

### **Coalition for a Clean Minnesota River (CCMR) banquet**

On Saturday evening a large group of people came together for the annual Minnesota River banquet sponsored by CCMR of New Ulm. Executive Director Scott Sparlin and the rest of the CCMR organization did a great job feeding us, providing plenty of liquid refreshments and highlighting some of the important issues surrounding the Minnesota River. After an enjoyable dinner, people were able to move around to different tables to talk with experts on a wide range of topics including the proposed Big Stone II Coal Plant, the Living Systems Project, MN River Fisheries and River Blast.

### **Noresland/New Sweden History Book**

A history of the Norseland/New Sweden Communities is being published as part of the Norseland Community Sesquicentennial celebration to be held June 21-22, 2008. *Norseland: Where the Big Woods Meets the Prairie* is a hard cover, 416 page book of history and more. Over 100 writers have contributed 329 articles and 445 photos. The book is an important record of the area's history and will be a family heirloom. Advance purchases of this book can be made by sending a \$30 check to: Norseland 150, 37658 410th Street, St. Peter, Minnesota 56082. Books will be available June 21 at Norseland Welcome Center (Anthony's Feed Service) or they can be mailed. For delivery by mail, send the purchase price plus an additional \$5 for postage and handling. Make checks payable to Norseland 150. Contact person: Judy D. Hanson, 507-246-5388 (Replica of front cover of book attached.)

### **Minnesota Nation's 3rd-Largest Wind Producer**

Minnesota has overtaken Iowa as the nation's third-largest producer of wind energy, behind Texas and California. The American Wind Energy Association said Minnesota added 405 megawatts of wind power production last year and had 1,299 megawatts of wind energy at the end of 2007. That edged Iowa's 1,271 megawatts. The organization said U.S. wind power capacity is now about 16,800 megawatts -- enough to serve 4.5 million households with electricity. Under legislation passed last year, Minnesota set a target of generating 25 percent of its energy from renewable sources such as wind by 2025. (WCCO TV)

**Minnesota now No. 3 for wind power.** Minnesota added 405 megawatts of wind power last year to overtake Iowa as the third-largest producer of wind energy, behind Texas and California, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/mnthirdwindpower.pdf>

### **New gas-to-energy plant will help power Glencoe**

Glencoe will soon receive nearly 25 percent of its electricity from a plentiful renewable energy source just a few miles down the road: the Spruce Ridge landfill. If all goes according to plan, Waste Management's newest gas-to-energy plant could come online as early as next week, according to the firm's district manager, Mark Reinert. The plant's commissioning will realize a long-shared vision for both Waste Management and the Glencoe Power and Light Commission. Construction on the plant broke ground in early September, but the utility's general manager, Collin Engebretsen, said, "This has been ongoing since 2000 or 2001. There wasn't enough gas volume before to make it economically feasible." The gas volume is now sufficient to power three engines and generators, with a fourth planned as volume increases. Engebretsen said the landfill gas-to-energy power is also more competitive with wind energy now, because high demand and low supply for wind generators has pushed prices up to about 5.5 or six cents per kilowatt-hour. The Waste Management plant will start off at about 4.5 cents per kilowatt-hour. (April 2, 2008 - 2:26pm — Jorge Sosa Hutchinson Leader)

### **Soybean groups, 'U' reconcile after study**

MINNEAPOLIS -- Two groups of soybean growers have patched up their differences with the University of Minnesota over a study on biofuels and global warming. The Minnesota Soybean Growers Association suspended about \$1.5 million in annual grants to the university in February

to protest that study by university scientists. The study said that dedicating large amounts of land to grow soybeans and other food crops for fuel would eventually change the landscape and worsen global warming. Jim Palmer is executive director of both the Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council and Minnesota Soybean Growers Association. He says that last month about 30 representatives of the groups had a productive meeting with University President Robert Bruininks and other leaders. He says communication between the soybean growers and the university has improved. Palmer says it was an argument among friends that just became too public. (4/4/2008 Associated Press Rochester Post-Bulletin)

#### **Editorial: Turning off vending lights is a symbolic step**

The \$9,600 that Mayo Clinic will save annually by turning out the lights on its Pepsi machines isn't a drop in the bucket -- it's a lot less than that, seen strictly in financial terms. But hey, it's a start, and we hope there will be a trickle-down effect. With thousands of Mayo employees walking past and perhaps purchasing beverages from the darkened machines each day, perhaps a message will be sent. Maybe people will be more conscious about energy use in their own homes, and will even teach their kids to turn off lights when they leave a room. This line of thinking is in keeping with the worldwide campaign known as Earth Hour, which on Saturday resulted in hour long voluntary blackouts in parts of major cities in Australia, southeast Asia, Europe and the United States, including Chicago, Phoenix and San Francisco. Obviously, Mayo can't join such efforts -- surgeons and medical equipment tend to prefer a steady supply of electricity. As a long-term solution to our global energy problem, efficiency, not blackouts, will play a leading role. So, if dimming the lights on soda machines is the next step in a journey of 1,000 miles, then so be it. 4/4/2008 9:00:42 AM

