

This item comes from Zak Pagel of Clean Water Action: *The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is accepting public comments until January 21 on a policy that will determine which rivers, lakes, streams and wetlands are fully protected. This new guidance offer "no protection" for our critical water resources and tells government officials to ignore not only the benefits of*



protecting water bodies but also the potential problems if they are not protected. This could mean increased flooding, dirtier and more costly drinking water and more pollution problems in waters across the country. I took action to tell the EPA that it should protect all of our nation's waters. Will you do the same? Take action now to:

http://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/2155/t/203/campaign.jsp?campaign_KEY=22196

More than 100 people showed up for the Big Stone II Administrative Hearing in Ortonville on January 10th. According to Patrick Moore, intelligent and passionate anti-Big Stone II testimony was presented by the Willmar League of Women Voters, Doctors, Lawyers, Teachers, Nuns, Farmers, Native Americans, Business Owners, Students, etc. A "People's Press Conference" was held before the hearing.

Testimony on Big Stone II will be taken until **Thursday Jan 17th**. Send your testimony to Judge Steven Mihalchick by e-mail at steve.mihalchick@state.mn.us

Here are some interesting items in the news in the last week or so:

- Minnesota is joining a coalition of 16 other states to sue the Environmental Protection Agency to preserve state's ability to regulate vehicle emissions. The lawsuit came out of California where EPA denied the state's request to set higher tailpipe emissions standards than that of the federal government. California wants to reduce vehicle greenhouse gas emissions by 30% by 2016. California contends it can obtain a waiver from the federal government to set its own standards. According to MN Attorney General Lori Swanson, Minnesota hasn't adopted the California standards but filed the petition in order to preserve the state's ability to do so. (Minnesota Public Radio)
- The eighty groups with the Minnesota Environmental Partnership (MEP) have come up with a legislative agenda. Here are some of the causes they will be advocating in 2008:
 - A quick passage of the great outdoors and heritage amendment – a constitutional amendment dedicating sales tax revenue to outdoor projects and the arts,
 - The legislature to authorize a cap-and-trade system designed to reduce carbon emissions,
 - More funds for transportation, in particular transit projects (Minnesota Public Radio)
- Major electronic manufactures including Panasonic, Sharp and Toshiba have come together to comply with Minnesota's new electronic recycling law. The "Electronic Recycling Act" law signed by Governor Pawlenty in 2007 requires manufactures of video display devices like televisions, computer monitors and laptop computers to recycle 60% of the volume of their sales for two years and than 80%. The three electronic companies formed Electronic Manufactures Recycling Management Company to operate a collection and recycling program in the state "and beyond." According to the Minnesota Monitor, "Minnesota has more than 150 other registered collection sites for consumer electronics, which is good news as Minnesota also has an estimated 19 million pounds of electronic waste."

- A Minnesota woman offered the owner of a cabin in Eagles Next Township a \$1,000 to let a bear and her two cubs continue hibernating for the winter. She was afraid moving the bears to a wildlife sanctuary would be a death sentence because they wouldn't fit in with the bears born or raised in captivity. The DNR has decided to move them a wildlife sanctuary in Michigan.

Events:

On January 17th (Thursday) Carrie Jennings, Glacial Geologist with the MN Geological Survey will be doing a **“The Geology of the Minnesota River”** presentation starting at 7:00 p.m. at the Chippewa County Courthouse Assembly Room in Montevideo. The entire family will enjoy this visual exploration of the Minnesota River Valley. Refreshments will be served. For more information contact Scott Kudelka at 507-389-2304 or scott.kudelka@mnsu.edu. Or Patrick Moore at 1-877-269-2873 or cure-ed@info-link.net

“Linking Our Community to the Global Environment” is the topic of this forum hosted by the Brainerd Area Environmental Learning Network on January 31st ((Thursday) at the Tornstrom Auditorium from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/globalworkshop.pdf>

February 9th (Saturday) is the **CURE (Clean Up the River Environment) Annual Meeting** at the Hollywood Theater in Montevideo. Waziyatawin Angela Wilson, PhD is the guest speaker. Her topic is The Dakota People and the Minnesota River. Hear about the untold story of the forced marches between Montevideo, Mankato and Fort Snelling after the Dakota War of 1862 ended at Camp Release. For more information contact the CURE office at 1-877-269-2873 or go to their web site at www.curemriver.org

February 11th (Monday) Rural Advantage – 3rd Crop Producer Meeting; 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. at Knights of Columbus Hall, Fairmont; Info: No cost; topics include Miscanthus as a bioenergy crop, Agroforestry, Small Grains, Hybrid Hazelnuts, and more. Contact Jeff Jensen (507) 238-5449 or jeff@ruraladvantage.org for more information or brochure

February 19th (Tuesday) is the next quarterly meeting of the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance at the New Century Charter School in Hutchinson. The meeting will start at 6:00 p.m. with a social hour and food. The regular meeting will get going at 7:00 p.m. and we try to wrap up by 9:00 p.m.

