

Patricia Buck

Thank you for your efforts to identify 2,395 wild rice producing waters and adding 20 new waterbodies to the list of wild rice waters impaired due to sulfate. These are significant to the health of our waters and for the Indigenous people particularly.

Please add Dark Lake, a wild rice lake in the Rainy River watershed contaminated by mining pollution, to that list.

I implore you to strengthen the current Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plan to study and reduce pollutants in impaired waters and restore wild rice waters impaired due to sulfate. Please develop and implement individualized plans to determine how much sulfate needs to be reduced for each waterbody impaired by mining pollution to comply with Minnesota's sulfate standard. Mining permits with stringent sulfate limits and unambiguous language will make it clear that the health of our precious waters and all inhabitants of Minnesota are top priority. Provide funding and staff to enforce those permits.

Restore mercury impaired waters and fish. Please recognize how 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 that reduce mercury to safe levels. We should not live in a world that requires we limit our intake of fish because they are too polluted.

Please do what is right for the wellbeing of people, future generations and the pristine and beautiful wild lands of northern Minnesota. Thank you, P. Buck