

RIVER TALK

THE MINNESOTA RIVER CURRENT

BLUE EARTH RIVER PADDLE & MN RIVER PADDLER PROGRAM LAUNCH

A little rain didn't stop twenty-seven dedicated paddlers from taking a trip down the Blue Earth River for the launch of the Minnesota River Paddler Program on June 12th at the Rapidan Dam County Park.

The rain came down the hardest right before the group got on the water at the ribbon cutting ceremony dedicating the Blue Earth River as the most recent State Water Trail in Minnesota.

Senator Julie Rosen of Fairmont handled the ribbon cutting duties as she



Senator Julie Rosen cuts the ribbon on the Blue Earth River

acknowledged all the people who helped move it forward. "Representatives Cornish, Gunther enjoyed working with local paddlers and community clubs on this river designation," said Senator Rosen. "The Blue Earth River is a gem, and now the whole state will know that southern Minnesota can be a destination for paddlers and tourists."

Once the ribbon had been cut, the paddlers floated down the Blue Earth River for just over nine miles enjoying the many Class I rapids pushing them toward the Highway 90 Bridge access point recently constructed by Blue Earth County.

Along the way, the paddlers got off the river to check out Dead Man's Gulch only to find two tiny skunks blocking their path back to the far end of this curved-out bowl. A stop at Triple Falls proved to be a lot easier for the group as they marveled at the beauty of this special place and enjoyed a sight only seen by paddling the Blue Earth River.

The rain held off for the rest of the afternoon as over 100 people hung out at Rapidan Dam County Park listening to a diverse selection of music from four local groups - Dick Kimmel & Co., Depot Creek, Lhotse and the Pre-Apocalyptic Junkyard Orchestra - along with eating the famous Dam Store pie and talking with fellow river advocates. Members of the Mankato Paddling and Outing Club gave rides on the reservoir all afternoon in their War Canoe.

To highlight the Minnesota River Paddler Program, the first patches/decals were awarded by the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance. Tim Krohn and John Cross of the *Mankato Free Press* received the first Minnesota 335 Paddler patch/decals for paddling the entire length of the Minnesota River in 1998 and 2008. The two reporters produced a comprehensive series of articles for the *Free Press* featuring the people, sights and landscape of the Minnesota River.

The Minnesota River Paddler Program is designed to help connect or reconnect people with the Minnesota River and its many tributaries. By offering three different patches/decals, the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance hopes this will be a fun way to motivate people to explore some or all of the rivers found in the Minnesota River Basin. More information on the MN River Paddler Program can be found on page 9.

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DID YOU KNOW?

Community Clean-Ups have become an important venture for the Friends of the Minnesota Valley (Friends) over the last nine years. In the first eight years, this nonprofit organization put on 66 Clean-Ups across the Lower Minnesota River Watershed. The results are impressive with over 8,400 pounds of phosphorus (equal to 6 million pounds of oxygen-depleting aquatic growth) and 47,000 pounds of trash removed from local waterways.

The program continues to pick up speed as this year’s effort resulted in 26 Clean-Ups among 23 communities removing 4,155 pounds of phosphorus pollution from entering the Minnesota River. According to the Friends, these are only the early results and they expect the numbers to increase. Fall Clean-Ups are being organized for the first time with four communities already on board. A new partnership with the Freshwater Society will launch a statewide effort for the Community Clean-Up Program including regional training sessions.

Over the next two years the program will also be offered across the entire MN River Basin with funding coming from a Section 319 Clean Water grant of the U.S. EPA. “We expect to double our pollution reduction as a result of the additional funding,” reports Lori Nelson, Executive Director. “In addition, the Friends received a Governor’s Award for Excellence in Pollution Prevention for the Clean-Ups Program. The program’s innovation, effectiveness, and its strong network of partners and supporters figured prominently in the award decision.” For more information on the program contact Friends at 952-881-9065.

River Talk is published quarterly in conjunction with the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance (Watershed Alliance) and partners. Thanks to the Water Resources Center for funding this effort.

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Check out the Watershed Alliance’s web site:
<http://watershedalliance.blogspot.com>





Jesse Anderson grew up on a farm outside of Dunnell, MN and graduated from the University of Minnesota-Duluth campus with a B.A.S. in Outdoor/Environmental Education. In the fall of 2007, Jesse took a position with the Lower Sioux Indian Community's environmental department and he has played an active role with the Minnesota River Paddler Program sponsored by the Watershed Alliance.

What is the biggest issue affecting quality of life in the Minnesota River Basin?

The biggest issue in my mind is that we need more buffers next to all waterways. These buffers help many aspects of life within the Minnesota River Watershed and the three big ones for me are wildlife habitat, soil erosion and native landscapes.

How do we connect the river to the public?

We can connect the public to the river in many ways and all ways should be looked at since all people are unique and different in some ways. Events and recreational opportunities are what really sucked me in; education is a huge aspect also.

