

Clean Water, the Outdoors and the Arts Amendment According to the Minneapolis Star Tribune, Minnesota voters passed the Clean Water, the Outdoors and the Arts Amendment. This will increase the sales tax by three-eighths of a percent beginning next July for the next 25 years to help fund projects to clean up our water, protect our natural resources and enhance arts programs. This will raise \$275 million a year by increasing the tax on a \$100 purchase by 38 cents. The Star Tribune reported, Democrats strongly favored the amendment. Here is the breakdown for the funding: Outdoor habitat projects and clean water remediation will each receive one-third of the revenue, estimated to be about \$90 million apiece. The remaining third will be divided between statewide arts groups and projects, which will receive 19.75 percent or \$54 million, and parks, trails and zoos, which will receive 14.25 percent or \$39 million.

Michael Groh

Michael was a facilitator and mentor who worked with the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance over the last couple of years. We appreciated his insight and ability to move us along without causing any hurt feelings. We couldn't have asked for a better facilitator and friend. For those who didn't know Michael Groh, he was one of a kind and will be missed by many people around the world. The following journal entry comes from his daughter.

Michael passed away on Thursday, October 30 at 3:15 pm. He was at home, in a hospice bed in the living room with the view he loved of River Road with all of the beautiful fall colors and wonderful golden sunlight filling the room. In his final hours, he was constantly surrounded by Jane, Aaron, Alicia, and his brother Ken; we had beautiful Mozart music playing as the four of us reminisced, laughed, cried, and sat in silence with dad, holding his hands and rubbing his feet.

Dad didn't want us to hold a funeral, so no services will be held. We may hold some sort of gathering in the future to celebrate Michael and his life, but we aren't making any of those decisions right now.

Michael's obituary will appear in the Sunday (November 2) Minneapolis Star Tribune newspaper. Based on dad's wishes, memorials are preferred to CaringBridge.org, any hospice care organization, or charities that are meaningful to the donor.

We have been deeply touched and lifted up by the outpouring of love and support from everyone throughout this difficult journey. We know that we will continue to face challenging times as we mourn our loss, but we find comfort in knowing that we have such a wonderful support network. Thanks for all of your ongoing support.

BMP Challenge Presentations

The Minnesota River Basin Joint Powers Board is collaborating with a number of other organizations, including American Farmland Trust and AgFlex Inc. to provide a primer on the realities and myths of water quality credit trading. In addition, we are making a renewed push to reach out to producers that might be interested in enrolling some acres

into a basically risk-free nutrient reduction and tillage management program – the BMP Challenge ([www.bmpchallenge.org](http://www.bmpchallenge.org/)<<http://www.bmpchallenge.org/>>). Water quality credit trading remains, to many, a cloudy science with too many potential pitfalls; however, advances and trial programs are showing that credit trading can not only improve water quality, but can put more cash into the pockets of producers for making improved land management decisions. Rolled into these land management decisions, is the BMP Challenge program, which gives farmers an opportunity to try different tillage practices and nutrient application rates that are viewed as techniques to improve environmental quality – and if the practices fail, the producer can be compensated.

I am looking for opportunities over the next 6 months to present this information. I would be very interested in coming to watershed meetings, producer programs, conservation organization functions, church forums, etc... to talk with landowners, producers, conservation staff, and others about the pros and cons of water quality credit trading, and to build relationships with those that might have an interest in the BMP Challenge. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing from any of you that might have a need or interest in this topic. Please feel free to pass this request on to anyone that might be interested. Thank you – Shannon J. Fisher, Director; Water Resources Center & Minnesota River Board – 507-389-5492 or [shannon.fisher@mnsu.edu](mailto:shannon.fisher@mnsu.edu)<<mailto:shannon.fisher@mnsu.edu>>

Friends of the MN Valley Annual Meeting

Last Thursday evening, over 50 people attended the Friend's Annual Meeting and came away excited about the upcoming year for this organization. Lori Nelson, Executive Director talked about the Friend's 2008 Highlights and Achievements.

