

## Be an active League Member

You've seen it all before! And, now you are seeing it again! "IT" is an assault on common sense stewardship of Minnesota natural resources. To watch current legislative actions one would have to assume that some legislators do not think clean air and water; bountiful wildlife populations, and outdoor recreation are core values to the citizens they serve. The mix of rolling back hard won gains appears to hold little value to many current legislators.

Some, if not all, of these actions will result in more pollution, and, the continued loss of what we value very highly. These actions threaten to continue to move Minnesota away from the proud tradition of being a conservation leader among the fifty states. How can this be in a state that saw 1,600,000 voters choose to tax themselves to reinvigorate conservation of all types?

### **What is going on here?**

There is not enough space in this *Waltonian* to cover it all. But this much is clear; without active IKES who are willing to voice their concerns, there will be more to come!! We've been at our best when we've been engaged. We represent the values of the majority of the people living in Minnesota, much of the legislation proposed does not represent those values.

Minnesota has a long, long history, as has the nation; of demonstrating that job creation, and, economic prosperity are generally tied to strong environmental protection and restoration values. We've seen industry leaders who in the 60's and 70's who fought to defeat conservation legislation, later admit that in many cases they were proud of their accomplishments mandated by legislation that protected the environment. And, that they made more money after the nation moved to clean up than when they used our lakes and rivers as dump sites for their waste.

We exist to defend those values. Those victories require eternal vigilance. Politicians often have little memory of what preceded their individual election to office. We need to help educate them. Legislators are over whelmed by the issues. Most legislators are good people. They ran for office because they do want to serve our state. But, they are often over-whelmed by the enormous pressure placed on them by their caucus, they work in an environment that is very often divisive, and the number of subjects in front of them is very challenging.

That is where we come in. One on one conversations with your legislators are very helpful. I know you are tired of receiving a constant barrage of requests that call you to action. I know that your life is very busy. I know that you may feel that you do not know enough of the details. I know you may be uncomfortable that this is about party politics.

Remember as IKES, we are not democrats, we are not republicans, and we are not independents. We are citizens who believe in natural resource stewardship. We believe that essential to our own future as a species is the care of this earth. We believe that investments today reduce cost tomorrow. We believe that we need to speak for plants and animal, lakes and streams, marshes, and woodlands that cannot speak for themselves. This is who we are!

We are not in your face nasty on every issue folks. We are thoughtful, respectful, we expect to be received fairly and we want our voices to be heard. But, once in a while, it is OK to show passion and to show contempt for politics that steal from all of us for the benefit of a few.

We can understand the desire that drives government to improve its performance. We can understand, and, support review of environmental protections. But, we cannot stand by and allow change that is not supported by good science, then applied evenly to all. That kind of re-rigging the ships sails is unacceptable to the League, and, always has been!

When the State and National League need your voice on an issue, lend it, help out! This is a democracy, we can make a difference, we always have. Pull out of map of Minnesota today, look at the footprints of the League. Do you see national wild life refuges, do you see wilderness areas, do you see state and national parks, do you see places you want to take your children and grand- children? We have these treasures and more because we are a League. We worked with like- minded groups in partnership, we did those things, together.

Now we have new challenges, we need to respond together, not just a few elected leaders, and dedicated staff, all of us, everyone! Please spend a little time every week of our lives protecting what past members accomplished. Let us serve our core values. What a shame it is every time we lose something precious to us all with the knowledge that we did not try to prevent that loss, losing without even trying is really a darned shame. Lets' pledge that we will not let that happen.

Dave Zentner