How do we get the youth involved in issues affecting the Minnesota River?

I am a huge believer in the Minnesota public schools and if more science based curriculum were brought into the youth's eyes about the area they live in and what causes and effects take place within the area they lived in this would be a great start to the generation ahead. Project Wet and Project Wild are two sources of curriculum that I really like.

How do we get the different or competing interests to listen to each other for a safer environment?

Everyone has an opinion and they are entitled to have their opinion. Somehow it has to be a win/win for both parties and to accomplish this people need to get involved with the area they live. I believe there is a very few percentage of people that want to live in an unsafe environment but through economics, lifestyles and change this can sometimes be hard.

What would you like to see as your legacy when it comes to your work with the MN River?

I am a long ways from leaving any kind of legacy but someday I hope I can feel that I did my part within the Minnesota River watershed be it through education, personal beliefs, and work. If I feel that I have done this I will be satisfied.

What are the positive aspects of working with a committee like the MN River Paddler Program?

Working with a committee like this has been a great experience! I enjoyed meeting new people throughout the watershed that have similar interests, intelligent minds, and great attitudes towards the life of the river.



Jesse Anderson paddling the Little Cottonwood River

What do you see as the role of the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance when it comes to improving, protecting, and restoring the MN River Basin?

The number one role I see is that we educate the public about the beauty of the area and not to take it for granted. Change can be good and that change needs to happen if future generations are going to enjoy the watershed as though people in the past and present did and do now.

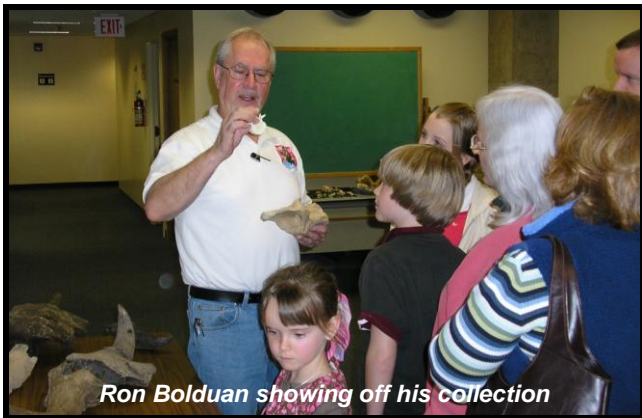
NATURALIST'S WORK IS FOR THE RIVER

Ron Bolduan initiates youth program

By Tanner Kent, Mankato Free Press

Where there is a river, there is history. And if it's the Minnesota River, Ron Bolduan is ready to share it.

He's been collecting river artifacts in his garage for decades and he's visited dozens of classrooms and community groups to share his assortment of tales and treasures. Three years ago, he converted a small, turn-of-the-century New Ulm schoolhouse located along the banks of the river into a one-room river museum that he opens to the public.



Ron Bolduan showing off his collection

And now, wanting to expand his advocacy efforts, Bolduan has started a youth program called River Rangers.

Open to just about any student for a 30-mile radius – including those in Mankato – River Rangers will recognize and award kids who participate in three river events in two categories: in-field environmental learning and environmental cleanup. At least one project has to be completed independently.

Bolduan, born and raised on the banks of the Minnesota River in New Ulm, said he wants to foster the next generation of river stewards.

"This program will get kids outside, enjoying nature," Bolduan said. "And presumably, it will make them better environmental citizens down the road."

Bolduan holds several events throughout the year in which potential River Ranger can participate. In August and September, he takes students along on his yearly mussel surveys, which act as indicators of river health. He also takes students on hikes along the river to identify animal tracks and to sandbars to search for shells and fossils.

Along the way, he shares the natural and local history of the river. "It's fun to spread the word about what the river holds," Bolduan said.

The Minnesota River is a passion for Bolduan, and in addition to working with students, he's given presentations to community groups and environmental clubs around the state.

Bolduan has presented on the return of commercial fishing to the Minnesota River last year – after a more-than-50-year hiatus – when a group from New York dragged nets through a handful of backwater areas for buffalo, a rough fish they were selling fresh in east coast street markets.

He has talked about the paddlefish caught recently in New Ulm. Finding the prehistoric, billed fish in numbers, Bolduan said, could indicate improving river health.

He's shared the fruits of his river photography, a hobby he's been developing for several years. And he's shared the stories about the now-gone days of clam-harvesting when diggers would pose for photos next to 15-foot mounds that were sent to Muscatine, Iowa, to be made into buttons and cuff links before the advent of plastic.

"I've always been such a river rat," Bolduan said. "And it's just taken on a life of its own."

Bolduan said anyone interested in a group presentation or participating in River Rangers can call him at 507-354-8367 or email at boldriv@newulmtel.net. His website, which includes information about the Regional River History Center can be found at www.ExperienceNature.com.