· Improving the Water Quality of the Minnesota River: Twenty-three communities, over 580 volunteers, and 29 public and private partners participated in Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality, resulting in the removal of over 3,400 pounds of phosphorus and over 10,000 pounds of trash from the Lower Minnesota River Watershed, saving communities \$2,065,200 in wastewater treatment costs.

· Enhancing Wildlife Habitat Conservation and Restoration: Under an agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and with the help of dollars from Minnesota's Environmental Trust Fund, we restored 420 acres of wetland and prairie in 5 counties. In addition, with the help of a generous donation by the Carl & Verna Schmidt Foundation, the Friends and partners such as the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust and the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance were able to set aside 660 acres of formerly cropped land for conservation purposes in the Minnesota River Basin.

· Promoting Innovative Agricultural and Land Use Practices: The Friends hosted our 5th annual Rural Land Opportunities Show at Farmfest 2008. The Friends and our partners promoted the concept of "Agri-preneurship," focusing on the economic benefits associated with alternative land use that benefits both farmers and the environment. The Friends were able to fill a tent at Farmfest with "Agri-preneur" vendors, bringing our message to an estimated 6,000 visitors.

· The Friends and our watershed partners held 3 conservation drainage information sessions in the Minnesota River Basin to introduce farmers and landowners to conservation drainage technology, which

retrofits existing tile drainage systems to reduce nitrogen-rich field runoff that degrades the water quality of the Minnesota River.

The CURE office is Moving!

A main street Montevideo building formerly owned by John & Mary Sellner, Ron Potter & Trudy Flowers has been donated to CURE. Over the long run, this generous gift will save us money we now spend paying rent, but in the short term we have some increased expenses for new phones, wiring and minor remodeling. We are asking our supporters to consider making an extra contribution at this time to help pay for these expenses. For more information, contact the CURE staff at 1-877-269-2873.

We hope you will attend our New Office Open House to be held on Wednesday, Dec. 10th 2008 from 2 to 6 p.m. at our new office: 117 S. 1st Street (Main Street) Montevideo. Thanks!

If you're burning garbage, you're making poison The following article comes from the Citizen Stream Monitoring Program's "Stream Reader" newsletter for the Fall of 2008. The problem: garbage has changed in the last 50 years. Today's garbage contains plastics, dyes, and other chemicals. Eventually the chemicals get into the food we eat. Eating contaminated food can cause serious health problems, like cancer. What can you do to help? Don't burn garbage. Use recycling and garbage services or drop-sites and encourage your neighbors to do the same. To find more information about local recycling and disposal options at home or at the cabin, call your county solid waste or environmental office or visit [www.pca.state.mn.us/burnbarrel](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/burnbarrel) for contact information for all 87 counties in Minnesota.

The Ripple Effect: Hydrologists Of The Past The following article comes from Julie Goehring of the Red River Basin Commission.

When space scientists study distant planets to ascertain the possibilities of life forms, they search first of all for signs of water. For while some forms of life can survive without oxygen, none can survive without water. Indeed, water comprises from 60 - 80 percent of every living cell - and all biological processes begin and end with H<sub>2</sub>O.

Our own planet is a superb specimen of this biological life source, with 70 percent of its surface covered with water. In addition, water-vapor clouds provide water to every continent in a constant cycling of the earth's waters through evaporation and precipitation.

