A person is seen from behind, walking away on a dirt path through a forest with vibrant autumn foliage. They are carrying a large, bright red canoe with a yellow stripe on their back. The path is covered with fallen leaves, and the trees are dense with colorful leaves in shades of red, orange, and green.

Passages

Celebrating 35 years of protecting and preserving
Minnesota's lands, waters, wildlife and citizens.



The path to here.

MCEA turned 35 this summer. We're not sure where the time went — but then, we've been pretty busy. What we do know is that 2009 was a year of marked progress, culminating in September with the apparent demise of the Big Stone II coal-fired power plant we have fought for five years. Earlier in the year, the Legislature approved water funds from the constitutional amendment in the manner we have sought for much of the decade. We're proud of all we've been able to accomplish in our 35 years. We're heartened by the growing environmental stewardship of Minnesotans, who voted last November to adopt the landmark Clean Water, Land and Legacy Constitutional Amendment.

We haven't won every battle along the way. But every experience has informed those that came after. Today, we're stronger and more energized than we've ever been and ready for the road ahead — wherever it may take us.

July 31, 1974 Minnesota's secretary of state signs papers making Project Environment Foundation (now Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, MCEA) a legally recognized nonprofit corporation. Richard Flint is chairman of the board and Edith San Souci is the executive director. The foundation immediately files a legal challenge to stop logging of virgin forests within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area and to ban snowmobiles there. Snowmobiles are banned, logging issue continues. Project Environment helps pass the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act, the cornerstone of all environmental laws in the state, requiring the government to consider ways to reduce or eliminate environmental harm from proposed projects. **1975** Project Environment Foundation lawyers join the landmark Reserve Mining lawsuit and stop the company from dumping taconite tailings into Lake Superior. **1986** Project Environment Foundation recommends ways for the state to adopt tough acid rain rules. The recommendations are followed and Minnesota becomes a leader in reducing acid rain pollution. **1988** Project Environment Foundation appeals the Superior National Forest final management plan—the U.S. Forest Service agrees to strengthen environmental policies, including setting road densities to protect wolves and lowering BWCA visitor levels. **1990** Project Environment Foundation audits the state's water pollution control programs and finds numerous problems, resulting in the passage of the Environmental Enforcement Act the following year. **1991** Project Environment Foundation splits from its parent organization, the North Star Chapter of the Sierra Club, and changes its name to Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy. **1992** Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy releases a 270-page audit of the state's air quality programs, containing 66 recommendations for changes. Many are adopted by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. **1996** Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy intervenes in the Stillwater bridge permit, stopping the original proposal both in court and Congress. **1997** With MCEA's support, a \$200,000 grant is awarded to the Pollution Control Agency to research deformity in frogs. **1999** MCEA successfully pushes the U.S. Forest Service to preserve 550 acres of old-growth forest in the Superior National Forest; the first significant decision to halt logging in the past 25 years. **2003** Minnesota Court of Appeals agrees with MCEA that the state must redo its stormwater permits. The permits do not provide sufficient protection for the state's waters. **2005** MCEA discovers internal documents that show Pollution Control Agency staff meeting secretly with industry leaders and watering down a proposed mercury air standard. *Minneapolis Star Tribune* reports the back-room deal using documents provided by MCEA, and the standard is then strengthened. **2006** MCEA plays a big role in passing the Motor Vehicle Sales Tax Amendment to provide more money for transit. **2007** MCEA proposes and helps pass the Environmental Health Tracking System and biomonitoring programs that make the connection between pollutants and illnesses. **2008** After a nine-year effort, in which MCEA was the first environmental group to join fishing and hunting groups, the Legislature allows the public to vote on a constitutional amendment to raise the sales tax for clean water, habitat and the arts. MCEA and others work to pass the amendment, and the citizens approve it in November.

Making history



Progress notes: 2009

MCEA and its partners scored a major victory recently when the Otter Tail Power Company pulled out of the Big Stone II coal-fired power plant project. The utility cited a poor economy and a coming federal law penalizing carbon dioxide pollution—a law MCEA had warned them about. In addition, MCEA filed suit in June to overturn the approval of power lines that would bring the coal-fired power into Minnesota. Without Otter Tail, the project should die.