Displays at the Regional River History & Information Center in New Ulm

The River Ranger Program is sponsored by the Regional River History and Information Center in New Ulm, the Water Resources Center at Minnesota State University in Mankato and the New Ulm Area Sport Fishermen.



By Carolyn Lange, West Central Tribune

New methods of draining water from farm fields are being implemented in Kandiyohi County in an attempt to reduce sediment and pollutants from getting into lakes and streams.

The alternatives include biofilters, rock inlets, drop inlets and stream barbs.

The goal, said Kandiyohi County Drainage Inspector Loren Engelby, is to keep sediment and nutrients out of the water and “in the fields where they’re needed.”

Traditional farm drainage systems, like the ones used in the late 1800s when tiling of wet fields began in the state, are still being used, said Engelby. In that basic system, water is channeled through a network of underground tiles and then fed into a drainage ditch system, often carrying dirt and fertilizer with it as it empties into rivers and lakes.



Installation of a field biofilter near Willmar.

But Engelby, who manages about 850 miles of publicly owned drainage ditches and tiles in the county, said the county’s management style is to “focus on water quality.”

And with more rules and regulations likely coming in the future, he said “we need to take responsibility for these water quality issues in the ag community” and continue to make improvements.

As a result, he’s been researching using new techniques that still get the job done in the fields and reduce environmental damage downstream.

One of the newest methods that has Engelby excited is an underground bioreactor that allows water to slowly filter through a bed of wood chips.

Research indicates these biofilters have the potential of removing 90 percent of nitrates from tile line water, said Engelby.

He installed the first one last year on a county ditch system south of Willmar Senior High School.

During construction, about 30 cubic yards of woodchips were placed in a 7-foot-deep hole that measured 10 by 30 feet.

Water from the county tile is intercepted, allowed to seep through the woodchips where bacteria breaks down the nutrients and then discharged back into the tile system.

Engelby said he’ll monitor the water quality to determine if nitrates are indeed being removed.

“I hope they work because I’d like them to catch on and do more of them,” he said.

The Hawk Creek Watershed Project paid for half of the \$3,000 cost of the bioreactor, he said, and money from the county’s water plan fund is paying for lab testing of the water.

Some of the other new controls he’s implementing include alternative inlets where water goes from fields and into a tile or ditch system, including using a bed of stones near the inlet to filter out sediment.

A metal cage around a drop-inlet can prevent field trash, like corn stalks, from entering and clogging up the tile lines.

Open drainage ditches are also vulnerable to erosion.

Engelby has worked with contractors to place large rocks along the banks to create “stream barbs” that divert the current away from the sides of the ditch and into the middle of the stream.

Improvements to public drainage systems are paid for by the benefitting landowners. The percentage of the total cost they pay is based on the percentage of benefits their acres receive from the drainage system.

Once the analysis is done this summer, Engelby said the county will select another six to eight ditch systems to analyze for re-determination of benefits until all the ditches have been viewed and benefits established.

Because most ditches haven’t had benefit adjustments for 80 to 100 years, he said it’s time to re-evaluate the ditch systems to make sure property owners are paying their fair share.

Beside the public drainage system, Engelby said there are five to 10 times more privately owned miles of drainage tiles in the county. Private landowners who are interested in using some of the new techniques can contact Engelby for information on research, installation and cost-sharing.

Although landowners have to pay for improvements on their private property, Engelby said area watershed districts do provide cost-sharing options.



By Erik Posz
Redwood Falls Gazette

We have been working a long time to get the Redwood River cleaned up, and now the mission is to get the people out here to enjoy it," said Jim Doering, former RCRCA Executive Director on Thursday morning, June 24th.

The Redwood-Cottonwood River Control Area (RCRCA) co-hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Thursday, at the new public access point on the Redwood River located on County Road 6. Doering, who currently works for the City of Redwood Falls, was on hand, as this was one of the last projects he oversaw during his tenure with the RCRCA.

"There are a lot of people who worked hard to get this project done," Doering said. "Sen. Dennis Frederickson spearheaded the effort to get the Redwood River designated as a state water trail. This access was actually put in 2008, but it is now on all of the maps and everyone can see that it is here.

"The Wildlife Management Area (WMA) guys played ball, too, and allowed us to have a parking lot here." Mike Salmon, Area Supervisor for the DNR, covered a few more of the local projects taking place on the river.

"We worked with WMA on that access and this one. So they went in without having to purchase an easement. In between these two landings, I'm trying to work with landowners in the Seaforth area to get another access in there.

"What we are working toward is a system where people can get on and off of the river in about three hours canoe time."

Erik Wrede, Water Trails Coordinator with the Trails and Waterways Division of the DNR commented that while the landing on

County Road 6 is a nice location and convenient facility, it is really only a beginning to the plans for the Redwood River.

"This (designation) goes all the way to Marshall right now, but we are looking at adding some miles and extending it to Camden State park," Wrede said.

"And there are projects taking place between this landing and Marshall, as well."

