

The view from here

Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

2011 Annual Report



is not short-sighted.

2011 was a challenging year, characterized by irresponsible political brinksmanship against the backdrop of a struggling economy. In times like these, politicians want quick fixes and call for sacrificing environmental protections in the name of creating jobs. But quick fixes rarely make good public policy. Gutting Minnesota's environmental standards will not stimulate our economy, even in the short run, and it could seriously damage our long-term economic competitiveness. MCEA is a consistent advocate for taking the longer view. In fact, we believe that's what environmentalism means. As we close the books on 2011, we take heart in the knowledge that Minnesotans still value clear air, clean waters and well-managed lands—and that they count on us to uphold those values—even in tough economic times.



Pessimists say that “it’s always darkest before... it goes completely black.” There are days in this political environment when the pessimists appear to have the firmest grasp of reality.

But nobody ever said this was going to be easy. There are now and always have been powerful economic interests who want to shift the costs of pollution to taxpayers and their children, and their point of view will always be heard.

That’s why MCEA is here. MCEA’s job is to challenge those powerful economic interests, to insist that long-term health, safety, and, yes, economic competitiveness are not sacrificed on the altar of short-term profit. That’s what it means to be “the legal and scientific voice for Minnesota’s environment.”

Lately, that has also meant playing defense. But working closely with the new Administration and our network of allies, MCEA has so far been able to fend off all of the worst proposals and keep Minnesota’s environmental safety net intact.

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At the same time, MCEA’s positive agenda remains on track:

- seeking “Green Chemistry” approaches to decreasing toxic chemical exposure;
- a comprehensive state plan to reduce ozone (smog) and fine particulate (soot) emissions;
- taxpayer protection so Minnesota’s citizens do not get stuck with the inevitable clean-up bill from new mining projects;
- better enforcement of shoreland and other water quality standards;
- better targeting of Legacy Amendment resources for clean water; and
- faster retirement of old coal plants.

This is hard work, and success is not guaranteed. The painfully slow economic recovery and the current toxic political climate only make our task more difficult. But we at MCEA firmly adhere to the ancient Chinese maxim that it is always better to light a candle than curse the darkness. With your help, we will persevere.



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Making it work for everyone.

The light rail line in the Central Corridor will become the backbone of the region's transit system. It represents an investment of \$1 billion that is expected to attract more than \$4 billion in compact and mixed-use forms of development. MCEA worked with community-based organizations to successfully add three stations that will serve some of the region's most diverse neighborhoods and allow them to access all of the region's social, economic and environmental amenities. This effort also led to changes in the way the Federal Government makes transit funding decisions.



New mining brings a new debate.

MCEA remains the leading technical and legal voice for the environment in the ongoing debate over non-ferrous mining in northeastern Minnesota. This past year has involved a lot of work behind the scenes with federal and state regulators to make sure they genuinely address the whole range of environmental issues posed by these new projects, and it has also involved preparation for battle if the government does not do its job. 2012 will be a critical year, as a new environmental impact statement for PolyMet is completed, and the first set of sulfide mining permits is prepared.



Minnesota's most precious natural resource.

MCEA's water quality program is the oldest and most active clean water watchdog in the state. Years of sustained effort have prevented hundreds of thousands of pounds of phosphorus pollution from reaching our lakes, streams and rivers, in turn preventing many toxic and unsightly algae blooms. MCEA's longstanding advocacy in support of numeric water quality standards for phosphorus and nitrogen pollution is bearing fruit as the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is poised to adopt such standards in a rulemaking process beginning November 2011. MCEA continues to lead the multi-state Mississippi River Collaborative's efforts to address the nutrient pollution causing the annual Dead Zone in the Gulf of Mexico.



The long view calls for sustainability and efficiency.

Coal and tar sands crude are available in the short term, but anyone who's paying attention knows these high-carbon energy sources are, over the long term, creating more problems than they solve. MCEA and its energy partners continue to work on retiring old coal plants, and opposing high-carbon liquid fuels, while advocating for policies that encourage investment in renewable resources and efficiency. MCEA's legal and technical expertise helps focus the passion and convictions of our many allies on the forums and decisions that will define the future of the state's energy supply.



Keeping the clock from getting turned back.

Sometimes the long view is behind us—way back to the 1970s when major environmental laws were enacted. MCEA has stepped forward to defend these laws in the face of unjustified claims that they slow business growth. In addition to working with legislators and agencies and providing legal and technical support for the defensive efforts, MCEA deploys:

1. The MCEA Truth Squad, which investigates but has yet to substantiate specific claims of delay for business and
2. The MCEA Environmental Defense Team—law students who help research damaging legislation and monitor committee meetings.

MCEA was a key player in limiting the negative impact of HF1, the environmental "streamlining" legislation. We also successfully lobbied against attacks on environmental review and supported coalition efforts to protect the nuclear moratorium and limits on new coal plants.

honoring

MCEA Honors Alida Messinger

On October 27, donors, friends and colleagues of MCEA gathered at Macalester College to honor Alida Messinger for her longstanding support of the organization's mission as the legal and scientific guardian of the environment. Presented with the Environmental Hero Award, this award recognizes an individual who has made a great investment of time and resources to ensure



that Minnesota's environment is protected for generations to come.