Working with businesses and residents along the proposed Central Corridor Light Rail line, MCEA is advocating for additional stops between Snelling Avenue and Rice Street. Transportation officials have agreed to add three additional stops and the City of St. Paul has agreed to pay for one of them immediately. MCEA also is pushing for a community benefits-based tax increment financing district that would bring money to help businesses weather construction disruptions.

MCEA is working to protect children's health by pursuing new lead policies. Currently, action is taken to protect children if their blood lead levels are greater than 10 micrograms per deciliter. Based on current research, MCEA is pushing to lower the action level to 5 micrograms per deciliter. The Legislature has shown interest, and last June the Minnesota Public Health Association endorsed the MCEA policy proposal.

Enbridge Energy wants to construct new pipelines from Canada, through northern Minnesota to Superior, Wis. The pipelines would carry tar sands oil into the United States and hazardous diluent back to Alberta. Tar sands oil is the dirtiest oil known, using huge amounts of energy to turn tar into something that can be pumped. Not only would the pipelines continue to feed the U.S. oil addiction while creating more global warming pollution, but also U.S. government officials reported that the new oil supply was unneeded. Nonetheless, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission and the U.S. State Department approved permits for the new pipelines, forcing MCEA to file suit.

Going to court to protect Minnesota's waters produced mixed results for MCEA. Last spring, the Minnesota Supreme Court ruled against MCEA in the Alexandria Lakes Area Sanitary District case, allowing a state agency to issue a permit to a sewage plant and allowing them to dump more phosphorus into Lake Winona—despite the fact that the agency conceded the lake already had too much phosphorous. However, MCEA successfully challenged a permit that would have allowed a new phosphorous discharge from the Central Lakes Regional Sanitary District. The sanitary district withdrew its permit request, due in part to MCEA's challenge.

MCEA submitted comments on a state implementation plan proposing to eliminate haze over the Boundary Waters Canoe Area and Voyageurs National Park by 2064. Air pollutants coming from Minnesota power and taconite plants frequently reduce the visibility in those areas.

When a new project is considered, the amount of greenhouse gases it will produce should be calculated, and alternatives and mitigations analyzed, MCEA said in its appeal of the state's environmental impact statement for the Essar/Minnesota Steel plant near Grand Rapids, MN. Although the Minnesota Court of Appeals ruled the impact statement was adequate, the court's decision to consider greenhouse gas emissions as an appropriate focus for environmental review is monumental. MCEA will ensure emissions are evaluated on all large projects.



Progress notes: 2009

Minnesota voters overwhelmingly approved the Clean Water, Land and Legacy constitutional amendment. Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy continued its longstanding efforts to ensure that funding priorities for water quality restoration money would fulfill the requirements of the federal Clean Water Act. The 2009 Legislative appropriations, the first under the 25-year amendment, closely reflected MCEA's priorities to test all of our waters, develop clean-up plans for those that are polluted and provide money to implement those plans.

MCEA helped draft and promote a bill which would set stricter limits on the mining of gold, copper, nickel and other sulfides, as well as require strong financial assurances to clean up any pollution after the mining ends. The bill failed to pass. MCEA also is watching and sending comments to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources as it prepares the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed PolyMet mine near Hoyt Lakes, the first copper-nickel mine in Minnesota.

One of the first chemicals tested for as a result of the tracking toxins and bio-monitoring law MCEA conceived and helped pass in 2007 was the PFO chemicals dumped by 3M and found in East Metro drinking waters. The Minnesota Department of Health released the results in the summer and downplayed the amount found in area residents as not much different than levels in people throughout the U.S. However, MCEA staff pointed out to the media and others that the levels were three times the national average and some studies had found reproductive problems at those levels.

For the fourth consecutive year, MCEA and its partners battled the proposed Big Stone II coal-fired power plant in Milbank, S.D. With each passing year, the environmental objections—that its power is unneeded, that it is not the least-cost option, and it would put enormous amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere—gain more weight. Still, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission approved the certificate of need for the transmission lines from the proposed plant into Minnesota. So, MCEA and its allies filed suit to overturn that decision and a hearing date is expected late this year or early 2010.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, after more than a year of hearings and work, released for public comment new shoreland rules. The rules, which MCEA and others have been pushing for more than five years, would update the 20-year-old rules and guide new developments on the shores of the state's rivers and lakes in a way that protects the water and the wildlife.