One of those projects is putting in monitoring stations that will feed real-time information to the DNR website so that paddlers can see what the river conditions are before leaving on a trip.

He said that at this point there is just raw data available on the state website, but soon they hope to have the data interpreted for paddlers with color-coded maps and charts to rate the passibility of the river.

"Within two years, we should have all of the monitoring stations with nice graphics and color-coding so that people can see what the water is looking like," Wrede said.

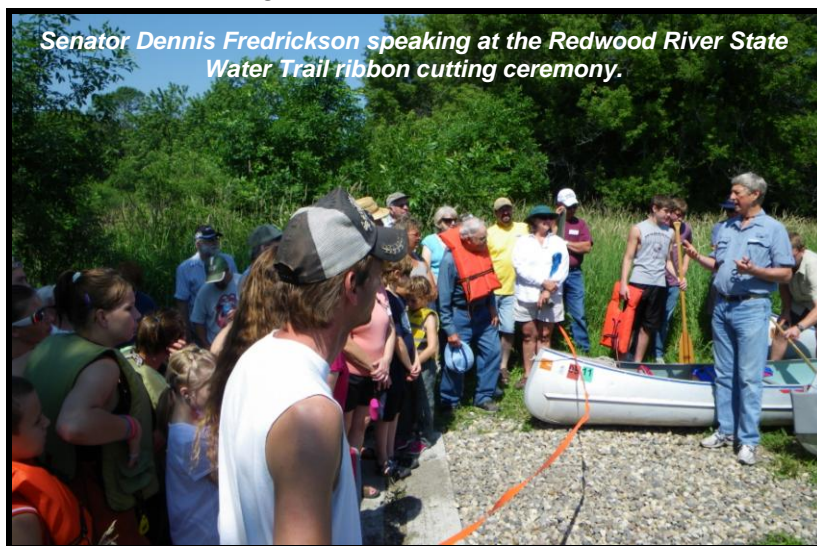
Sen. Frederickson noted how these efforts impact the ability of locals to use the rivers for recreation, and how they can fit into a larger effort to build tourism.

"The Minnesota River, its valley and all of the tributaries, like this one, are a tremendous resource to Minnesota and to those of us who live in this watershed," Frederickson said.

"There has been a new awakening as to what a wonderful asset this is to fishing, for hunting, having trails and enjoying the river valley for its wildlife and vegetation.

"Without access points like this one citizens couldn't get on the river and enjoy them.

"And this isn't just a resource for those of us who live here, but for those who will travel the Minnesota River, travel here, stay here and enjoy the recreation and history of the area."



Senator Dennis Fredrickson speaking at the Redwood River State Water Trail ribbon cutting ceremony.

Once the ribbon cutting was out of the way, the 50 some people who attended the ceremony hopped into canoes and made the trek from the County Road 6 landing to the shores of Perks Park, seven miles away on Lake Redwood.



“Minn. couple turn planting into a growing success”

Jason and Jolene Moen of Glenwood have a way with plants. Every time they plant a garden, they harvest more than they can consume.

They’ve taken some of the excess to the local foodshelf, but there’s always something left over. “I am like my father,” Jolene said. “I have always gardened and have always had extra produce.”

They saw a solution to their garden bounty when a friend, a member of a local Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), suggested starting their own CSA.

The Moens started Plentiful Visions three years ago. They offer full- and half-shares over 16 weeks in the summer and early fall. Full-share members receive a box of fresh vegetables once a week delivered to their home. Half-share members get produce every other week, Jason said.

They started with one member and now have 15 shareholders. They don’t envision growing much larger than a 30-shareholder CSA, Jolene said. “I like it smaller,” she said. “You get to know your customers.”

The couple will also sell produce at the Pope County Farmers Market in Glenwood.

They hadn’t planned on making gardening a business when they purchased the farm seven years ago. They merely wanted a place in the country near Alexandria where they work. A country home is a great place to raise their family, Jason said. And it offered space for a garden, which they’d always had.

The 8.5 acre farm, located between Alexandria and Glenwood, had a garden and buildings but the yard needed trimming and the soil required rejuvenation. They increased the ground’s organic matter and Jason took to mowing the expansive yard. Jolene had a solution to Jason’s long mowing time: She wanted to turn more lawn into garden space. Not all of the areas they’ve dug have been planted in vegetables. They landscaped several spots with flowers and lawn decorations.

The garden plants are started in the house under grow lights. They are using Seed Savers seed and have many plants for transplanting. Potatoes are planted on Good Friday. It’s a standard “Farmers

Almanac” practice that’s been a successful one for them.

They grow cabbages, radish, green onions, spinach, romaine lettuce, beets, Swiss chard, large storage onions, rutabagas and more.

They are not organic, but they don’t use pesticides or chemicals.

“Our weed control is the five fingers on this hand and five on the other,” she said. “We use no chemical fertilizer and eventually we hope to become organic.”