#### **Ney Nature Center Spring Fling Benefit Dinner & Silent Auction**

On April 11<sup>th</sup> (Friday), the Ney Nature Center is holding a spring fling with catered appetizers, dinner and desert. Guest speakers are Art and Barb Straub – “Spring Arrives in the Valley.” In addition the program includes a Silent Auction and raffle tickets. The special raffle item is a “Hand Carved Wooden Rocking Horse.” This benefit and silent auction will be held at the Ney Nature Center two miles east of Henderson on Highway 19, turn right at the top of the hill onto Nature Center Lane. Space is limited. The cost is \$30.00 for members and \$35.00 for non-members. For more information contact Becky Pollack at the Ney Nature Center, 507-248-3474.

#### **Minnehaha Creek Watershed District is hiring a Water Quality Assistant/Technician.**

See the job posting at

<http://www.minnehahacreek.org/documents/JOBDESCRIPTIONLakeWaterQualityTechnician.pdf>

Please contact Dr. Udai Singh for more information at 952-471-0590x228 or [usingh@minnehahacreek.org](mailto:usingh@minnehahacreek.org)

#### **Goodhue Soil and Water Conservation District intern position**

The Goodhue SWCD is hiring a summer intern to focus on water quality monitoring and watershed assessment in the Little Cannon River Watershed of Goodhue County. Intern will conduct pollution assessments on feedlots, collect environmental grab samples, conduct stream surveys, assist with data analysis and interpretation, and assist district staff with field work when needed. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/goodhueintern.pdf>

#### **College Carbon Buster Awards of Excellence**

United States Senator Amy Klobuchar is presenting Carbon Buster Awards to Minnesotans who are making a difference in the fight against global climate change. The Senator is asking college students across Minnesota to use pictures, essays or video to show what they're doing to raise awareness and combat global warming. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/collegecarbonbuster.pdf>

#### **Events:**

April 13<sup>th</sup> (Sunday) is the program **Water Presentation in Natural Settings** from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Holy Spirit Retreat Center, Mankato. For more information:  
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/holyspiritpresentation.pdf>

April 15<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday) is the **Minnesota River Watershed Alliance Quarterly Meeting** at the New Century Charter School in Hutchinson. A social hour begins at 6:00 p.m. with food and drink, and the regular meeting at 7:00 p.m.

April 17<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) is the “**Rain Gardens for Water Quality**” presentation at 7:00 p.m. at the Ney Nature Center outside of Henderson. For more information,  
<http://mrbdc.mnsu.edu/calendar/pdfs/raingardenney.pdf>

April 19<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) is an Earth Day event and Youth Energy Summit (YES) Awards Ceremony at the Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information,  
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/prairiewoodsearthday.pdf>

### **Water Quality Articles:**

**Cities struggle with aging sewer systems.** While most Minnesotans don't need to think about what happens after they leave the powder room, there are many in Minnesota for whom sewage is a growing worry. Many small communities have outdated sewage systems that need replacing. But the high cost of such a project is delaying improvements. Many of these outdated systems are “living on borrowed time,” as one analyst put it,  
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/citiesstruggleagingsewersystem.pdf>

**Judge: DNR not doing enough to protect lynx from trapping.** A federal judge ruled on Monday that the DNR is violating the Endangered Species Act because it allows trapping and snaring within the range of the Canada lynx,  
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/dnrnotdoingenoughlynxtrapping.pdf>

**Ethanol benefiting farmers.** The ethanol plant owned by Otter Tail Ag Enterprises will use 19.5 million bushels of corn a year and this will mean an economic impact of close to \$110 million annually in Otter Tail County, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/ethanolbenefitingfarmers.pdf>

**Green grocers – Which area stores recycle plastic bags?** In Fairmont, two of the four supermarkets recycle the plastic bags with a third looking into this practice,  
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/greengrocers.pdf>

**Legislature sends Pawlenty bonding bill.** The Minnesota House and Senate are sending Gov. Pawlenty a bonding bill despite his objections about its price tag,  
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/legislaturepawlentybondingbill.pdf>

**States sue EPA over inaction on greenhouse gas emissions from cars.** Minnesota was among 17 states to file a petition accusing the EPA of stalling after a U.S. Supreme ruling giving the agency power to regulate emissions,  
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/mnlawsuitagainstepa.pdf>