Beginning in the mid 1980's, when MCEA was still the Project

MCEA legal and legislative advocacy efforts. It is her direct involvement that resulted in MCEA becoming the strategic and effective organization that it is today.

Alida believes that Minnesotans need a competent and highly effective law firm to stop polluters from destroying our natural resources. She recognized early on it was important to support organizations that defend the rights of regular citizens against big economic self-interest. She believes that clean air, water and soil are a birthright and need to be protected.

A nationally known philanthropist, Alida's work has focused on environmental organizations that support renewable energy, sustainable development, clean water and wilderness protection, including national organizations such as the Natural Resource Defense Council, and the Environmental Defense Fund. "MCEA is to Minnesota... what the NRDC and the EDF are to the country," says Alida.

Alida also supports projects that promote empowerment and economic justice for women and girls, and that protect the democratic process by educating and mobilizing voters.

MCEA is honored to count Alida as one of its most valued supporters and is a grateful beneficiary of her generosity.

It is Alida's direct involvement that resulted in MCEA becoming the strategic and effective organization that it is today.

Environment Foundation, Alida first supported a water quality audit MCEA conducted to determine if the PCA was complying with water quality standards. This audit resulted in twenty Notices of Intent to file a lawsuit, all of which were settled out of court, and the establishment of Enforcement Forum at the PCA which is still in effect today. Over the years, Alida has supported many other

donors

MCEA's journey has been made possible by our donors. We thank them for supporting our vital mission and recognize individuals and foundations whose contributions from July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011 totaled \$500 or more, as well as Legacy Circle members. We apologize for anyone we might have inadvertently missed.

\$5,000 or more

- Anonymous
- Peter H. Bachman and Janet Rice
- Edward R. Bazinet Foundation
- Patrick and Aimee Butler Family Foundation
- Bill and Sharon Clapp
- David D. and Vanessa D. Dayton EcoTrust
- James and Mary Frey
- John Larsen Foundation
- Marbrook Foundation
- Walt McCarthy and Clara Ueland
- Greg McNeely
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- Alida R. Messinger
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\$1,000-4,999

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Donors continue next page »

numbers

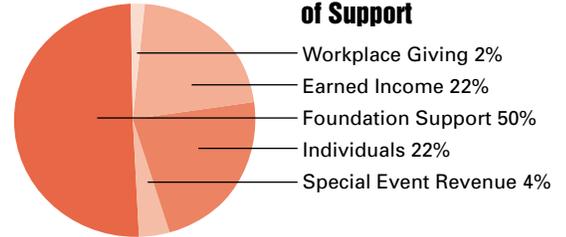
Statement of Financial Position Year ended June 30, 2011

Total Assets	\$ 2,074,423
Liabilities and Net Assets	
Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	\$ 139,501
Unrestricted Net Assets	712,566
Temporarily and Permanently Restricted Net Assets	1,222,356
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 2,074,423

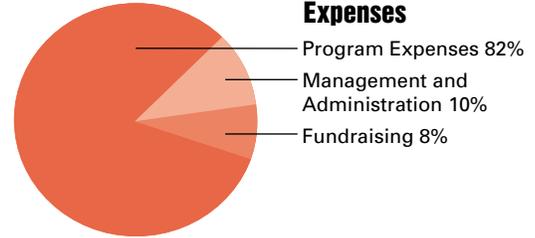
Statement of Activities

Support	
Individuals	\$ 354,295
All Others	1,430,516
Total Support	\$ 1,784,811
Total Expenses	\$ 1,530,000
Increase in Net Assets	\$ 254,811

2011 Sources of Support



2011 Outgoing Expenses



The staff of MCEA carries the day-to-day load of keeping Minnesota green and protecting the state's environment.

Scott Strand
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Water Quality Program Director

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Natural Resource Scientist

Allison Wolf
Legislative Director

MCEA also thanks the following staff who served the organization during the year:
Paul Aasen
Sue Kmetz
Kara Zarate Kneen
Mary Winston Marrow
Ann Occhiato
Diane Olson
Ericka Schmidt
Samuel Yamin

Donors, continued:

Jaclyn and Jim Schroeder
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Dee and Nick Long
Mike Madigan and Kay Erickson
Darby and Geri Nelson
Jim and Peggy Perry
Karl and Hollis Stauber
Steve Thorne
Angus Vaughan
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Since 1974, the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy has been protecting our water, air, land and people. MCEA from its beginning as Project Environment Foundation to the present has worked with government agencies, the Legislature, and the courts to set sound environmental policy, to ensure good laws are enacted, and to enforce the law when needed.

Real environmental issues are complex and real environmental progress takes time. MCEA is in for the long haul. Our policy and legal experts use the facts to drive change and to ensure real outcomes. We are committed to working across all sectors—private and public, profit and nonprofit, political and academic—to form the partnerships needed to succeed. MCEA is equally committed to watching over the process to make sure what needs to be done is in fact done.

Minnesota's environment has seen a lot of changes since MCEA was founded. Some of the changes have been for better, some for worse. MCEA's goal is to make sure the changes in the coming years are for the better.