



Conservation Connection



A Minnesota Legislative Outdoor Newsletter: Created by Kim Scott and Alexandra David

**Sponsored by: Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Fergus Falls Fish and Game Club,
Fish Lake Conservation Club, Izaak Walton League, MN Musky and Pike Alliance,
MN Sharptail Grouse Society, Outdoor News, Pheasants Forever, Sportsmen for the BWCA***

June 6, 2025:

Important Dates:

- Monday, June 9th 10 a.m.: Special session
- February 17, 2026: First day of the 2026 Legislative Session.

Gov. Tim Walz calls Monday special session after legislators strike deal on budget: Legislators must finish their work by July 1 to avoid a partial government shutdown. Walz and legislative leaders announced Friday they've agreed to a one-day session that must adjourn before 7 a.m. Tuesday. Their [two-page signed agreement](#), which came after weeks of behind-the-scenes dealmaking, could avert a partial government shutdown. In a statement, Walz said the bipartisan budget agreement will make necessary spending cuts and is the result of "hundreds of hours of good-faith, bipartisan debate." . . . Legislators adjourned their regular session May 19 without passing the vast majority of the bills that make up the state budget. They've [blown deadline after self-imposed deadline](#) since then, but the stakes are only getting higher with each passing day: Budget bills must be signed into law by July 1 or much of the state government will shut down then. Already, the state has sent out layoff notices to hundreds of nurses, and tens of thousands more notices will go out to state employees early next week.

Their agreement will limit amendments to more than a dozen outstanding bills: lawmakers have agreed to finalize and vote on the following bills during Monday's special session:

- Modifying MinnesotaCare for Undocumented Adults Bill
- Health and Human Services Policy and Appropriations Bill
- Commerce and Consumer Protection Policy and Appropriations Bill
- Human Services Appropriations Bill
- Education Policy and Appropriations Bill

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- Transportation Finance and Policy Bill
- Capitol Investment Bill
- Taxes and Local Aids Bill
- Data Center Bill
- Environment and Natural Resources Appropriations Bill
- Jobs, Labor, Economic Development Policy and Appropriations Bill
- Higher Education Policy and Finance Bill
- Energy, Utilities, environment and Climate Policy and Appropriations Bill
- Technical Revisor Corrections Bill

[Lawmakers have] agreed to suspend rules requiring multiple hearings for bills, which will speed along the process. Legislative leaders and Walz, who negotiated a basic budget framework during session, have pointed to the near-tie in the Legislature as the main reason for the delay. Democrats hold a single-vote majority in the Senate and the House is evenly split between Democrats and Republicans, forcing the two parties to find common ground on issues from health spending to energy policy . . . Lawmakers have been meeting mostly in private over the last few weeks to discuss lengthy budget bills, only returning to public view once they had settled their differences . . . The special session will also include a borrowing package of construction projects across the state, known as the bonding bill. Rep. Harry Niska, R-Ramsey, said on MPR Friday that lawmakers had agreed to a \$750 million package, though no bill has been posted publicly . . . Bonding bills require a three-fifths majority to pass, so buy-in is needed from both parties. Both Niska and DFL Floor Leader Jamie Long told MPR that while some negotiations remain, the deal announced Friday will hold. [Read more.](#)

Some adults will soon need a permit to operate a boat or personal watercraft in Minnesota: In a move sure to make waves with many Minnesotans, boaters under age 21 will soon need to get a permit before operating motorized watercraft in the state. A law, passed in 2023 to increase boating safety, will require state residents born after June 30, 2004, to pass an online test and pay \$34.95 for a watercraft operator’s permit. The requirements will gradually apply to older age groups in coming years. [Read more.](#)

Advisory Task Force on Future of Minnesota’s Water: Attorney General Keith Ellison announced the appointments he has made to the Advisory Task Force on Future of Minnesota’s Water that he formed on March 31, 2025. The Task Force includes both DFL and Republican lawmakers, representatives from state agencies, as well as members of the public representing agriculture, tribal communities, businesses, and local regulators, as well as advocates and experts in the areas of water quality and conservation. Members of the Task Force will study issues affecting the stewardship of Minnesota’s water resources. [Read more.](#)

Task Force Members:

Lawmakers

- DFL Representative Kristi Pursell, District 58A

- GOP Representative Isaac Schultz, District 10B
- DFL Senator Ann Johnson Stewart, District 45
- GOP Senator Keri Heintzeman, District 6

State Agency Representatives

- Jess Richards, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- Brad Jordahl Redlin, Minnesota Department of Agriculture
- Myra Kunas, Minnesota Department of Health
- Dana Vanderbosch, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Members of the Public

- Kelly Applegate, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
- Will Bement, White Earth Reservation
- Darin Broton, Minnesota AgriGrowth
- Erick Francis, City of St. Louis Park
- Peg Furshong, CURE
- Caroline Griffith, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy
- David Leuthe, Retired Water Resource Manager
- Angela M. Lipelt, Mower County
- Julie Lucas, MiningMinnesota
- Neva Maxwell, Cook County
- Jeff Pagel, Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation
- Tessa Parks, W.T. Farms and Clean River Partners
- Nancy Schuldt, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Lienne Sethna, PhD, Science Museum of Minnesota's St. Croix Watershed Research Station
- Professor Harvey Thorleifson, University of Minnesota College of Science and Engineering

Select DNR News releases:

- [New education requirements in effect July 1 for some boaters in Minnesota](#): Beginning July 1, 2025, more people who operate motorboats or personal watercrafts on Minnesota waters must obtain a valid watercraft operator's permit. The updated requirements, passed into law during 2023, are intended to make boating safer by ensuring people operating motorized watercraft know the rules and are properly trained.
- [Volunteers needed for DNR loon survey](#): The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is seeking volunteers to help monitor the loon population in Aitkin, Becker, Cook, Crow Wing, Itasca, Kandiyohi, Lake, and Otter Tail counties. Volunteers are needed for a minimum of one morning during the July 4 through July 14 monitoring period, to count the number of

adult and juvenile loons on pre-selected lakes.

- [Celebrate the grand opening of the Glendalough State Park trail center on June 14](#): On Saturday, June 14, Glendalough State Park will celebrate the completion of its new trail center and the trail extension past Sunset Lake. Visitors can enjoy an open house at the new building from 10 a.m. until noon with cake and lemonade served by the Glendalough Park Partners. A program begins at 11 a.m. with appearances from State Senator Jordan Rasmusson, Battle Lake Mayor Richard Bullard, and senior DNR officials.
- [Piers added with Get Out MORE funding](#): New fishing piers at Leech Lake in the city of Walker, and Lake Francis in the city of Elysian, are the newest of many fishing infrastructure improvements made possible by the Get Out MORE (Modernize Outdoor Recreation Experiences) one-time funding approved by the Minnesota Legislature in 2023.

Reposting the below information again, as the agreement is expected to be ratified during the special session on Monday:

Environment and Natural Resources Working Group

- [Environment Special Session Budget Bill Draft \(25-05671\) 5.28.25](#)
- [Environment Special Session Bill HRD Summary 6.6.25](#)