The CSA boxes are filled first followed by produce for the farmers market. The food shelf supply comes next.

“It’s all about feeding people,” Jolene said. “They are very appreciative at the food shelf. I was unaware of how many people use the foodshelf. Instead of getting canned, packaged or frozen foods, they get some fresh garden vegetables to enjoy.”

She says their operation is a work in progress. They are trying to figure out how much to grow per CSA share.

The couple also cares for a few donkeys and 55 laying hens. The eggs are consumed by the family, sold to co-workers and included in CSA shares, she said.

Their love of gardening is rubbing off. Although four-year-old Janel is more interested in playing games in their yard, Carter, 6, has started his own plot. This is Carter’s first attempt at gardening, his parents said. But he’s already planning on adding onions, corn and pumpkins all foods he likes to eat. He’s also farming worms. And he’s learning good eating habits.

“The main reason we do this is because of the importance of eating healthy and eating local,” Jolene said. “That’s what this is all about.”



Jolene and Jason Moen pose for a photo on their Glenwood, Minnesota farm. The Moens are committed to provide fresh local foods grown to various customers and local food shelves.

FAMILY TAKES ON ONE-MONTH, LOCAL FOODS CHALLENGE

*By Tom Cherveney,
West Central Tribune*

Someday, Susie Lang's name might be mentioned in the company of Julia Child and Julie Powell.

She intends to make her mark by mustering the art of Renville County cooking, just like the two women whose adventures in French cooking are chronicled in their memoirs and celebrated in the popular movie, "Julie & Julia."

The Lang family has committed itself to eating only locally grown foods for a full month, starting Tuesday. The preference will be for foods raised in Renville County, but the Langs will also buy local foods from outside of the county as needed.

Lang will post accounts about her adventure on Twitter and Facebook as well as the website of the Renville County Housing and Redevelopment Authority/Economic Development Agency.

She is a development assistant with the office, and that role had much to do with this challenge. Members of the organization's Agriculture and Renewable Energy Committee were tossing around ideas on how to promote more local food production in the county, she said.

A host of studies suggest that rural areas would realize millions of dollars in additional income – and create lots of jobs – if they produced more of the foods now being transported from places hundreds and thousands of miles away.

"I don't know how it happened," said Lang. The conversation turned to the importance of building a market for local foods by introducing more people to what's available and teaching the art of cooking local foods, in the same way Julia Child and Julie Powell challenged themselves to learn the art of preparing French cuisine.

Someone suggested: "Susie, why don't you and your family do that," she said.

Husband Andy said he is all for it. He's well aware that fresh food tastes better and offers more nutritional value than processed foods or those that have sat in trucks and on warehouse shelves for days.

Lang said she wants to demonstrate that eating better is very "doable," even for busy families. Local foods are accessible and affordable, she pointed out. Renville County is host to five different farmers markets, and there are a variety of producers in and around the county offering everything from fresh meats and vegetables to Minnesota-made wines for local consumption.

But there are challenges ahead, Lang



Susie Lang, right, and her family are committed to eating only locally-produced foods until July 15.

admits. "We're definitely a pizza family," she said.

She will need to do more preparing and planning now that her pizzas must be made from scratch. She will need to identify the local sources for all of the raw ingredients she will need, find recipes and set aside time for cooking.

It's also part of the fun, she said. Her trips to farmers markets and visits to growers have already provided her with all kinds of information and great recipes and ideas, she said.

Lang acknowledges that she has much yet to learn. While at the Hector farmers market, she asked for Kenney for instructions on how to cook chicken. "You know," she told Kenney, "the kind that comes with bones in it and everything."

To follow the eat local challenge on Twitter, search RenCoHRAEDA.

Minnesota River Paddler Program

Introduction

The Minnesota River flows for 335 miles from Big Stone Lake on the South Dakota border to its confluence with the Mississippi River at Fort Snelling. As the river meanders across the broad valley, it picks up a diverse selection of tributaries both large and small. There is the Chippewa River as it slowly cuts across the prairie landscape, or the boulder-filled Beaver Creek and the fast-flowing streams of the Blue Earth River Watershed.

Program Basics

The Minnesota River Watershed Alliance has launched the first-ever Minnesota River Paddler Program. Three unique patches/decals are being offered to anyone who meets the following criteria:

- **MN River Tributary Paddler:** Paddle any three of these major tributaries: Chippewa River, Lac qui Parle River, Pomme de Terre River, Yellow Medicine River, Hawk Creek, Redwood River, Cottonwood River, Watonwan River, Le Sueur River, Blue Earth River, and one stretch of the Minnesota River for a total of four paddles.



