

Conservation Connection

A Minnesota Legislative Outdoor Newsletter: Created by Kim Scott and Alexandra David

*Sponsored by: Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Pheasants Forever, Mn Musky and Pike Alliance, Sportsmen for the BWC, Mn Sharptail Grouse Society, Outdoor News, Ferguson Falls Fish and Game Club, Nicollet Conservation Club**

May 19, 2023

Important Dates:

- **May 22, 2023, 11:59pm: Regular Session must adjourn.**

Note: A bill passed *during* the last three days of session in an odd-numbered year (the first year of the biennium) must be signed or vetoed by the governor within three days of presentment to the governor. If the governor fails to return the bill to the house of origin in an odd-numbered year within three days of presentment, the bill becomes law.

Legislative News Highlights

Buckle up for a marathon weekend of deal-making and debate at the State Capitol, as lawmakers scramble to spend a \$17 billion surplus and get key bills across the finish line ahead of Monday's adjournment deadline. As of Thursday, which was the House's [initial goal date for finishing the session](#), about a dozen finalized budget bills had cleared both chambers, with several more priority measures in the pipeline for final votes. Several major pieces of legislation, including a tax package, a transportation spending package and a hotly debated hospital staffing bill, remained unfinished with just four days to go. Here's where some key remaining issues stand: [Read more and here.](#)

Minnesota lawmakers reach historic deal on environment, climate and energy: Minnesota is set to spend historic sums on the environment after lawmakers agreed to a package of policy changes and programs to safeguard air and water, plant trees and renovate crumbling outdoor infrastructure such as fish hatcheries and boat ramps. The \$2 billion environment bill is headed to Gov. Tim Walz's desk after House and Senate floor votes on Thursday. The far-reaching changes will touch much of the state — its farm fields, grasslands, peatlands, forests, factories and homes.

The deal imposes one of the broadest bans on PFAS, the so-called "forever chemicals," and gives the state more power to punish irrigators who deplete groundwater . . . Some measures, such as a ban on lead fishing tackle and a wolf hunt ban, did not survive. Most of the \$1 billion in new spending comes from the state's general fund surplus but there are other sources too, such as the \$11 million the state

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Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will generate from fee hikes — primarily boat registration fees that haven't been raised since about 2006.

Some priority measures didn't survive. Negotiators declined to reinstate a citizens' board that once oversaw pollution permits at the MPCA after a group of rural House Democrats said they couldn't support the bill with that provision . . . Lawmakers also decided against installing a new barrier to prevent invasive carp from spreading further up the Mississippi River. After a [record number](#) of the destructive fish were caught this spring, senators pushed a \$17 million proposal to install a noise, light and bubble system to act as a barrier along one of the river's lock and dams. Legislators also jettisoned a proposed ban on lead sinkers and instead chose to spend \$1 million to keep "Get the Lead Out" — an educational effort to get hunters and anglers to voluntarily switch to nontoxic ammunition and tackle. Lead sinkers and jigs are swallowed each year by loons and swans [Read more and here](#).

Higher fees for boats and jet skis but anglers, park visitors won't pay more under final DFL

environmental bill: Minnesota lawmakers won't hike the price of fishing licenses or state park permits under a budget deal struck by DFL lawmakers, rejecting a proposal for higher fees made by the Department of Natural Resources this year. But Democrats who control the Legislature are planning to raise fees on one area of outdoor recreation: watercraft registrations. DNR Commissioner Strommen said the agreement includes about \$300 million in the two-year budget for her agency, including more than \$110 million for an [initiative](#) to modernize outdoor recreation infrastructure such as dilapidated fish hatcheries . . . DFL lawmakers in the House and Senate were largely united in [pushing for a boost to environmental initiatives](#), and they proposed many of the same spending priorities. But as Democrats hashed out differences between their budget plans, the prospect of fees was [one point of disagreement](#). Republicans and some DFL legislators opposed more expensive permits for outdoor recreation, arguing it was unnecessary to hike prices when Minnesota is flush with a historic \$17.5 billion budget surplus. [Read more](#).