**Minnesota Valley: The biggest refuge no one ever heard of.** The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife area is right under our nose - - across from the airport and the MOA. It operates on a tight budget, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/mnriverrefugenohasheard.pdf>

**New trail ambassadors will be ‘eyes and ears’ for DNR.** ATV enthusiasts who ride on public lands in Minnesota may see something different on the trails this summer. State-trained volunteers wearing florescent yellow vests will be on the trails, to monitor trail activity and encourage rides to follow the rules, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/newtrailambassadors.pdf>

**Have an old computer or TV?** Recycling drive coming soon. An ambitious electronics recycling drive is scheduled for April 11 – 12 in the Twin Cities and expected to be the largest in state history, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/recyclingdrivecomingsoon.pdf>

**Recycling program puts old term papers to good use.** At the University of Minnesota the recycling program includes cardboard, glass, cans, paper, construction materials, bikes, refrigerators and nearly any other product discarded on campus, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/recyclingprogramoldtermpapers.pdf>

**Buying phosphorus credits would help city meet pollution requirements.** Until Willmar's new wastewater treatment facility begins operation in 2010, the city is proposing to buy phosphorus credits from another city in the Minnesota River basin to comply with new phosphorus reduction requirements, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/willmarphosphoruscredits.pdf>

**Apogee is aglow over new glass.** A subsidiary of the Bloomington-based firm brings its CrystalGray line of energy-saving glass to market, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/apogeeaglownewglass.pdf>

**Bike/Walk Twin Cities.** Beginning next year, bike/walk street will appear in Minneapolis. Federal dollars are being used to redesign some Twin Cities residential streets to favor bicyclists and walkers, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/bikewalktwincities.pdf>

**On climate change, energy, bishop looking to Legislature, Willmar.** The Rev. Jon Anderson found himself in some "real dog fights" as part of the 56-member, Minnesota Advisory Committee on Climate Change, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/climatechangelookinglegislature.pdf>

**Defending E85 study.** Recent studies on the life-cycle of E85 versus gasoline show there is no carbon benefit of most ethanol forms, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/defendinge85study.pdf>

**Our View: EPA should stop stalling.** According to the Mankato Free Press editorial, "Arnold has the right idea. Use force to get some action," <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/epashouldstopstalling.pdf>

**Expanding wind energy across Minnesota.** While the Buffalo Ridge has served as a shining example of the potential for wind energy, the state of Minnesota wants to see more expansion throughout the state, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/expandingwindenergyacrossmn.pdf>

**High ammonia levels found in Iowa water supply.** Spreading fertilizer on frozen ground has led to record ammonia levels in the state's water supplies according to state environmental officials, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/highammonialevelsiowawater.pdf>

**Lawsuit to challenge phosphorus rule.** The Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities plans to sue the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency over new rule limiting phosphorous runoff, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/lawsuitchallengephosphorusrule.pdf>

**LED streetlights: Bright idea for St. Paul?** The city is testing them to see whether they can cut energy use and maintenance costs, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/ledstreetlightsbrightidea.pdf>

**Minnesota River captures pieces of history.** It was billed as a talk about the Minnesota River. But it perhaps should have been billed as story hour, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/mnrivercapturespiecesofhistory.pdf>

**UMM in D.C.: Life on Morris campus is 'both renewable and sustainable.'** University of Minnesota, Morris Chancellor Jacqueline Johnson was among three leading educators who

described the way American colleges and their students are leading the fight against global climate change, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/morriscampusrenewablesustainable.pdf>

**3M submits plans to Minnesota for cleaning up PFCs in the east metro.** Call it the \$56 million spill. That's the maximum the 3M Co. will pay because its chemicals leaked into Washington County's water, as tallied last week from state and company documents, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/3msubmitsplansforcleaninguppfcs.pdf>

**Communities wrestle with the menace of plastic bags.** Plastic grocery bags are a big environmental problem. They take up space in landfills and require lots of fuel to make. As a result some countries are banning them or taxing them, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/communitieswrestlewithplasticbags.pdf>

**E85 promoted at Cosmos station.** The Meeker County Corn Growers Association promoted E85 at a local gas station, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/e85promotedatcosmosstation.pdf>

**Green industry stands ready to stimulate the economy.** According to organizations like the Land Stewardship Project it is time to utilize green resources like the wind, the sun and restaurant cooking oils to stimulate the economy, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/greenindustrystimulateeconomy.pdf>

*The scarcest resource is not oil, metals, clean air, capital, labour, or technology. It is our willingness to listen to each other and learn from each other and to seek the truth rather than seek to be right.* – Donella Meadows, environmental scientist, teacher and writer

*Children of a culture born in a water-rich environment, we have never really learned how important water is to us. We understand it, but we do not respect it.* – William Ashworth, Nor Any Drop to Drink, 1982

**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>**

Thanks,

Scott

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