- **MN River Extreme Paddler:** Paddle the following rivers in the Minnesota River Watershed: Little Minnesota River, Whetstone River, Yellow Bank River, Chippewa River, Lac qui Parle River, Pomme de Terre River, Beaver Creek, Yellow Medicine River, Hawk Creek, Redwood River, Cottonwood River, Little Cottonwood River, Watonwan River, Le Sueur River, Blue Earth River, Big Cobb River, Maple River, Rush River, High Island Creek, Sand Creek, and three stretches of the Minnesota River (Upper, Middle and Lower) for a total of 23 paddles. *Documentation is required for this patch/decals – photos, affidavit from another source, etc.*



- **Minnesota River 335 Paddler:** For anyone who paddles the entire length of the Minnesota River from the Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge to Fort Snelling at the confluence with the Mississippi River either in one paddle or by segments. *Documentation is required for this patch/decals – photos, affidavit from another source, etc.*



For more information contact Scott Kudelka at 507-389-2304 or scott.kudelka@mnsu.edu

Book Review: “Hidden History of the Minnesota River Valley” by Elizabeth Johanneck

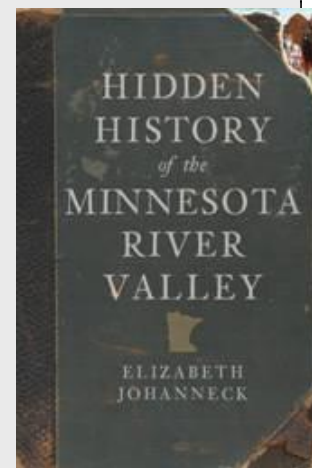
For thousands of years, indigenous people have gathered for celebrations and sacred ceremonies at the sacred site, given the name Camp Coldwater by the U.S. military in the early 1800s. Water from a forty-seven-degree, year-round spring is used in the Dakota Healing Lodge because of its purity. River or lake water would never been used because of its impurities.

In 1820, during the Lewis Cass Expedition’s search for the source of the Mississippi River, American geographer, geologist, ethnologist and Indian agent Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, whose wife was of Ojibwe and Scot-Irish descent, discovered a birch bark message left by the Dakota. Found near the mouth of the Sauk River between present-day St. Cloud and Minneapolis, the message invited the Ojibwe to the sacred spring.

Science may support the healing properties of the water and the hallowed atmosphere where the two rivers meet. When solar and lunar influences cause the water table to rise, they force air, charged with negative ions, out of the earth. Negative ions are also created when the surface tension of water is broken, changing the atmosphere in much the same way a lightning strike does. Mystics have traditionally occupied waterfalls and rivers for this reason. Negative ions are associated with a sense of well-being. They lessen infections and dry burns faster, healing them more quickly and leaving less scarring.

In short, the spring water from the center of the earth is blessed.

Elizabeth Johanneck grew up on a farm in Redwood County, one of eight children and went off to college at Southwest State University in Marshall. An author and blogger – “Minnesota County Mouse Folk Blog” – Johanneck dives into stories about Fort Snelling, Dr. Mayo’s Closet and even a ghost story titled “The Terrible Story of Little Annie Mary.” The reader will discover what is unique about the MN River Valley and a history that can be funny as well as deeply unsettling.



Hidden History of the Minnesota River Valley took on a life of its own, attracting stories I had never heard before and presenting me with familiar stories in which astonishing facts had been left out through the sin of omission. I’ve tried to present a dispassionate and more complete picture of river valley history than I am accustomed to, weaving together bits and pieces of information gathered through interviews and a vast array of sources. I have striven for accuracy, having rely, in some cases, on the folklore of the valley.



I want to send out a huge thank-you to everyone who helped make the Blue Earth River Paddle and MN River Paddler Program Launch a success despite the crazy weather. You never want to cancel or postpone an event especially one that involves a lot of preparation and commitment from a large cast of people.

First, I need to acknowledge the Paddling Committee of Chantill Kahler-Royer, Joel Wurscher, Brooke Patterson, James Fett, Jesse Anderson and Susie Carlin. You couldn't ask for a better group of people. This event happened because of their leadership and willingness to do whatever it took. Each of them handled various aspects of the planning and never lost their smiles even as the rain came down hard.



To pull this off there were a lot of other people who eagerly volunteered to help out. We received much needed support from Blue Earth County especially from Jessica Beyer and Dean Ehlers who showed us what it takes to hold an event at Rapidan Dam County Park while handling some of the logistics. Thanks to Jim Hruska and family of the Dam Store who served up tasty food including their famous pie. Another big thanks to the Mankato Paddling and Outing Club for giving rides in their war canoe on the reservoir.

We hoped for a much larger turnout on the paddle but the weather kept most people off the water. Senator Julie Rosen of Fairmont was gracious enough to help dedicate the Blue Earth

River as a state water trail. She maintained her enthusiasm as the rain dumped on us. Thanks to Erik Wrede of the DNR for making this ribbon cutting ceremony a part of our event and Gene Jeseritz also of the DNR who brought down canoes from Hutchinson for the paddle.

