



MINNESOTA DIVISION Izaak Walton League of America *Defenders of Soil, Air, Woods, Waters and Wildlife*

Priorities for 2017 Minnesota Legislature

Clean Water – Minnesota is blessed with an abundance of water that each and every one of us needs daily. We must be good stewards of this resource, for our own, as well as our children's children's benefit.

- ◆ **Forever Green** – A cover crop and perennial crop research and demonstration program at the U of M focused on developing crops, agricultural techniques and markets which protect water and store carbon. A total of \$10 million/year on an on-going basis is required to fully develop and implement research and field demonstrations.



Photo by Dave Hansen/University of Minnesota.

- ◆ **RIM** – \$30 million is needed to fund the first matching installment of a federal/state program to create permanent conservation easements on flood-prone and erodable private lands in the Minnesota River Valley. Up to 100,000 acres of wetlands, expanded stream buffers and well head protection areas will be enrolled over five years to protect public waters, while fairly compensating willing private landowners.



St. Louis River. Photo by Michael Furtman.

- ◆ **St. Louis River Estuary clean up** – \$25.4 million in state funds are necessary to complement nearly \$50 million in federal Great Lakes funds to clean up legacy pollution at ten sites in the Duluth harbor and upstream areas in the estuary by 2020.

Contact Environmental Issues Program Director Don Arnosti at (612) 718-3626.

Habitat Protection – All life needs habitat, from the smallest creature to humans.

- ♦ **Pollinators** – Bees, butterflies and other insects provide irreplaceable services pollinating one third of our food crops, and many plants across our native ecosystems. To thrive, they require healthy and diverse habitat, free of toxic chemicals. A class of systemic insecticides, termed “neonicotinoids” are used in many agricultural seed coatings and have been proven to harm bees and other pollinators.



Monarch Butterfly. Photo by Don Dinndorf.

Registration of this use of these chemicals would help control impacts to pollinators. We support funding for a “pollinator account” to provide money for pollinator research and education about chemicals and practices which minimize harm to pollinators.

- ♦ **School Trust Land compensation** – School Trust lands are managed to produce revenue, yet many of the lands are rare and sensitive habitats unsuitable for this objective. Last year, the legislature provided funding for a “valuation study” to allow fair and efficient compensation to the Trust for 11,000 parcels that are not suitable for revenue generation, or are in other high value uses. Approximately 60,000 acres were valued. Parcels include over 200 boat launches, 7500 acres of native prairie, 500 acres of old growth forest and more than 50,000 acres of Peatland SNA. These lands should be removed from the Trust and compensation provided.

Pollution Prevention – The cheapest and most effective way to protect our waters and habitats is to prevent polluting activities from occurring. Sulfide ore mining, distinct from taconite mining, has always polluted nearby waters with long-lasting impacts.



BWCAW. Photo by Michael Furtman.

- ♦ **Separating mineral promotion duties from the DNR** – We support moving these responsibilities to the Department of Economic Development, freeing DNR to manage and regulate mining without conflict of interest.
- ♦ **Prove it First** – We support legislation similar to current Wisconsin law that prohibits sulfide ore mine permitting until a similar mine is opened and successfully closed without pollution. This takes an appropriately conservative approach to mineral development.