

Voyage down the Minnesota River

Tim Krohn and John Cross continued to paddle down to the Minnesota River over the last week. On their journey they visited and wrote about a number of people with long ties to the Minnesota River Watershed.

From Renville County, the two put together a story on the initiative to protect granite rock outcrops. They talked to Tom Kalahar of the Renville Soil and Watershed Conservation District about this new conservation program. *Kalahar said the concern about protecting the granite, which geologists say is 30 billion years old, began about a decade ago during a year-long battle over an illegal mining operation.*

In New Ulm, they caught up with Scott Sparlin at the Riverside Park to talk about water quality and Regional River History and Information Center. *"People still lament the water quality of the river, but it has really improved. You can see it with your own eyes. When you're seeing sturgeon – everyone is catching them – that's a water quality indicator. And people are catching paddle fish, that's a water quality indicator," Sparlin said.*

Down at the Judson, Tim and John camped over night at Joe Michel's place along the river. Joe has been paddling rivers for more than 60 years. *In all his canoeing, he's had only one brush with disaster that he still remembers – the time on the swollen Minnesota River when a giant cottonwood tree floating downstream suddenly began to flip and nearly smashed him.*

To follow Tim and John as they make their way down to the Minnesota River, check out the Mankato Free Press web site at:

http://www.mankatofreepress.com/local/local_story_198010713.html

Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan

This is your chance to have a say in how state decides to protect and restore its natural resources. Should Minnesota improve the water quality of our lakes and rivers? Promote alternative energy strategies that increase environmental quality? Improve community planning to protect natural resources? Integrate conservation goals with transportation goals? These are just a few recommendations contained in the Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan. For more information on the Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan:

<http://environment.umn.edu/scpp/>

Chemistry, Geology students, faculty helping to clean up Gaylord lake

A proposed project plan on how to clean up Lake Titloe's watershed was approved last month by the State's Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). In April, the State of Minnesota approved a bonding bill which included \$475,000 worth of projects designed to improve the water quality in Lake Titloe. Approximately \$175,000 of that money will be utilized to study Lake Titloe's watershed and develop a plan to improve the quality of water entering the lake. (Published in the Gaylord Hub, Gaylord, MN, 7/10/2008)

For the entire story, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/laketitloeproject.pdf>

NEW Byway DVD for sale filled with fabulous photos of the byway and lovely music by nature photographer Ron Bolduan! Take a preview of some of the great places along the byway that are featured on the DVD: [Explore The Valley with Ron Bolduan](#). If you would like to purchase a DVD email the byway and we can take your order! Write by mail: Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway: New Ulm Convention & Visitors Bureau; 1 North Minnesota Street; New Ulm, MN 56073-1727 or by phone: (888)463-9856

Extension Educator Position

The MN Extension Service is searching for an Extension Educator-Conservation Agronomist to fill the grant-funded position that Kevin Blanchet occupied for ten years. The focus is primarily nutrient and manure management education for producers and agricultural professionals. They are starting a three year project that includes on-farm trials with Gyles Randall as well as small-group education for producers and ag professionals on evaluating the economic value of manure for specific operations. Certification education for agricultural professionals is another area they are addressing. The person in this position works as part of a team with other Extension Educators and Specialists as well as staff of federal, state, and local agencies. Since this is a statewide position, the office location is negotiable.

The position is posted on the UM Central HR Website:

http://www1.umn.edu/twincities/06_employ.php

Plastic Bags

- <http://www.poconorecord.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080506/MULTIMEDIA02/80505016>

Events:

July 17th (Thursday) is the **Chippewa River Geology Presentation** starting at 7:00 p.m. at the Starbuck Community Center. Carrie Jennings, a Glacial Geologist with the MN Geological Survey will be giving a presentation highlighting the glacial history of the Lake Minnewaska area and western Minnesota. Refreshments will be served. For more information contact Jennifer Hoffman at 320-269-2139 ext. 120.