Representing several other environmental and clean energy groups, MCEA argued in favor of the Cap X 2020 proposal by 11 utilities to build three new 345-kilovolt power lines in Minnesota. However, the groups argued successfully for two conditions the utilities opposed. First, all three power lines must be double-strung so if the utilities later need to add more capacity, they could simply string the wires on the same towers. Second, the utilities must dedicate firm capacity for wind-generated power. The commission agreed to that condition on only the Brookings, S.D. to Twin Cities line.



Progress notes: 2009

Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy successfully petitioned the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency in 2007 to strengthen its non-degradation rules for lakes and rivers that are nearly pristine. MCEA has participated in a stakeholder process and in negotiations with U.S. EPA to shape the draft revised rules so that they keep “clean water clean.”

Working with environmental partners, MCEA tried to get a number of recommendations from Gov. Tim Pawlenty’s climate change advisory group passed by the legislature. Parts of the Building Sensible Communities bill passed, such as allowing school districts to locate new schools in town, adding carbon sequestration as a reason for protecting wetlands and funding a Metropolitan Council study on ways to cut air pollution and congestion. However, requiring that climate change impacts be part of any environmental review of a proposed development and requiring the Met Council to include global warming in its planning process did not pass.

In June, MCEA submitted comments on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency’s monitoring plan for 2010 designed to improve its air pollutant monitoring to protect public health. Among other comments, MCEA pointed out the lack of any air monitoring for ground-level ozone—a well-known respiratory hazard generated from vehicle exhaust and other human activities—in Minneapolis, St. Paul, Hennepin or Ramsey Counties. MCEA also suggested improvements to the agency’s asbestos monitoring used to protect the health of communities in Minnesota’s Iron Range mining region.

The 8th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals ruled in August that Minnesota may continue to require air testing for asbestos-like fiber byproducts emitted by the Northshore Mining Company in Silver Bay. Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy had argued in favor of keeping the so-called control city standard. While the ruling allowed the state of Minnesota to continue to use the control city standard in its air permits for the Northshore plant, the decision also eliminated the federal jurisdiction over the standard.



A new era

Winning over the long haul. We Americans love to keep score. Winners and losers — it's how we define everything from our politics, to our personalities, to our play. The environment in Minnesota has had some big wins over the past 35 years.

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area was protected, acid rain was regulated, millions of pounds of soil and phosphorus have been kept out of rivers, coal-burning power plants have been stopped, and last year, 1.6 million Minnesotans voted yes to funding environmental protection and restoration. MCEA is proud to have been part of these and many more big wins.

We've also seen our share of losses. Not enough progress has been made on non-point sources of water pollution. Not enough progress has been made on controlling greenhouse gases. Too few court challenges designed to uphold existing laws have succeeded. We will continue to push ahead on those fronts, learning lessons from the losses and finding new paths to success.

Part of the problem, however, is we don't keep score the right way. We, all of us, need to redefine winning. It's a win when environmental decisions become everyday decisions. Thinking of the environment needs to be as second nature as looking both ways before crossing the street. This means choosing a nontoxic chemical in a manufacturing process, using as little fresh water as possible, and building a school away from a busy freeway. We win when protecting the environment becomes part of business as usual.

How can the added burden of taking care of the environment be a win?

Because when the environment wins, we win. If our water is clean, we are healthy and the rivers and lakes thrive. If our air is clean, our children breathe easier, emergency rooms have less business and our trees live longer. If we burn less fuel, our pocketbooks are heavier and our carbon footprint shrinks. Win, win.

And our economy booms. Every analysis of the value of the environment shows that a clean Minnesota makes more money. Talented workers come to Minnesota because of our parks and lakes. Research shows that every dollar spent restoring the Great Lakes returns four dollars. Hunting and fishing bring billions into our state each year. Win, win.

