



MINNESOTA WATERS

HOW IS THE WATER QUALITY?

According to the Environmental Protection Agency's National Water Quality Inventory 2000 Report:

Rivers and Streams: Only 30% of surveyed river miles fully support their designated uses and 70% of surveyed river miles are impaired. Nonpoint sources, such as land disposal and runoff, generate most of the pollution in Minnesota rivers.

Lakes: Sixty-four percent of surveyed lakes fully support their designated uses and 36% of surveyed lakes are impaired. Nutrients are the primary cause of pollution in lakes. Nonpoint sources contribute most of these nutrients.

Great Lakes: Minnesota's 272 miles of Lake Superior shoreline have consumption advisories for certain species and size classes of fish. Most of the pollution from point sources has been controlled, but atmospheric deposition and runoff still degrade water quality.

FUNDING

One of the most valuable tools available to states for water quality work is federal financial assistance through loans and grants. Some of the most important sources of federal funding are administered by the Environmental Protection Agency and include the following programs: *Clean Water State Revolving Fund*, *Water Pollution Control State and Interstate Program Support (Section 106 Grants)*, and *Special Needs Support*.

Unfortunately, President Bush's proposed budget for FY 2003 cuts EPA funding for water programs by \$524 million, with significant consequences for individual states. Minnesota bears \$3.8 million of this proposed cut to water quality (6.7 percent below the current year). For example, Minnesota's Clean Water State Revolving Fund, which maintains sewage treatment, has been drastically reduced, falling by \$2.5 million or 10.2 percent. In addition, money assisting Minnesota's to reduce pollution loadings into its waterways (Section 106 Grants) was cut 7.1 percent. Funding for Minnesota's Special Needs, for which it received \$1 million in FY 2002, has been slashed to nothing.

These reductions have very serious implications for state efforts to improve water quality. As a result, a coalition of environmental groups is calling for an increase in funding for EPA water quality programs during the federal appropriations process.

TOXIC DISCHARGES INTO WATER

Minnesota Toxic Releases in 2000:

Releases into Surface Water:	1,361,628 pounds
Releases into Public Sewage:	14,576,408 pounds

CLEAN WATER ENFORCEMENT

According to the Environmental Protection Agency's data January 2000 – March 2001:

In total, 13 of Minnesota's major facilities (15.5%) were in significant non-compliance.

Of these major facilities, three of all major industrial facilities (11.1%) were significant non-compliance as well as 10 of all major municipal facilities (17.5%).

WETLANDS DESTRUCTION

America's wetlands rank among our most vital natural resources. They purify our drinking water, save our homes from floods, and protect our coasts.

- Of Minnesota's estimated original 15,070,000 acres of wetlands, circa 1780, only 8,700,000 acres are estimated to still exist as of the 1980s, a net loss of 42%.
- Minnesota has 41 rare wetland-dependent species, such as the Topeka shiner. Of these rare species, 34 are animals and 7 are plants.
- The economic value of Minnesota's remaining wetlands is \$51.8 billion.

COASTAL CONDITIONS

Of the three counties bordering the Great Lakes, only St. Louis County has a permitted public swimming beach. Two counties, St. Louis and Cook, monitor their beaches according to the standards developed by the Committee of the Great Lakes.

There were no closings/advisories in Minnesota in 2001.

DRINKING WATER SYSTEM VIOLATIONS

According to EPA's Safe Drinking Water Information System, between Fiscal Years 1997 and 2001, Minnesota had 133 community water systems with reported health standard violations. This is 14% of all systems in Minnesota. Five percent of the population or 185,211 people are served by these systems. (*Note: Most violations are not reported according to an October 2000 EPA final report on quality of data in SDWIS.*)

FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORIES

Minnesota had 941 fish consumption advisories in 2001. This is a decrease of 5 since 2000. Of these advisories, 4990 were for lakes, 792 for rivers, and 8 were for the Great Lakes.

Nationally 2,618 fish consumption advisories were posted in 2001. This is 220 less than in 2000 – a decrease of 8%. However, advisories are categorized by geographic location and the average lake acreage, river miles, and coastline miles under advisory have increased since 1993. An alternative analysis of the number of advisories, as based on species and pollutants, would generate a different view of each state.

REFERENCES FOR STATE WATER QUALITY FACT SHEETS

Water Quality Data:

U.S. EPA. *National Water Quality Inventory 2000 Report*. August 2002.

Toxic Discharge and Enforcement Data:

U.S. Public Interest Research Group. *Permit to Pollute: How the Government's Lax Enforcement of the Clean Water Act is Poisoning Our Waters*. August 2002.

<http://uspirg.org/uspirg.asp?id2=7545&id3=USPIRG&>

U.S. EPA. *2000 Toxic Release Inventory Fact Sheets*. June 2002.

<http://www.epa.gov/tri/tridata/tri00/state/index.htm>

Wetlands Data:

Dahl, T.E. *Wetlands Losses in the United States, 1780's to 1980's*. U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service. Washington D.C., 13 pp., 1990.

The Nature Conservancy and the International Network of Natural Heritage Programs and Conservation Data Centers. *National Heritage Central Databases*. January 2000.

Coastal Data:

Natural Resources Defense Council. *Testing the Waters 2002: A Guide to Water Quality at Vacation Beaches*. July 2002.

<http://www.nrdc.org/water/oceans/ttw/titinx.asp>

Funding Data:

U.S. Office of Management and Budget. *Budget of the U.S. Government Fiscal Year 2003, Budget Information for States*. July 2002.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2003/bis.html>

Drinking Water Data:

U.S. EPA. *Data Reliability Analysis of the EPA Safe Drinking Water Information System, Federal Version (SDWIS/FED)*. July 2002.

<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/sdwisfed/sdwis.htm>

Fish Consumption Data:

U.S. EPA. *Listing of Fish and Wildlife Consumption Advisories*. 2001.

<http://map1.epa.gov>