July 19th (Saturday) is **Lac qui Parle Sesquicentennial Heritage Celebration** from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Lac qui Parle County Park. The day features historical exhibits and demonstrations, musical entertainment, historical readings, guided park area tours, kid's games and activities, along with food and beverages. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/dawsonflyer.pdf>

July 19th (Saturday) is the **Day at the Dam Celebration** from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Rapidan Dam. There will be tours of the park, boat rides on the reservoir, music, informational displays, horse draw wagon rides, lawn games, family activities, and food from The Dam Store. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/celebrateblueearthday.pdf>

July 21st (Monday) is the **Minnesota River Board Annual Meeting** at the Best Western in North Mankato. The executive committee meets at 8:30 a.m., with the full board meeting starting at 9:00 a.m. To reserve a seat and lunch, contact Susie Carlin by July 15th at 507-389-5491 or by email susan.carlin@mnsu.edu. For the Full Board packet please visit www.minnesotariver.org

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

Water Quality Articles:

[Wanting funding for outdoors, they woo youth online](#) (Pioneer Press). Outdoors crowd? Check. Arts folks? Good. Environmentalists? Count on it. Young voters? Whoa! Not only whoa, but what if? What if younger voters come out in force in November and vote for a favorite candidate — say Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama — and leave other ballot questions blank?

[Our View: Stop erosion of natural beauty](#) (Mankato Free Press). For the first time, Minnesota policymakers have a comprehensive blueprint to guide investments in Minnesota's greatest resource: its natural beauty and environment.

[Making sense of nature's systems](#) (St Paul Pioneer Press). There's promise in a new report on Minnesota's natural resources. But it's important to see it for what it is: the beginnings of a better way to look at our environment as a system, and thus make better judgments about policy, public and private.

[Governors talk of moving beyond corn-based ethanol](#) (Associated Press). Governors from the coal fields of West Virginia to the corn fields of Iowa talked Sunday at their summer meeting about moving beyond ethanol produced just from food sources.

[Couple follows sun to energy efficiency](#) (The Land Online). Nestled in a heavily wooded area just outside New London, the country home of Graden and Becky West is virtually 100 percent energy efficient thanks to a rotating solar panel that follows the sun.

[Tighter margins, but ethanol plants making it work](#) (The Land Online). Despite the price of corn, the nay-sayers rumblings about using corn for fuel, the headlines about world food price concerns, even rumors of shut downs of ethanol plants, despite all the chatter the renewable fuels industry continues to grow across America.

[Studying steam at the Granite Falls ethanol plant](#) (Marshall Independent). GRANITE FALLS - Brian Ng had never stepped foot on the grounds of an ethanol plant until late May. Now Ng, a mechanical engineering masters student at the University of Minnesota, is looking to help improve efficiency at Granite Falls Energy.

[A blooming solution to gas crisis?](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). A solution to \$4-a-gallon gas could be floating in your neighborhood pond.

[One step forward, too many steps back](#) (Winona Daily News). As the price of a gallon of fuel rises, the public opinion for petroleum drilling seems to be plummeting. Most Republican groups are urging residents to seize upon this shift and write the friendly folks in Washington, D.C., to tell them to fire up the drills.

[Don't make a stink; the water already has](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The news that Minneapolis' water smelled like a dead skunk in a limburger factory came as no news to our house; a few weeks ago the bathtub taps disgorged a strange green grot that looked like the remnants of an extraterrestrial frat party.

[State sued over cutoff of ethanol payments](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). A company with ties to one of Minnesota's wealthiest and most notable business families has sued Minnesota over ethanol subsidies it claims the state reneged on.

[Minneapolis: Water stinks, but city says it's safe](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Wendy Adamson doesn't care about Mayor R.T. Rybak's appeal to buy less bottled water. Her tap water stinks -- literally -- and she's not having any of it.

[Here's one farmer hurt by ethanol](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). To be clobbered by market forces is one thing, but it's government policy driving the factors that threaten the livelihood of turkey farmers.

[From freeway to greenway as workers dust off bikes](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Rush hour hits the bike lanes as high gas prices push people to pedal to work.

[Levees may worsen flooding problems](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). A long chain of levees along the Mississippi and other rivers is contributing to the catastrophic flooding that has hit the region recently. Some engineers say the levees have constricted the rivers' flow, forcing water into river towns. There are dozens of levees along the Mississippi River in our region.

*For myself I hold no preferences among flowers, so long as they are wild, free, spontaneous.
Bricks to all greenhouses! Black thumb and cutworm to the potted plant! – Edward Abbey*

*I am not bound for any public place, but for ground of my own where I have planted vines and
orchards trees, and in the heat of the day climbed up into the healing shadow of the woods.
Better than any argument is to rise at dawn and pick dew-wet red berries in a cup. – Wendell
Berry*

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: <http://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.

Thank you,

Scott

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