



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

Executive Summary for Action

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers Meeting
Wednesday, June 20, 2024

Agenda Item

Item 9. C. – 2024 Legislative Activities Update

Prepared By

Linda Loomis, Administrator

Summary

The 2024 legislative ended, and Lisa Frenette has provided an update. Friends of the Minnesota Valley received \$50,000 for its River Watch Program.

A summary of issues the LMRWD asked Ms. Frenette to follow is attached.

Attachments

Legislative activities update

Recommended Action

No action recommended - for information only

Environment and Natural Resources Policy Provisions - SF 2904 Chapter 90

Article 2: Native Rough Fish

A number of changes have been made to rough fish in the provision on the recommendations of the DNR after the definition of rough fish was changed to native rough fish. This also included removing carp from the definition and defining the list of native rough fish.

This year a number of changes were made to accommodate the changes made last year including:

- *Requires the DNR to ensure there are no adverse impacts when making brood stock available.
- *Allows the DNR to deny an aquatic farm license in a water containing native rough fish.
- *Requires an aquarium facility to provide a receipt with certain information when transferring.
- *Prohibits live native rough fish and their eggs to be taken from public waters. (current game fish law.)
- *Modified the harpooning of rough fish to accommodate the new definition.

A more extensive summary of new laws on native rough fish can be found [here](#)

Article 3: Board of Water and Soil Resources

A number of provision governing watershed districts were adopted this year. They include:

Recommendations for updating the Minnesota Public Drainage Manual to a list of recommendations that BWSR is working with the Drainage Workgroup on.

Modifies the threshold for watershed district boundary petitions to be at least 50% of the resident owners in the watershed district

Allows a majority of the watershed district managers to file a petition to withdraw from the territory and that a notice must be sent by mail from BWSR on a hearing on a watershed district boundary change.

A petition to increase the number of watershed district board managers must be adopted by resolution by a majority of the managers.

Removes a requirement that a watershed district's secretary mail a notice of a meeting to each of its members at least eight days before the meeting and states that all meetings are subject to the open meeting law.

Federally recognized tribes should be included as part of the watershed advisory board.

Changes have been made to the Watershed Management Plan currently in law which includes placing responsibility directly on the watershed district and removing BWSR's responsibility.

I recommend consulting with the Board's attorney on any and all watershed district changes that have been implemented in this year's legislation.

Omnibus Environment Finance bill - HF 3911

[Chapter 119](#)

Continuous Fishing Season for Certain Fish

For sunfish, white crappie, black crappie, yellow perch, channel catfish, rock bass, white bass, yellow bass, burbot, cisco (tullibee), lake whitefish, common carp, and native rough fish, the open season is continuous.

Road Salt Study

Requires the PCA to compile an annual report until 2030 on the state's purchase of deicing salt. This does not include salt used by the Department of Transportation for road management.

Invasive Carp Management

\$1,720,000 the first year is to prevent and manage invasive carp. This includes activities related to the Mississippi River Locks and Dams and stakeholder engagement. Up to \$325,000 may be used for a grant to the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota to study the Mississippi River Lock Dam 5 plan to optimize management to reduce invasive carp.

Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund - HF4124

[Chapter 106](#)

Friends of the Minnesota Valley river watch program

The program will receive \$50 thousand for the second year of the program. Friends of the Minnesota Valley must provide a report to the commissioner and to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees and divisions with jurisdiction over environment and natural resources finance and policy and the clean water fund on the outcomes achieved with the money received under this appropriation.

Protecting Upper Mississippi River from Invasive Carp

\$12,000,000 the second year is to the commissioner of natural resources to fund activities to protect the Upper Mississippi River from invasive carp. Primary activities within this appropriation to include agreements with federal partners, such as the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, to complete a site-specific evaluation of deterrent effectiveness and feasibility and to design, construct, and begin the operation and maintenance of a structural deterrent for invasive carp at Lock and Dam No. 5 on the Mississippi River to protect Minnesota's aquatic habitat through an adaptive management approach. Funds may be used to supplement invasive carp tagging, tracking, netting, and commercial capture activities as well as testing technologies to support the future effectiveness of a deterrent within the Mississippi River. A detailed

accomplishment plan must be submitted to and approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council prior to release of funds. This appropriation is available until June 30, 2029.

Other Initiatives Supported by the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District

Support Water Storage Initiatives

No language was discussed this year to include support for MN River hydrology studies that identify and prioritize areas that provide the most beneficial and cost-effective implementation for storage; BWSR received \$17 million in 2023 to work in collaboration with constituencies to implement storage upstream.

There was no bonding bill this year due to the nature of the end of session so Carver and Shakopee did not received any funding for their bonding requests.