View the spreadsheets for [environment and natural resources](#), [Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund](#), and [climate and energy](#) and the final [conference committee report](#).

See how your legislators voted on the final environment bill on the next page.

(Look up your legislators [here](#)):

See all bills signed into law during the 2023 regular session [here](#).

House of Representatives: 72-57

ACOMB	●	EDELSON	●	HOWARD	●	MEKELAND	●	QUAM	●
AGBAJE	●	ELKINS	●	HUDELLA	●	MOLLER	●	REHM	●
ALTENDORF	●	ENGEN	●	HUDSON	●	MUELLER	●	REYER	●
ANDERSON, P. E.	●	FEIST	●	HUOT	●	MURPHY	●	RICHARDSON	●
ANDERSON, P. H.	●	FINKE	●	HUSSEIN	●	MYERS	●	ROBBINS	●
BACKER	●	FISCHER	●	IGO	●	NADEAU	●	SCHOMACKER	●
BAHNER	●	FOGELMAN	●	JACOB	●	NASH	●	SCHULTZ	●
BAKEBERG	●	FRANSON	●	JOHNSON	●	NELSON, M.	●	SCOTT	●
BAKER	●	FRAZIER	●	JORDAN	●	NELSON, N.	●	SENCER-MURA	●
BECKER-FINN	●	FREDERICK	●	JOY	●	NEU BRINDLEY	●	SKRABA	●
BENNETT	●	FREIBERG	●	KEELER	●	NEWTON	●	SMITH	●
BERG	●	GAROFALO	●	KIEL	●	NISKA	●	STEPHENSON	●
BIERMAN	●	GILLMAN	●	KLEVORN	●	NOOR	●	SWEDZINSKI	●
BLISS	●	GOMEZ	●	KNUDSEN	●	NORRIS	●	TABKE	●
BRAND	●	GREENMAN	●	KOEGEL	●	NOVOTNY	●	TORKELSON	●
BURKEL	●	GROSSELL	●	KOTYZA-WITTHUHN	●	O'DRISCOLL	●	URDAHL	●
CARROLL	●	HANSEN, R.	●	KOZLOWSKI	●	OLSON, B.	●	VANG	●
CHA	●	HANSON, J.	●	KOZNICK	●	OLSON, L.	●	WEST	●
CLARDY	●	HARDER	●	KRAFT	●	O'NEILL	●	WIENER	●
COULTER	●	HASSAN	●	KRESHA	●	PELOWSKI	●	WIENS	●
CURRAN	●	HEINTZEMAN	●	LEE, F.	●	PÉREZ-VEGA	●	WITTE	●
DANIELS	●	HEMMINGSSEN-JAEG	●	LEE, K.	●	PERRYMAN	●	WOLGAMOTT	●
DAUDT	●	HER	●	LIEBLING	●	PETERSBURG	●	XIONG	●
DAVIDS	●	HICKS	●	LILLIE	●	PFARR	●	YOUAKIM	●
DAVIS	●	HILL	●	LISLEGARD	●	PINTO	●	ZELEZNIKAR	●
DEMUTH	●	HOLLINS	●	LONG	●	PRYOR	●	SPEAKER	●
DOTSETH	●	HORNSTEIN	●	MCDONALD	●	PURSELL	●	HORTMAN	●

