

Water Storage and Climate Change Mitigation



THE PROBLEM:

Minnesota's wetlands, swamps, and perennial streams have been threatened, degraded, and downsized for several decades through the expansion and practices of the agricultural industry. As a result, the environmental benefits that are associated with these unique ecosystems, including carbon sequestration and storage, have been reduced as well.

Southern Minnesota and highly agricultural areas are the regions with the greatest reduction in wetland cover.

Destruction of wetland areas exacerbates the problems associated with climate change in Minnesota by reducing carbon storage, increasing the risks of invasive species, and causing further pollution of Minnesota's water bodies

BACKGROUND

- Wetlands cover about 20% of the state of Minnesota which is more area than lakes and rivers combined. ([MPCA](#))
- Wetlands act as a buffer to larger or nearby water bodies by interfering with runoff from impervious surfaces and capturing the pollution through unique soils and vegetation located throughout the wetland.
- Wetlands also act as carbon sinks and are necessary for capturing and storing greenhouse gases ([BWSR](#))
 - Wetlands have high productivity through vegetation and fertile soils which causes them to capture carbon
 - Anaerobic conditions within some wetlands allows for the long term storage of carbon (ex: peatlands)
- Drainage projects and the alteration of natural landscapes increases flow, erosion, and pollution to downstream regions. This negatively impacts important water features including perennial streams and wetlands.

MINNESOTA'S WATER STORAGE DESERVES PROTECTION

Water storage and wetland protection are tools Minnesotans may utilize to mitigate the harmful impacts of climate change.



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