

**Coldwater Spring Resolution
Minnesota Political Caucus
Tuesday, March 7, 2006**

Whereas historic Coldwater Spring is the last spring of size in Minneapolis, flowing at 100,000-gallons per day, (1) and

Whereas Coldwater Spring is on the National Register of Historic Places, is where the soldiers lived who built Fort Snelling, and is called the Birthplace of Minnesota, and

Whereas the Mendota Dakota Community formally requested a "conservation easement" for the entire 27-acre Coldwater campus "in perpetuity" to protect land considered "forever sacred" and "forever neutral" by Dakota, Ojibwa and other Native peoples, (2) and

Whereas legislation and resolutions to protect the flow of water to Coldwater have been passed by the Minnesota Legislature, the City of Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and the American Indian Movement, (3)

Therefore be it resolved that the 27-acre Coldwater campus located between Minnehaha Regional Park and Fort Snelling State Park be returned to open green space, and be preserved and protected for the future. (4)

(Please see notes on reverse.)

NOTES: Coldwater Spring Resolution

(1) "Last spring of size": The Great Medicine Spring in Theodore Wirth Park was permanently dewatered in the late 1980s (along with nearby Glenwood Spring) by MnDOT construction of I-394 west out of Minneapolis. Coldwater's flow comes out of limestone bedrock. The Frederick Miller Spring (off 212, by Lion's Tap in Eden Prairie) comes out of a pipe beside Spring Road.

(2) Request made on August 28, 2000, to the National Park Service by Linda Brown, Administrative Assistant for the Mendota Mdwakanton Dakota Community.

In court-ordered testimony on March 19, 1999, Ojibwa spiritual elder Eddie Benton Benais from north central Wisconsin said: "My grandfather told how he and his family, he as a small boy traveled by foot, by horse, by canoe, to this great place to where there would be these great religious, spiritual events. And that they always camped between the falls and the sacred water place (Coldwater Spring)...We know that the falls which came to be known as Minnehaha Falls, was a sacred place, was a neutral place...and that the people (Dakota, Ojibwa, Sauk, Fox) all having used and recognizing and mutually agreeing that that is forever a neutral place and forever a sacred place."

(3) The Coldwater protection bill was signed into law by Gov. Jesse Ventura, May 15, 2001. MnDOT proposed legislation to repeal the protection on February 7, 2002, at the beginning of the next legislative session. A series of resolutions to maintain Coldwater protections soon passed.

The City of Minneapolis resolution passed February 15, 2002.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board resolution passed March 3, 2002.

The American Indian Movement resolution passed February 17, 2002.

(4) Coldwater has been federal land since the 1805 Dakota-Pike treaty. Until 1920 Coldwater furnished water to Fort Snelling—and then became parkland. Between 1959 and 1996 the Coldwater campus was used by the U.S. Bureau of Mines as a Cold War metallurgy and mining research facility. Since 1996 the office buildings have been abandoned and are degraded with asbestos and mold. Some of the 4 warehouses and garages are used by various agencies.

The National Park Service agreed to sell the Coldwater campus for \$6-million to the airport for parking and storage space. The deal fell through after 9/11. Congressman Martin Sabo secured a \$750,000 appropriation in 2003 to determine the "disposition" of this Mississippi bluff-top parcel. The fate of the spring and surrounding land should be announced by the end of 2006.

At the time of European settlement, 1820, the area was a prairie-edge, burr oak savanna. Currently eagles, hawks, owls, foxes, deer, coyotes, rabbits and a symphony of birds and insects live around the spring.