

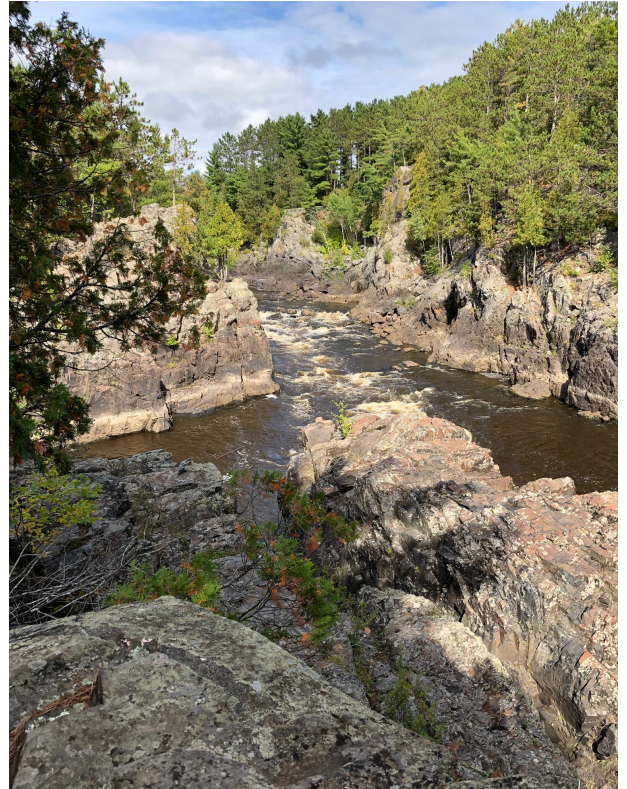


## Protecting Minnesota's Clean Waters & Communities

### What Problems Does WaterLegacy Address?

WaterLegacy's work addresses threats to Minnesota's waters, habitats, human health, and climate, and the communities that would be most adversely affected:

- 1) The proposed new and toxic industry of copper-nickel sulfide ore mining would contaminate Minnesota's major watersheds from the Boundary Waters to the Mississippi River.
- 2) Traditional conservation alone will not protect lands, waters, health, or climate from industrial pollution.
- 3) Historically, both governments and non-governmental organizations have failed to recognize tribal rights and environmental justice.
- 4) Minnesota government agencies are failing to protect Minnesota's lands, waters, human health, and our climate future.



### How Does WaterLegacy Work?

WaterLegacy uses science, law, and organizing to ensure that sulfide mining does not destroy water quality and wild rice, increase mercury contamination of fish, and impair human health and tribal resources.

WaterLegacy works in partnership with tribes and other allies to hold state agencies accountable to protect water, nature, and health. We:

- 1) Take strategic action in consultation with tribes and invest resources to support tribal rights and capacity,
- 2) Develop legal and technical arguments in court and administrative proceedings to ensure that permits and standards protect natural resources,
- 3) Serve as a catalyst to increase the efficacy of other environmental groups, and
- 4) Organize and mentor citizen scientists, doctors, and other members of the public to comment, testify, and advocate to protect clean water.



# Selected WaterLegacy Accomplishments

WaterLegacy's **education and organizing work** has motivated more than 75,000 comments from the public, as well as several published medical articles, dozens of reports from citizen scientists, and hundreds of testimonies opposing pollution and supporting stronger water quality standards.

Our **administrative advocacy and litigation** have upheld the wild rice sulfate standard, a priority for the tribes. In partnership with tribes and other allies, WaterLegacy's litigation has reversed weak permits for Minnesota's first copper-nickel mine, the PolyMet sulfide mine, **setting precedent to protect Minnesota's Lake Superior watersheds**. We have also strengthened enforcement of the Clean Water Act in Minnesota. Selected successes in partnership with allies include:

- **PolyMet Water Pollution Permit reversed by the Minnesota Court of Appeals** due to state agency failure to consider water quality impacts of untreated mine and waste seepage. (2021)
- **PolyMet Permit to Mine reversed by the Minnesota Supreme Court** due to state agency failure to set a permit term or show that PolyMet would control acid mine drainage. (2021)
- **PolyMet U.S. Army Corps Wetlands Destruction Permit Suspended** due to Fond du Lac Band's objection. (2021) The basis for tribal objections under the Clean Water Act was developed by WaterLegacy's counsel in the **first law review article ever to argue for that authority**. (2015)
- **Historic Listing of 35 Minnesota Wild Rice Waters Impaired due to Sulfate Pollution** so they can be protected and restored under the Clean Water Act. This change was compelled by the U.S. EPA as a result of administrative advocacy by WaterLegacy and tribes. (2021)
- **Groundwater Water Standards Upheld by Minnesota Supreme Court** and agency ordered to analyze pollution through groundwater to surface water under the Clean Water Act. (2021)
- **Exposed Minnesota State Agency Irregular Procedures** in destroying official records and hiding U.S. EPA comments critical of the weak PolyMet water pollution permit. (2019-20)
- **Prevented Repeal of the Sulfate Water Quality Standard that Protects Wild Rice** by intervening in a lawsuit (2010), defeating a new rule in administrative hearings (2011-2018), organizing to secure two vetoes of session laws by the governor (2019), and winning an appeal of a taconite mine permit. (2020)



Join WaterLegacy's work to defend Minnesota waters & communities!  
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