Fortunately in the afternoon the rain moved out and our line-up of four bands - Dick Kimmel & Co., Depot Creek, Lhotse and the Pre-Apocalyptic Junkyard Orchestra - could play without worries of being fried. Each of the bands gave up their afternoon and paying gigs to come out on a pretty crappy day. All the bands did a fantastic job and we were lucky to get this caliber of talent.

A special shout out to Dick Kimmel who helped me with all the logistics for the music including the reservation of a sound system. He really made it stress free on my end.

I also want to thank Scott Matteson, Miranda Hacker, Ryan Thesing, Eric Patterson, Angie Becker Kudelka and Patrick Moore for helping out wherever we needed them. They were truly the unsung heroes and deserve a nice pat on the back. Thanks also to Tom Royer for designing the poster. Finally, I need to thank Diane Wiley and Karnell Johnson from the Water Resources Center and Minnesota River Board for taking care of the financial issues. I am sorry if I missed anyone. Here is to hoping we can do another event like this next year!





WHAT'S HAPPENING

Lagoon Park structures damaged

Flooding on the Chippewa River has caused significant damage to structures in Montevideo's Lagoon Park. This spring the river crested at 20.09 feet, the fourth highest recorded level. Structural damage to historic stone bridges and walls built by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the 1930s were recently discovered by city officials. The stone arch bridges are now missing rocks along the water's edge and cracks opened up at the ends. Hit hard, the stone walls are crumbling with one section fallen in the channel and others missing stones.

The goal of the city is repair the stone bridges and walls, but they want to remove the dam. Flood debris last spring took out approximately three feet of the bridge. According to city officials, the dam is more of a danger and they hope FEMA and state flood mitigation funding will pay the local share for the demolition costs with the DNR picking up the rest of the costs. In its place a series of rock weirs will be constructed, allowing fish to immigrate upstream.



City manager Steve Jones points out where a crack has opened in the wall of one of the historic WPA stone bridges in Lagoon Park. City Council members toured the park at the end of June to view damage by spring floods.

Asphalt Storage Project

A planned asphalt storage facility to be built in the Minnesota River Valley will not be required to complete an Environmental Impact Statement in a ruling by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Citizen Board. The board voted 6 to 1 for a "negative declaration," meaning Duinick Inc. of Prinsburg will not have to prepare an extensive analysis of possible environmental or health risks. The facility will be located just north of Granite Falls and still needs a Conditional Use Permit from Chippewa County due to an agricultural use zoning.

Farm Beginnings Program

Nearly 400 beginning and transitioning farmers have been helped over the last 12 years by the Land Stewardship Project (LSP), a Minnesota-based nonprofit that promotes sustainable agriculture. Farmers take classes on how to identify their advantage, set goals, develop business marketing and financial plans, and use sustainable farming methods. In addition, the program encourages established farmers to share their knowledge and experience to help those just starting out. Resources developed by LSP include a book listing contact information for experienced and beginning farmers along with a clearinghouse on their web site.

Gold Mine bridge repair

Redwood County Board of Commissioners approved funding to repair what locals call the Gold Mine Bridge. Built in the early 1900s, this truss bridge



on the Minnesota River has been damaged due to major floods including this year when the deck was completely engulfed by rising water. Huge tree limbs pushed into the structure caused even

more stress. Repairs to the bridge will range from removal of dead trees to welding plates on rusted I-beams at the abutments to fixing cross bracing at the center spans. Because of its age, the bridge is restricted to six tons, mainly for personal vehicles.

Chippewa River Watershed Perennial Project

A new initiative called the "Chippewa 10% Project" is being launched to find innovative and profitable ways to produce and market food products and biomass fuels derived from environmentally sensitive farm fields that farmers transition to perennials. This ambitious project is being led by the Land Stewardship Project and the Chippewa River Watershed Project with the help of the USDA Agricultural Research Service's Soils Lab in Morris, University of Minnesota-Morris, University of Minnesota West Central Research and Outreach Center and Louisiana State University AgCenter.

The project will not take land out of production, instead this partnership will engage willing farmers and landowners, business entrepreneurs and institutional and community leaders to work together for a cleaner, more economically vibrant watershed. It will also test a new strategy linking agricultural land-use change, economic development and water quality improvement.



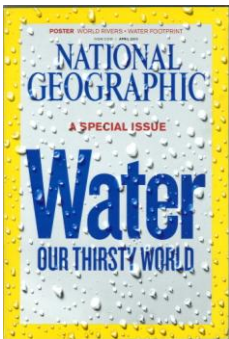
WATER: Our Thirsty World – National Geographic

The amount of moisture on Earth has not changed. The water the dinosaurs drank millions of years ago is the same water that falls as rain today. But will there be enough for a more crowded world?

Nearly 70 percent of the world’s fresh water is locked in ice. Most of the rest is in aquifers that we’re draining much more quickly than the natural recharge rate. Two-thirds of our water is used to grow food. With 83 million more people on earth each year, water demand will keep going up unless we change how we use it.