For the entire article go to <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/hydrologistsofpast.pdf>

Job Opportunities:

Clearwater SWCD District Manager

This position provides technical assistance to landowners, organizations, agencies, and other units of government under policies established by the Clearwater Soil & Water Conservation District for the protection and enhancement of the natural resources in Clearwater County. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/clearwaterdm.pdf>

#### Water Quality Coordinator

The Southeast Minnesota Water Resources Board is seeking a Water Quality Coordinator. A successful candidate will have experience in grant writing, managing multiple projects and a good understanding of the environmental issues facing water quality in Southeast Minnesota. The candidate must be self-directed and able to take general environmental concepts and direction from the Board and translate those ideas into a detailed plans and projects encompassing the 10-county Southeast Minnesota region. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/watercoordinator.pdf>

Engineering Technician with Impack 6 Joint Powers Board This is a fulltime position to assist Soil and Water Conservation Districts in east central Minnesota with engineering projects. Responsibilities will include surveying, design, plan preparation using AutoCAD and Eagle Point Software, and construction inspection of projects. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/engineeringtechnician.pdf>

Wabasha County Seeks Water Plan Coordinator/Open Feedlot Assistant The Wabasha Soil and Water Conservation District is seeking a Water Plan coordinator & Open feedlot assistant. Duties range from being responsible for the Natural Resource Block Grant (NRBG) programs, Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) program and provide assistance for the open feedlot program. Applicants must submit a completed SWCD application, resume, and cover letter for employment. Applications may be picked up, or by calling 651-565-4673 ext. 4. Individuals selected from interviews will be contacted by the District Manager by phone number provided by applicant. Application deadline is Dec. 10, 2008. For more information <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/wabashawaterplanner.pdf>

#### Events:

November 15th (Saturday) is the Web of Life, Way of Life: Exploring Solidarity with Earth Conference at the School Sisters of Notre Dame Mankato Provincial House Conference Center from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Registration is required by November 10th by calling 507-389-4272 or sending an email to [lcoons@ssndmankato.org](mailto:lcoons@ssndmankato.org)<<mailto:lcoons@ssndmankato.org>>. Cost for the event is \$20 or \$15 for students. Look for morning coffee and locally grown lunch. This event is sponsored by Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry – a ministry of the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

November 15th (Saturday) is the Ney Nature Center's Annual Meeting starting at 9:00 a.m. with coffee and rolls. Guest Speaker Bob Douglas will be giving a presentation on "What Log Cabins Can Tell Us." The Ney Nature Center is located across the Minnesota River east from Henderson (2 miles) on State Hwy 19.

November 17th (Monday) is the Minnesota River Board Meeting starting at 9:00 a.m. at the Arlington Community Center. A number of guests will be talking including Senator Dennis Fredrickson, Tim Krohn and John Cross of the Mankato Free Press and Sean Bloomfield and Colton Witte about their river trip from Chaska to the Hudson Bay.

November 18th (Tuesday) is a Minneapolis to Hudson Bay in 49 Days Presentation at 7:00 p.m. at the Belgrade Methodist Church in North Mankato. Colton Witte and Sean Bloomfield paddled up the Minnesota River, down the Red River and all the way to the Hudson Bay this past summer.

November 20th (Thursday) is "Writing for Social Change" Panel Discussion from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon at the United Church of Christ (212 North 4th Street) in Montevideo. Sponsored by Clean Up the River Environment (CURE), the panel discussion will include Joe Amato, Joe Paddock, Florence Dacey, Jim Van der Pol and Athena Kildegaard and moderated by Patrick Moore. For more information go to [www.curemnr.org](http://www.curemnr.org)<<http://www.curemnr.org/>>

November 25th (Tuesday) is the "Voyage down the Minnesota River" presentation starting at 7:00 p.m. at the New Ulm Public Library (17 N. Broadway Street). Join Tim Krohn and John Cross of the Mankato Free Press for an amazing look at their journey down the Minnesota River this past summer and the interesting people they met along the way. This event is co-sponsored by the Regional River History Center of New Ulm and the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance. For more information contact Scott Kudelka at 507-389-2304 or by email at [scott.kudelka@mnsu.edu](mailto:scott.kudelka@mnsu.edu)<<mailto:scott.kudelka@mnsu.edu>>

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

#### Water Quality Articles

Schlueter -- Apple lovers have friend in University of Minnesota<<http://webstar.agrinews.com/agrinews/299479401380566.bsp>> (Agri News). Apple lovers may not know that roughly about 80 percent of apple varieties are developed at the University of Minnesota.

