

## Rebecca Myerly

MPCA is to be commended for its identification of 2,395 wild rice producing waters and the addition of 20 wild rice producing waters that are impaired due to sulfate exceeding Minnesota's 10 mg/L wild rice sulfate standard. Dark Lake should be added to Minnesota's impaired waters list because it is a wild rice producing water downstream of a tailings basin and therefore subject to the pollution and contamination resulting from the mining process.

It is vitally important for MPCA to not only identify but also to restore the wild rice producing waters that are impaired due to sulfate and other pollutants. This restoration process should include:

- \*determining how much sulfate needs to be reduced in each body of water impaired by mining pollution to comply with Minnesota's established sulfate standard,
- \*writing mining permits with stringent sulfate limits, and
- \*enforcing those permits.

These efforts would cut the number of Minnesota's wild rice impaired waters by approximately half.

In addition, MPCA should recognize and acknowledge sulfate pollution exacerbates the effects of mercury deposited from the air in its studies and plans to restore mercury impaired waters and set firm deadlines to analyze watersheds and establish regulatory controls to reduce mercury to safe levels—levels that are safe for the waters, fish, humans, and all other creatures.