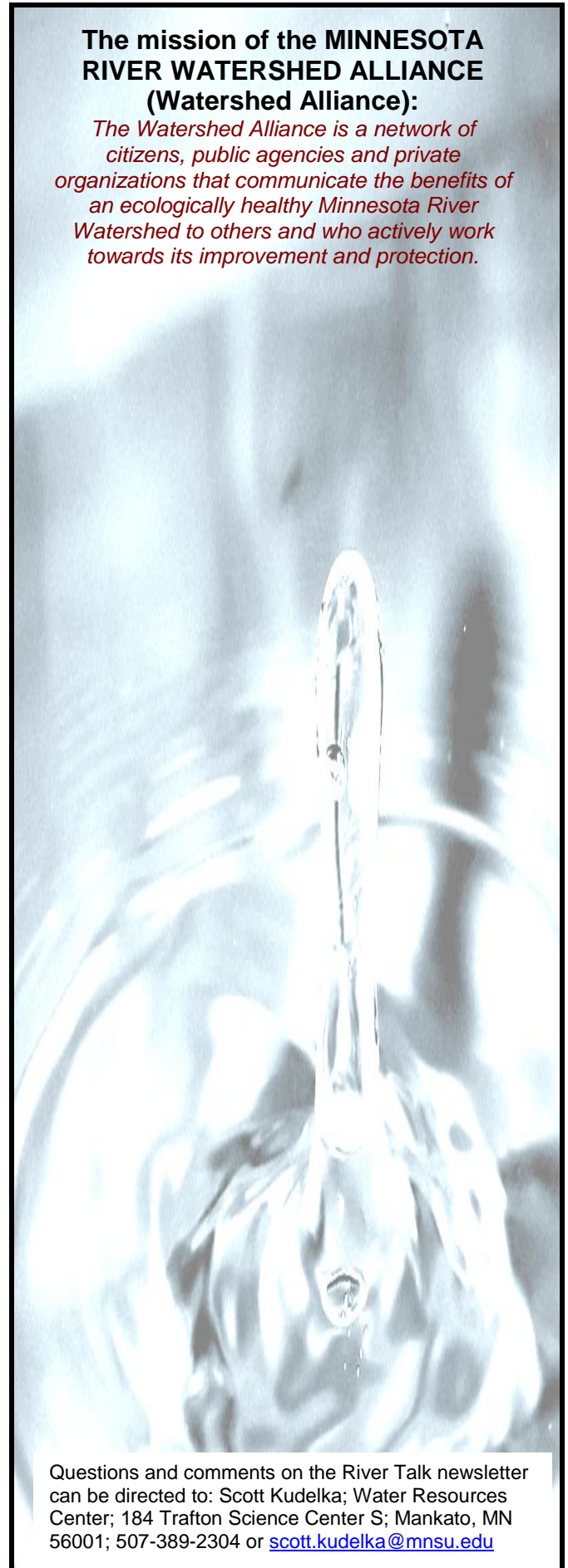
Americans use about 100 gallons of water at home each day. Millions of the world’s poorest subsist on fewer than five gallons. Forty-six percent of people on earth do not have water piped to their homes. Women in developing countries walk an average of 3.7 miles to get water. In 15 years, 1.8 billion people will live in regions of severe water scarcity. One out of eight people lacks access to clean water. 3.3 million die from water-related health problems each year.

The weight of China’s Three Gorges Reservoir will tilt the Earth’s axis by nearly an inch. The longest tunnel, supplying New York City, is 85 miles and leaks up to 35 million gallons a day. The Itaipu Dam in South America cost \$18 billion and took 17 years to build. Dam projects have displaced up to 80 million people worldwide.



Water is life. It’s the briny broth of our origins, the pounding circulatory system of the world. We stake our civilizations on the coasts and mighty rivers. Our deepest dread is the threat of having too little – or too much. – Barbara Kingsolver

Few lands are untouched by the power of a stream. Even the direst regions can hold trace of ephemeral river runs. Rivers create their own channels, gathering rain or snow and ice melt that runs off land and bearing it downhill by force of gravity to the sea. The journey makes rivers the unsurpassed carvers of Earth, cutting canyons and valleys and depositing sediments as fertile soils. By nature, they wind – the most efficient way for water to travel. Rivers and lakes store less than half a percent of Earth’s fresh water, but they are the lifelines of human history – where people settled, farmed, traded, built cities, explored.



The mission of the MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED ALLIANCE (Watershed Alliance):

The Watershed Alliance is a network of citizens, public agencies and private organizations that communicate the benefits of an ecologically healthy Minnesota River Watershed to others and who actively work towards its improvement and protection.

Questions and comments on the River Talk newsletter can be directed to: Scott Kudelka; Water Resources Center; 184 Trafton Science Center S; Mankato, MN 56001; 507-389-2304 or scott.kudelka@mnsu.edu