Crafty fixes can help renters retain heat<<http://www.mndaily.com/2008/10/26/crafty-fixes-can-help-renters-retain-heat>> (Minnesota Daily). With nighttime temperatures now dipping below freezing, student renters will be turning up the heat. Though a Minneapolis ordinance requires landlords to heat dwellings to 68 degrees, no law requires them - or tenants - to be efficient about it.

Opponents of Eyota ethanol plant use filibuster<[http://www.postbulletin.com/newsmanager/templates/localnews\\_story.asp?z=2&a=368501](http://www.postbulletin.com/newsmanager/templates/localnews_story.asp?z=2&a=368501)> (Rochester Post Bulletin). Eyota residents opposed to the proposed MinnErgy LLC ethanol plant voiced their concerns on Tuesday during a Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Citizens Board meeting, which lasted more than seven hours.

Powerline project report presented to county board<<http://www.nujournal.com/page/content.detail/id/503623.html?nav=5009>> (New Ulm Journal). Cap X2020, which seeks to build electrical transmission lines across southern Minnesota, is making its way through the long chain of state regulations, a project representative told Brown County commissioners on their Tuesday meeting.

GFW studies possibility of wind power<<http://www.nujournal.com/page/content.detail/id/503625.html?nav=5009>> (New Ulm Journal). Wind power may be coming to a school district near you. Gibbon Fairfax Winthrop (GFW) School District Superintendent Stephen Malone, High School Principal Jeff Bertrang and a high school science student comprise a wind team that is studying the viability of wind power for the district.

No deal on Eyota plant ... yet, MPCA panel tells ethanol firm<[http://www.startribune.com/local/33478224.html?elr=KArks:DCiUHc3E7\\_V\\_nDaycUiD3aPc:\\_Yyc:aUU](http://www.startribune.com/local/33478224.html?elr=KArks:DCiUHc3E7_V_nDaycUiD3aPc:_Yyc:aUU)> (Minneapolis Star Tribune). A controversial ethanol plant proposed for southeastern Minnesota will likely require more study, according to a decision Tuesday by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Citizens' Board.

Tradewinds window shades ramp up the eco-factor<[http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/homegarden/33448404.html?elr=KArks7PYDiaK7DUvckD\\_V\\_jEyhD:UiD3aPc:\\_Yyc:aUU](http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/homegarden/33448404.html?elr=KArks7PYDiaK7DUvckD_V_jEyhD:UiD3aPc:_Yyc:aUU)> (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Tradewinds, a new line of window shades from Graber, has notched the manufacturer's eco-factor a bit higher.

Scholarships available to organic and specialty crop growers<[http://www.agweek.com/articles/?id=1401&article\\_id=60106&property\\_id=2](http://www.agweek.com/articles/?id=1401&article_id=60106&property_id=2)> (AgWeekly). Specialty crop and organic producers in Minnesota can apply for scholarships to offset the cost of farm business management classes through a program offered by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) and several partners. Applications are now being accepted for 2009.

Incentives added for CRP options<[http://www.minnesotaoutdoornews.com/articles/2008/10/30/top\\_news/news03.txt](http://www.minnesotaoutdoornews.com/articles/2008/10/30/top_news/news03.txt)> (Outdoor News). New USDA policies intended to promote certain aspects of the Conservation Reserve Program are set to take effect early next month. Incentives have been approved for practices aimed at wetlands protection and enhancement, according to Greg Anderson, agricultural program specialist for the USDA's Farm Service Agency in St. Paul.

Coal plant supporters pressure wind supporters<[http://www.startribune.com/business/33549879.html?elr=KArks:DCiU1OiP:DiiUiD3aPc:\\_Yyc:aULPQL7PQLanch07DiU](http://www.startribune.com/business/33549879.html?elr=KArks:DCiU1OiP:DiiUiD3aPc:_Yyc:aULPQL7PQLanch07DiU)> (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The latest squall to blow through Minnesota energy developers is a letter to wind projects in the western part of the state -- from the agency that controls the power grid -- saying it would be in their best interests to support a new coal plant in South Dakota.