Senate: 35-32

Y ABELER	Y FATEH	N LANG	Y PAPPAS
N ANDERSON	Y FRENTZ	Y LATZ	Y PHA
N BAHR	N GREEN	N LIESKE	Y PORT
Y BOLDON	N GRUENHAGEN	N LIMMER	N PRATT
Y CARLSON	Y GUSTAFSON	N LUCERO	Y PUTNAM
Y CHAMPION	Y HAUSCHILD	Y MANN	N RARICK
N COLEMAN	Y HAWJ	Y MARTY	N RASMUSSEN
Y CWODZINSKI	Y HOFFMAN	N MATHEWS	Y REST
N DAHMS	N HOUSLEY	Y MAYE QUADE	Y SEEBERGER
Y DIBBLE	N HOWE	Y MCEWEN	N UTKE
N DORNINK	N JASINSKI	N MILLER	N WEBER
N DRAHEIM	N JOHNSON	Y MITCHELL	N WESENBERG
N DRAZKOWSKI	Y KLEIN	Y MOHAMED	Y WESTLIN
N DUCKWORTH	N KORAN	Y MORRISON	N WESTROM
Y DZIEDZIC	N KREUN	Y MURPHY	Y WIKLUND
N EICHORN	Y KUNESH	N NELSON	Y XIONG
N FARNSWORTH	Y KUPEC	Y OUMOU VERBETEN	
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FINAL PASSAGE CC REPORT		YEA 35	NAY 32

Governor Walz signs the Legacy omnibus bill into law, including the appropriations from the Outdoor Heritage Fund (as recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council):

[Chapter 40, House File 1999](#) – Legacy Omnibus Bill

The Legacy Omnibus Bill appropriates \$818 million for conservation, clean water, parks & trails, and arts & culture projects and programming across the state. The bill funds habitat restoration, clean water programs across state agencies, parks and trails funding throughout Greater Minnesota and the metro, and museums, educational arts programs, and more.

\$3.3 billion public safety and judiciary budget bill, which includes a pair of gun control measures, is on its way to the governor's office for a signature after the Minnesota House of Representatives on Monday passed it on a 69-63 vote. After an eight-hour debate, all but one Democrat in the chamber voted to advance the bill while Republicans and Rep. Dave Lisle, DFL-Aurora, opposed it. The plan would make Minnesota the 20th state to enact what are known as red flag protections aimed at removing firearms from those deemed a danger to themselves or others. It would also expand criminal background checks to private transfers of firearms. [Read more](#). The Senate passed the report via a [34-33](#) party-line vote May 12. The public safety and judiciary finance and policy agreement contains provisions to require universal background checks for handgun sales and would enact new laws on extreme-risk protection orders thereby allowing family members and others to petition a court to have firearms removed from a person found to pose a significant danger to themselves or others. [Read more](#). Update: bill signed, [read more](#).

Gov. Tim Walz signs bipartisan legislation to fund replacement of lead service lines on residential properties: cities will be expected to map their own service lines and do their own outreach to homeowners for free lead pipe replacements: Across Minnesota, thousands of underground service lines that snake from home basement water meters to water mains in the center of the street are made of lead. ... The lines sit within both the public right-of-way and private residential property, and replacing them can cost property owners \$10,000 or more. ... On Tuesday, Gov. Tim Walz signed bipartisan legislation that would help cities across the state not only map the locations of their lead service lines, but rip them out and replace them, at no cost to homeowners. The \$240 million initiative received the unanimous backing of House lawmakers and near-unanimous support in the state Senate. [Read more](#).

New rules for watercraft on Lake Minnetonka are now in effect with the start of boating season. The Lake Minnetonka Conservation District's new rule doubles the distance from shore – 150 feet to 300 feet – for which boats are limited to a maximum speed of 5 mph. There are no changes to the rules for watercraft near docks, anchored boats, swimmers, or scuba diving warning flags. That speed limit remains at 5 mph within 150 feet. ... The rule change comes following a public engagement period by the conservation district board, and went into effect on Jan. 1, albeit boats have only recently been able to get onto the lake. [Read more](#).

Select DNR News releases

- [Recreational opportunities abound at state parks, trails, recreation areas over Memorial Day weekend](#): In advance of the upcoming Memorial Day weekend, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is highlighting recreational opportunities at state parks, trails and recreation areas throughout Minnesota.
- [Fort Snelling State Park temporarily closed again due to flooding](#): Fort Snelling State Park temporarily closed again to the public at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, May 17 because water from the rising Minnesota River is expected to flood the main park road and all the parking lots.