February 25th Rural Advantage – 3rd Crop Producer Meeting; 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. at Knights of Columbus Hall, Fairmont; Info: No cost; topics include distributed energy with pyrolysis and gasification, pelleting opportunities with ag residues, biomass to methanol, alfalfa for feed & fuel, and more. Contact Jeff Jensen (507) 238-5449 or jeff@ruraladvantage.org for more information or brochure

Check out additional upcoming events and workshops on the Minnesota River Calendar at <http://mrfdc.mnsu.edu/calendar/index.html>

Jobs

Carver Soil and Water Conservation District is hiring an Urban Conservation Technician. This full-time, permanent position will focus on providing construction site erosion and sediment control inspections and reviews for compliance with NPDES and local water rules. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/carverswcdurban.pdf>

A Director of Clean Water Programs is being hired by a Minnesota Coalition of agriculture groups including MN Farm Bureau, MN Corn Growers and MN Soybeans. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/cleanwaterdirector.pdf>

Water Quality Articles:

Minnesota River communities getting head start on phosphorus reduction. Some of the larger communities like Willmar and Montevideo and industries in the Minnesota River Basin are moving faster than expected to reduce their discharge of phosphorus to meet water quality standards, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/mnriverphosphorusreduction.pdf>

Wind farmers want their two cents. Wind energy companies are hoping for quick action on a tax credit affecting their industry when the U.S. Congress goes back to work later this month. The tax credit is a major financial boost in the wind energy field and set to expire at the end of the year, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/windfarmerstwocents.pdf>

Some new – and old – ideas to protect Minnesota’s resources. The Minnesota Environmental Partnership (MEP) is proposing a number of legislation to restore Minnesota’s traditional leadership in protecting natural resources, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/protectingmnresources.pdf>

Peatland Protection Could Ward Off Climate Control. The Minnesota Climate Change Advisory Group is including peatland protection and restoration measures in several dozen recommendations to slow down climate change being forwarded to Governor Pawlenty, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/peatlandclimatechange.pdf>

5,000 gallons of leaking gas still trapped in sewer. A tanker truck rolled over on an entrance ramp to Interstate 394 and most of the 8,000 gallons of gas leaked into the sewer system as government officials try to contain the fuel from flowing in the Mississippi River, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/leakinggastrappedsewer.pdf>

Dennis Anderson: Fight is not for the weak of heart. Dennis Anderson of the Minneapolis Star Tribune comments on how the Legislature and some of the state’s so-called conservationists aren’t doing enough to ensure the passage of a sales tax to raise funds for natural resources, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/fightfornotweak.pdf>

Alternative energy plans a boost to wildlife habitat. An annual gathering put on by the MN DNR will be taking on the issue of bioenergy instead of the usual hunting and fishing topics. The DNR senses bioenergy will be a big part of Minnesota’s future, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/alternativeenergywildlifehabitat.pdf>

Editorial: Bottles, bottles everywhere. A call to motivate people to drink more from the tap than from bottles, which Americans now consume more than any other beverage except for soft drinks and even more than all alcoholic beverages combined, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/bottleseverywhere.pdf>

Despite the hype, experts question corn ethanol’s environmentally friendly image. Scientists and agriculture experts aren’t as sure about corn ethanol as politicians and other special interest groups about it being the environmentally friendly solution to the nation’s energy problems, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/ethanolimage.pdf>

Ethanol reduces need for imported oil, but its energy saving are costly. Critics are saying biofuel wouldn’t exist in its present form without government help. This includes the federal government paying 51 cents of the cost for every gallon of ethanol you buy, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/ethanolgrowingfuel.pdf>

"When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it is attached to the rest of the world," – John Muir

"There are two spiritual dangers in not owning a farm. One is the danger of supposing that breakfast comes from the grocery, and the other that heat comes from the furnace," – Aldo Leopold

The Minnesota River Watershed Alliance (Watershed Alliance) is an organized network of citizens, public agencies, and private organizations dedicated to communicating the benefits of an ecology healthy Minnesota River Watershed to others and are actively working towards its improvement and protection. We meet four times a year and encourage landowners and recreational users of the river to be part of the effort. For more information on the Watershed Alliance: www.watershedalliance.blogspot.com

Please register at the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance's bulletin board at: <http://mail.mnsu.edu/mailman/listinfo/mrwa> to receive regular updates on what is happening in the Minnesota River Watershed.

Thanks,

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