

## CREATION CARE GREEN TIPS - MAY

1. While the Boundary Waters area enjoys special protections in Minnesota, new federal changes to the **Clean Water Act of 1972 (Section 401)** would limit the ability of states and tribes to study the **effects of big federal projects such as pipelines, dams and mines on water quality**, in effect **overruling Minnesota's stricter standards**. According to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), this would leave us unable to address the potential water quality concerns posed by the huge copper-nickel mine that **Chilean copper mining giant Antofagasta and its Twin Metals subsidiary** want to build just outside the Boundary Waters that will **produce 20,000 tons of ore per day**. Another concern for the MPCA is the project's **air emissions such as mercury**, along with **potential leakage from the huge mound of dry mine tailings waste** that Twin Metals will build on its site. The proposed changes **1) set a one-year time limit for local reviews, 2) allow federal agencies to veto what states and tribes decide, and 3) oppose considering broader impacts on an ecosystem**. The result of two executive orders signed this past year **to speed construction of oil and gas pipelines**, these changes to the Section 401 of the Clean Water Act **have a May deadline and could take effect later this summer**. Potential **legal challenges** are all that stand in the way.
2. Earth Day was created **50 years ago** on the idea that **human well-being** is very much tied to the **well-being of the environment**, and is now **practiced in more than 190 countries**. According to the University of Minnesota's Institute on the Environment, **Minnesota is facing even more threats now than in 1970**, with **wild bee and pollinator populations collapsing**, and more than **90% of the state's hibernating bats dying from a fungus**. The population losses are largely due to **intensive and single-crop farming, powerful new pesticides and the loss of food and habitat**, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Rising temperatures have caused **more extreme storms and more frequent flooding**, with so much excessive drainage into the **Minnesota River that its width has more than doubled in recent years**, swallowing houses and collapsing water towers. **YOU CAN HELP** by 1) urging cities to adopt rules and programs to help **homeowners and schools plant wild flowers, milkweed and other native grasses to turn lawns into pollinator habitats** and 2) encourage policy makers to promote private industry's goals that would **produce 100% carbon-free electricity by 2050**.
3. Since it was passed in 1973, **The Endangered Species Act** has protected more than **1,600 plants and animals, keeping more than 99 percent of them from going extinct, and helping hundreds to recover**. Yet at a time when the world's leading scientists warn of an **extinction crisis with millions of species lost forever**, new federal changes to the Endangered Species Act would for the first time 1) **place economic costs of protecting at-risk wildlife over the actual survival of the species** and 2) welcome bulldozing, mining and drilling **in the critical habitats of protected species**. In addition, the current EPA has not only removed previous restrictions of **sulfoxaflor, a pesticide that reduces bees' ability to reproduce**, it has also **added new uses for the toxic bee-killing insecticide**, according to the science journal *Nature*. Finally, these federal changes pulled the plug on the **Department of Agriculture's (USDA) study of bee populations**, which beekeepers use to monitor bee colony decline. **URGE YOUR POLICY MAKERS** to work to protect critical wildlife, **whose well-being we all depend upon for our own well-being**.

4. January was the **warmest month on record globally** according to atmospheric monitoring group Copernicus, with **records shattered in Europe and Asia** while a number of locales in **Eastern Europe and Russia wound up more than 12-13 degrees above average**. Eric Steig, a glaciologist studying climate change at the University of Washington, reports that in response to earth's swiftly warming climate, **Antarctica has broken its warmest temperature ever recorded (65 degrees at Esperanza Base along Antarctica's Trinity Peninsula)**. According to the World Meteorological Organization, the Antarctic peninsula is one of the **fastest-warming regions in the world, with 87% of glaciers along its west coast retreating at the most accelerated pace since 2008**. **YOU CAN URGE YOUR STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATORS** to enact policies that will drastically **lower our use of fossil fuels and move toward agricultural practices that sequester carbon in the soil where it belongs**.

5. We are in the midst of what some call an "insect apocalypse," with an estimated **40 percent of all insect species at risk of extinction in coming decades due to habitat loss, pesticide use, shifting temperatures and other factors**. Experts believe at least **one in 10 species of dragonfly (out of more than 800 species in every continent but Antarctica)** are threatened by human-driven assaults that eliminate large numbers of these efficient predators that **devour as many as 100 mosquitoes a day, along with gnats, black flies, horseflies, midges, flying ants and termites**. Dragonfly eggs hatch in water, where the larvae, or nymphs, begin to develop what will later emerge as wings. **YOU CAN BE A DRAGONFLY CHAMPION** by **1) installing a fish-free pond** with shallow sides and a center depth of about two feet. Place it in partial sun and add a mix of wispy grasses and other submerged or floating plants where dragonflies can roost and lay eggs; **2) leaving the ponds messy** with leaf litter on the bottom that gives aquatic dragonfly nymphs a place to hide and hunt; and **3) adding flowers and shrubs near the pond where dragonflies can rest or hunt for insects, with flat, light-colored rocks for dragonflies to sun themselves**. **Avoid using chemicals, which is a gift to all wildlife**.