- [Off-Highway vehicle riding season underway](#): After a long winter, the off-highway vehicle riding season is upon us. Minnesota boasts more than 3,000 miles of trails for all types of OHVs and rider skill levels.

Last week at the Legislature:

On Monday evening, Senate [Finance](#) convened to discuss the cash-only capital investment bill: [H.F. 0670 \(Pappas\)](#): Capital investment; spending authorization to acquire and better land and buildings and for other improvements of capital nature with certain conditions. See also: [HF670 Spreadsheet](#)

On Wednesday morning at 9:00 AM, the [Environment, Natural Resources, Climate and Energy Conference Committee \(HF2310\)](#) met to present the conference committee agreement and adopt the conference committee report for [HF2310](#) (Hansen/Hawj). See also: [Environment and Natural Resources CC Agreement Spreadsheet](#); [ENRTF 2023 \(FY 2024\) CC Agreement Spreadsheet](#); [Energy Budget CC Report Spreadsheet](#); and [HF2310 Conference Committee Report](#).

At 12:30 PM on Wednesday, Senate [Rules and Administration](#) met to pass the cash-only capital investment bill, [H.F. 0670 \(Pappas\)](#): Capital investment; spending authorization to acquire and better land and buildings and for other improvements of capital nature with certain conditions, to the Senate floor.

Next Week at the Legislature:

During the final days of the 2023 legislative session, conference committees have completed their work on their omnibus bills. The frequency of floor sessions will increase to facilitate final passage of conference committee reports.

The Legislature must adjourn by midnight on Monday.

At 8:30 AM on Wednesday, May 24th, the **Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council** will meet to discuss Council executive officer elections.

Bills of Interest:

There are no deadlines on bill introductions during session, however, committee deadlines have expired for the 2023 session and action is unlikely to be taken on any bills being introduced.

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) and **Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF)**: Please click [here](#) for a list of bills of pertinence to the OHF maintained by LSOHC staff.

Environment and Natural Resources:

Majority party legislation:

Kraft introduced: [H. F. 3320](#). A bill for an act relating to recycling; establishing product stewardship program to promote recycling of boat wrap; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 115A. The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy. *No Senate companion.*

Pursell; Jordan; Davids; Skraba; Nelson, N.; Schultz; Smith; Olson, L.; Clardy; Finke; Hill; Fischer; Vang; Carroll; Kozlowski; Kraft; Hansen, R.; Lee, K.; Lillie; Bierman; Klevorn; Bahner; Elkins; Frazier; Huot; Greenman; Sencer-Mura; Frederick; Brand; Youakim; Kotyza-Witthuhn; Acomb; Pryor; Hornstein and Tabke introduced: [H. F. 3321](#). A bill for an act relating to natural resources; creating Outdoor School for All grant program; appropriating money; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 84. The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy. *Senate companion:* [S.F. No. 3347](#) (Hauschild).

Senators McEwen, Morrison, Mitchell, and Seeberger introduced--[S.F. No. 3342](#): A bill for an act relating to environment; appropriating money for study of PFAS in biosolids. Referred to the Committee on Environment, Climate, and Legacy. *No House companion.*

Hemmingsen-Jaeger introduced: [H. F. 3326](#). A bill for an act relating to environment; banning certain mercury-containing lighting; amending Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 116.92, by adding a subdivision. The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy. *Senate companion:* [S.F. No. 3345](#) (Mitchell).

Minority party legislation:

Senator Howe introduced--[S.F. No. 3339](#): A bill for an act relating to agriculture; requiring compensation for an agricultural crop damaged or destroyed by wildlife; requiring rulemaking; requiring a report; appropriating money; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 3. Referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Broadband, and Rural Development. *No House companion.*

Firearm legislation:

Majority party legislation:

Senator McEwen introduced--[S.F. No. 3343](#): A bill for an act relating to public safety; providing an exception to the crime of illegal possession of a firearm in certain situations; amending Minnesota Statutes 2022, sections 609.165, subdivision 1b; 624.713, subdivision 2. Referred to the Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety. *No House companion.*