcome the biggest obstacles to such improvements, including competition for budgetary resources, lack of understanding of the scientific issues that underlie water purity, and so forth?
- As a student with ties to rural, agricultural communities, I have noticed a lack of communication and collaboration with rural Minnesotans regarding water quality regulation and improvement strategies, but it is unclear if these channels of communication are not present or not well advertised. What strategies do your agencies employ to communicate and collaborate with the family farmer regarding water quality concerns?
- From a bystander's point of view, each agency represented on this panel has good reason to be concerned about water quality in Minnesota. However, each agency is governed by their mission statement and the people whom they serve, which may result in conflicting goals (or conflicts of interest between agencies) over the long run. What are you doing to work between agencies to establish common/core goals? How are you working together to address the best interests of all Minnesotans?
- How will Minnesota need to adapt to the current political uncertainties surrounding environmental protection? Is there political will within the state to make up any funding shortfalls that may come if changes are made at the federal level which work to reduce federal funding?
- How does the transportation sector intersect with water issues?
- What is the one most important thing that ordinary citizens can do to improve water sustainability in Minnesota?
- How can agriculture contribute to securing a safe and abundant water resource on into the future, specifically given the impact that climate change may have on the State's and the region's water supply? What kinds of incentives programs may be on the table to encourage the adoption of best management practices for water, food, and livelihood security?
- How can we promote better research on managing local and international water resources, as well as promoting accessibility to marginalized populations across Minnesota?
- What can we learn, international students, from Minnesota and its public policies in terms of water's sustainable managements?
- In regards to the current political climate, what can we expect for the future of monitoring and mitigating pollutants of emerging concern (such as pharmaceuticals, microplastics, etc.)? How will the state of Minnesota ensure adequate resources are being allocated to combat anthropogenic pollution?
- What role and priority do you see for remote sensing (i. e., imagery and data acquired by satellites and aerial systems, including unmanned (drone) systems for monitoring water quality of lakes and streams and mapping surrounding land cover?
- Are there any hiring initiatives for companies that deal specifically in water quality and water resources management?
- What democratic (small d) processes are needed in Ag dependent areas of MN to increase participation and commitment in conservation and water quality practices?