

Ellen Hawkins

Comments to MNPCA on the draft 2024 Impaired Water List

Thank you for recognizing wild rice habitat including wetlands that are impaired due to high sulfate levels. I wonder why you haven't listed Dark Lake, especially significant due to its location downstream from Minntac in the Rainy Watershed. While listing is important, it's hard work toward restoration that's needed. When I was a little girl, growing up just north of St Paul in the 1950s, my parents explained how wetlands can be drained or polluted. They worked to restore a marsh adjacent to their farm, which they felt had probably been a wild rice lake in the past. We harvested a few handfuls of rice from a nearby lake, wrapped it up in balls of clay and scattered it around the marsh, hoping it would take root. It didn't, but the importance of restoration of impaired native habitats took root in our minds. Many of you working for the MPCA probably recall similar peak experiences that inspired you. Please draw on them now and figure out how to get this job done. Recognize the ties between sulfate levels and mercury contamination. Mining and its wastewater must be better regulated and regulations must be enforced.

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