

Beth Tamminen

I am pleased that MPCA has taken the step of identifying 2,395 Wild Rice Producing Waters as tribes have requested for many years. This includes their addition of 20 lakes/waters to the list of those impaired by too much sulfate.

Although it may be controversial due to its location downstream of Minnetac, it is critical that MPCA add Dark Lake to Minnesota's 2024 Draft Impaired Waters List. It has been identified as wild rice producing and is a hotspot for likely sulfate pollution. It cannot be ignored just because it may be inconvenient to list it.

MPCA needs to take the next step and determine the standard for how much sulfate needs to be reduced in impaired waters to be able to then complete a plan for doing so. Because at least half of the impairment of wild rice waters is due to sulfate discharge from mining, MPCA needs to consider regulating this by setting and enforcing limits on sulfate discharges.

Beyond its effects on wild rice, science has shown that sulfate pollution, combined with the alteration of wetlands, increases the depositing of mercury in other waters. This affects the safety of eating fish for our whole region, in particular for children, pregnant women, and anyone who eats fish from regional waters regularly. It is in the interest of public health throughout our region to control sulfate pollution