Farm chemicals can indirectly hammer frogs<[http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/38161/title/Farm\\_chemicals\\_can\\_indirectly\\_hammer\\_frogs\\_](http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/38161/title/Farm_chemicals_can_indirectly_hammer_frogs_)> (Science News). Atrazine, the second-most widely used agricultural herbicide in America, can pose a toxic double whammy to tadpoles. The weed killer not only increases the likelihood that massive concentrations of flatworms will thrive in the amphibians' ponds, a new study reports, but also diminishes the ability of larval frogs to fight infection with these parasites.

Golden Gophers' new home goes green<[http://www.kare11.com/news/news\\_article.aspx?storyid=528291&catid=2](http://www.kare11.com/news/news_article.aspx?storyid=528291&catid=2)> (Kare 11 News). When you think of the new Gopher football stadium, you're probably excited about the location, the field or the view. Chances are you haven't given much thought to storm water runoff.

Minn. farmers harvesting largest corn crop ever<<http://kstp.com/article/stories/s643091.shtml?cat=1>> (Associated Press). The U.S Department of Agriculture predicts Minnesota will harvest its largest corn crop in history. And the United States will enjoy its second-largest corn harvest ever.

The not-so-secret life of a beekeeper<[http://www.minnpost.com/from\\_our\\_partners/2008/11/03/4234/umn\\_news\\_the\\_not-so-secret\\_life\\_of\\_a\\_beekeeper](http://www.minnpost.com/from_our_partners/2008/11/03/4234/umn_news_the_not-so-secret_life_of_a_beekeeper)> (MinnPost). Spent five minutes with Kevin Williams and you'll know why kids love him. Williams, the curator of education at the University of Minnesota's Bell Museum of Natural History, is bubbly and playful, and keeper of honeybees, scorpions, tarantulas, cockroaches, and other varieties of creepy crawlies-or "really pretty bugs," depending on whom you ask.

Scientists delve into solar technology challenges<<http://www.mndaily.com/2008/11/01/scientists-delve-solar-technology-challenges>> (Minnesota Daily). Imagine the next time your home or apartment building needs sprucing up, it could be redecorated with a paint that would harness the sun's energy and turn it into electricity.

Fuel Tank Spilled In Backyard, Left For Months<<http://wcco.com/local/fuel.tank.spill.2.854608.html>> (WCCO TV). A Twin Cities couple is fighting to get a big mess out of their backyard. Hundreds of gallons of fuel oil spilled outside their house in White Beaver Lake 10 months ago, and the mess is still there.

At least 11 injured in anhydrous ammonia leak<[http://www.startribune.com/local/33744944.html?elr=KArks:DCiUHc3E7\\_V\\_nDaycUiacyKUU](http://www.startribune.com/local/33744944.html?elr=KArks:DCiUHc3E7_V_nDaycUiacyKUU)> (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Authorities say at least 11 people were injured south of Moorhead when anhydrous ammonia leaked from a tank being pulled by a farmer.

Minn. residents looking for help with heating costs<[http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2008/11/03/heat\\_help/](http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2008/11/03/heat_help/)> (Minnesota Public Radio). The number of people seeking help with energy bills is up sharply this year over last year.

Rivers so often define our world. Is there a better book about America than Huckleberry Finn's journey on the Mississippi? Is there a better way of seeing London than taking a boat down the Thames to Greenwich? Some of the greatest human adventures have been along rivers; up the Orinoco to find El Dorado, or the search for the source of the Nile. Millions of Indians keep bottles of Ganges water in their homes, like holy water. We romance on the Blue Danube and the Seine and fight over the Jordan and the rivers of Babylon. – Fred Pearce, *When Rivers Run Dry*

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: **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

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

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