

The Minnesota River Board met on Monday in Montevideo with representatives from 20 counties and numerous other organizations and agencies. The Board dealt with a number of issues including:

- Tom Egan of Dakota County is the new member on the Executive Committee,
- The Board passed a resolution that creates a process for counties to rejoin the organization. Three counties – Yellow Medicine, Lyon, and Renville are in the process of rejoining the Board. In addition a couple of counties are also looking at rejoining.
- A spirited discussion took place revolving around the issue of the proposed construction of the Big Stone II Coal Plant and potential for a major water drawdown on the lake. There is a lot of concern how this will effect water quality in the lake and the Minnesota River. The Board directed Shannon Fisher to write both the Minnesota and South Dakota governors to ask for the reconvening of the Boundary Waters Commission.
- The Board approved to be a sponsor of the Conservation Drainage Symposiums to be held in Montevideo, New Ulm and Bloomington in April and contributed \$500 to the forums.



The Friends of High Island group (coordinated by Scott Sparlin) recently held a fundraiser that brought in around \$5,000 to \$6,000 for putting Best Management Practices on the ground including rock tile inlets and Raingardens in the City of New Auburn. These funds will be matched by the Friends of the Minnesota Valley. The MN DNR is working with the landowner of the High Island Lake outlet to sign an easement contract to let them do a water drawdown this fall. The DNR also plans to stock the fish with walleye. According to Scott Sparlin, Friends of High Island are planning to shift their focus to other areas including the eroding Henderson bluffland and Bakers Lake Watershed.

In 2007 there were a total of 34 applications for BMPs under the Rush River Watershed Project in Sibley and Nicollet counties. Practices included:

- 69 rock tile inlets,
- 1,028 acres of cover crops,
- 5 terrace projects,
- 32.9 acres of filter strips (incentive dollars),
- 2 wetland restoration projects totaling 4.2 acres (incentive dollars),
- 4 sediment basins,
- 17 septic system upgrades (loan dollars)

In 2007 the High Island Creek Clean Water Partnership spent \$20,183.19 on BMPs, including:

- 566.95 acres of cover crops,
- 28 acres of CRP filter strips (incentive dollars),
- 7 rock tile inlets,
- A bendway weir project,
- \$20,785.00 on septic system upgrades in Sibley County

Events:

January 31st (Thursday) is Minnesota Nutrient Management 590 Training from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at Jackpot Junction Casino, Morton. For more information:

<http://wrc.umn.edu/outreach/tsp/nmptraining/index.html>

February 1st & 2nd (Friday & Saturday) is the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota Youth Day and Sustainable Farming Association's Annual Conference at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter. For more information: <http://www.sfa-mn.org>

February 5th (Tuesday) is the 7th Annual Road Salt Symposium from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Crowne Plaza, Brooklyn Center. For more information: <http://www.freshwater.org>

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.curemnrivier.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.

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

Water Quality Articles:

Credit trading could make river cleanup pay for farmers. At the annual Hawk Creek Watershed Project meeting, Shannon Fisher of the Minnesota River Board gave an outline of the BMP Challenge and Water Quality Credit Trading program and how it could benefit farmers, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/nutrientcreditoverview.pdf>

Big Stone II case centers on projects. Administrative judges are holding a three-day hearing in St. Paul to decide the fate of the transmission line project in western Minnesota, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/bigstonecentersoncost.pdf>

Big Stone II costs debated. Energy experts and utility officials disagree over the potential cost of the proposed coal-fueled Big Stone II power plant and related transmission line improvements, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/bigstonecostsdebated.pdf>

Governor's climate group makes recommendations. A long list of suggestions on how Minnesota can reduce its carbon footprint has been approved by the state Climate Change Advisory Group, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/governorclimatepanel.pdf>

MN Panel Backs Cleaner Cars, Splits On Coal Plants. The state's Climate Change Advisory Group recommends lower speed limits, vehicle fees on carbon emissions, and allowing companies to buy and sell carbon allowances, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/mnpanelcleanerair.pdf>

Minnesota / Panel approves proposal on global warming. A mixture of strategies have been proposed by the Climate Change Advisory Group to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 30% by 2025, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/panelapprovesproposal.pdf>

Slow down to slow climate change. Minnesota's Climate Change Advisory Group is recommending to lower speed limits and use cleaner cars to reduce greenhouse emissions but some critics said it isn't enough, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/panelslowdownprogress.pdf>

PUBLISHER'S NOTEBOOK: Farm Bill needs more reform, less politics. Some people are disappointed the new Farm Bill doesn't go far enough to reform the country's agriculture policy, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/morereformlesspolitics.pdf>

House GOP could support gas tax hike. After the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce said it would support a 7.5 cent gas tax hike, Minnesota House Republicans now think they could back the proposal, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/republicanscouldsupportgastax.pdf>

Number of miles driven in state levels off; Effect could be broad. Over the last four years the total number of miles driven annually by Minnesota's residents have leveled off, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/milesdrivenlevelsoff.pdf>

Can Beauty Be Dangerous? Lipstick tainted with lead. Mascara that contains mercury. A hair-straightening treatment that slicks your tresses with protein . . . and formaldehyde? As three recent controversies show, sometimes the world of beauty can be downright ugly, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/canbeautybedangerous.pdf>

Enemy of the lake. Phosphorus turns our waters green. Wouldn't you rather see your toes? Why is there so much P in my lake? <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/enemyofthelake.pdf>

Groundwater Could Run Low Over Ethanol Production. With the production of ethanol expected to double by 2011 there is a growing concern about our groundwater supplies, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/groundwaterethanolproduction.pdf>

Is ethanol tapping too much water? As the industry expands, Minnesota's groundwater supply is under greater pressure, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/ethanoltappingtoomuchwater.pdf>

We may need to wage war against corn-based ethanol production. As the price of crops like corn and soybeans continue to rise, so does the demand to plow up conservation land enrolled under the Conservation Reserve Program, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/waroncornethanol.pdf>

PROGRESS: Panel focuses on renewable energy. Renewable energy leaders from the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota State Colleges and University system, along with the state departments of agriculture and commerce have been meeting quarterly since 2006, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/panelfocusesrenewableenergy.pdf>

Fixit: Recycling turns on end markets. Karen Youso, Star Tribune Columnist answers questions concerning the recycling of bottles, old plastic toys, margarine containers etc., <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/recyclingmarkets.pdf>

Solvent fume testing begins in St. Louis Park. The Environmental Protection Agency began taking air samples Monday from beneath basements in St. Louis Park to determine whether vapors from soil are infiltrating more than 200 homes and businesses, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/solventfumetesting.pdf>

The waiting list for proposed wind energy projects in the state is 612 years. But changes are afoot. Because of the federal process to approve energy projects, a huge waiting list is holding up hundreds of renewable energy projects, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/windenergychanges.pdf>

Water, water, water...There is no shortage of water in the desert but exactly the right amount, a perfect ratio of water to rock. Of water to sand, insuring that wide, free, open, generous spacing among plants and animals, homes and towns and cities, which makes the arid West so different from any other part of the nation. There is no lack of water here, unless you try to establish a city where no city should be. Edward Abbey, Wilderness Reader

Ever wonder about those people who spend \$2.00 apiece on those little bottles of Evian water? Try spelling Evian backwards, NAÏVE, George Carlin.

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,

Scott

Scott Kudelka
Minnesota River Watershed Alliance
Communications Coordinator
Water Resources Center
184 Trafton Science Center S
Mankato, MN 56001
507-389-2304
scott.kudelka@mnsu.edu
<http://watershedalliance.blogspot.com>