As we celebrate our 35th year, we will continue to educate businesses, government agencies and the public on ways to make environmental decisions everyday decisions. But, we wouldn't have been able to accomplish anything this past year, or the 34 years before that, without the donors and foundations who have so generously supported our work. We thank you. We also thank the hard-working and dedicated staff and board members who have been, and are, part of MCEA. Finally, we remember our dear departed friend and board member, Roger Holmes. Roger's dedication to the natural world defined winning.



Sincerely,

Cecily Hines Chair of the Board of Directors

Paul Aasen Interim Executive Director

By the numbers

Statement of Financial Position Year ended June 30, 2009

Total Assets	\$ 2,307,562
Assets	
Cash and Certificates of Deposit	\$ 837,976
Unconditional Promises to give	\$ 490,344
Accounts receivable	\$ 60,350
Investments (Endowment)	\$ 893,018
Other assets	\$ 25,874
Total Assets	\$ 2,307,562

Liabilities and net assets

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 64,997
Unrestricted net assets	
Undesignated	\$ 461,699
Designated by board for long term investment	\$ 342,151
Temporarily restricted net assets	\$ 881,108
Permanently restricted net assets (Endowment)	\$ 557,607
Total Liabilities and net assets	\$ 2,307,562

Statement of Activities

Support

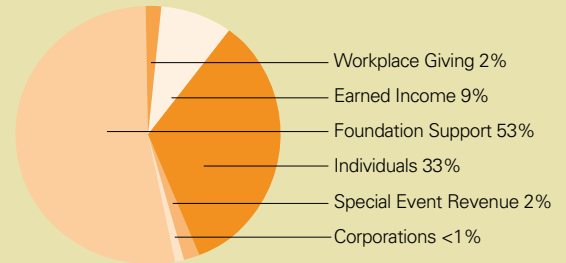
Individuals	\$ 578,634
Corporations	\$ 5,260
Foundation Support	\$ 918,200
Workplace giving	\$ 40,781
Earned income	\$ 149,800
Net loss on investments	\$ (64,787)
Special events revenue net	\$ 38,170
Total Support	\$ 1,666,058

Expenses

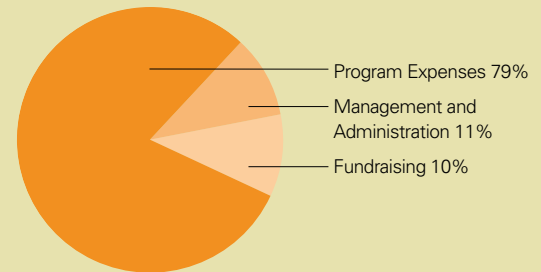
Program expenses	\$ 1,291,123
Management and administration	\$ 173,955
Fundraising	\$ 166,601
Total Expenses	\$ 1,631,679

Increase in net assets **\$ 34,379**

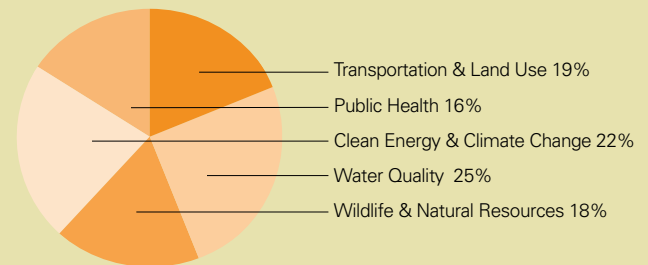
2009 Sources of Support



2009 Operating Expenses



2009 Program Expenses



Time and money

MCEA's 35-year journey has been made possible by our donors. You fund a greener and healthier Minnesota and your contributions over the last year have made a huge difference. We thank all of you for making our work possible. Here we recognize individuals whose contributions from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009 totaled \$500 or more, as well as the White Pine Legacy Circle members. For a full donor list, please see the expanded annual report on MCEA's website.

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The **Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy** (MCEA) is the legal and scientific voice protecting and defending Minnesota's environment. We fill a critical niche in Minnesota by combining legal action and legislative work with science and communications to hold government accountable and enforce current environmental laws.

At the heart of our mission is a reverence for nature and a fundamental commitment to a green world for the benefit of current and future generations.