

### October 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting Notes - 2010 "Clean up the MN River" Focus

At the October 20<sup>th</sup> Minnesota River Watershed Alliance meeting, the facilitator Audrey Arner broke the group up into small groups of three to come up with ideas for the 2010 focus as a way to start the discussion on what we would want to work on as the Watershed Alliance. She told everyone to think about the possibilities and use our imagination to overcome some of the financial constraints. The group will pick the 2010 focus issue at the January 19, 2010 meeting. Audrey also highlighted Jim Schafer's comment, "I want to leave more than I take."

The list of ideas the individual groups came up with:

- Continue with MN River Friendly Label
- Compare and study land use types for 50 feet setback along waterways and county enforcement process
- Assemble local groups on guided canoe trips.
- Mark bridge crossings with signs and identification along with other watercourses including ditches and cool spots
- Keep meeting quarterly – networking and speakers.
- Communicate Lake Pepin TMDL – a big deal – Act as a bridge between landowners and Lake Pepin folks
- Roll out the River Patches
- Participate with Minnesota River documentary and interactive web site
- Carry one another's messages
- Promote the national heritage area status
- Drinking water – keeping it clean
- Host Governor's Fishing Opener and highlight possibilities

### 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Winter Solstice Celebration!

The Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry will host the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual **Winter Solstice Celebration** on **Monday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009**. During these hectic days, the public is invited to participate in an evening of simplicity! We'll share a simple meal, seasonal reflection and a bonfire to welcome the return of the sun to the northern hemisphere. Sliding scale donation \$5-\$10. Everyone is welcome. Please RSVP by Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> to 507-389-4272.

The Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry is located at 170 Good Counsel Drive in Mankato. For more information about either program call Lisa Coons at the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry at 389-4272 or e-mail [lcoons@ssndmankato.org](mailto:lcoons@ssndmankato.org). The Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry is an educational ministry of the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

### Challenges of LID Stormwater Conference at the Minneapolis Marriott Southwest

The upcoming *Overcoming Technical and Policy Challenges of LID Symposium and Exposition*, on January 20, 2010 is an important event for local, state, and federal government administrators and regulators, developers, builders, contractors land use/development planners, civil/environmental engineers, landscape architects, environmental professionals/consultants, environmentalists and interested citizens.

This LID conference and exposition is packed full of information to help you understand LID design, performance, policies, economics, benefits, and operations with a special emphasis on the Great Lakes region. Forester Media, Inc. will be hosting the conference on January 20, 2010 at the Minneapolis Marriott Southwest.

**Early Bird Registration Fee is \$175.00** Registration Fee Each After 1/11/2010: \$195.00. Registration fee includes lunch, refreshment breaks, and exhibit hall access. Conference activities will include three concurrent technical sessions:

1. How to apply LID to the unique geology, hydrology, and climate of the Great Lakes region will emphasize the economic benefits, ecological goals, planning techniques, design principles, analytical methodologies, and implementation strategies of LID.
2. Integrating Stormwater Management into Code will detail information on planning and zoning codes common to Minnesota Municipalities and their link to emerging water requirements.
3. Before Monitoring is a complete guide to actions that are necessary before beginning a monitoring program for LID practices.

Please relax and get prepared for this special learning experience and sharing opportunity.

*I encourage you to visit <http://www.foresterevents.com/> for additional information, to register for this event, and to share that knowledge with those who you think will benefit from this conference. Respectfully, Scott Nania; Forester Events - Program Director; [snania@forester.net](mailto:snania@forester.net); 805-682-1300 Ext. 136*

### **Statewide Endocrine Disrupting Compound Monitoring Study, 2007 - 2008**

The Statewide Endocrine Disrupting Compound Monitoring Study, 2007 – 2008 has been issued by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. This report contains the results of a state-wide study on the presence and effects of endocrine disrupting compounds, pharmaceuticals, pesticides, and other contaminants normally associated with wastewater in Minnesota's lakes and rivers. The study was completed through a cooperative effort between MPCA, St. Cloud State University, and the U.S Geological survey.

In this study, commissioned by Minnesota lawmakers in the 2007 Legislative Session, twelve lakes and four rivers in Minnesota were sampled for the presence and concentrations of a diverse group of EDCs and other chemicals in surface water and sediment. In addition, caged and wild-caught fish from these bodies of water were examined for evidence of endocrine disruption and environmental stress. The lakes and rivers were selected to represent a wide range of land use and development. Two lakes without development were selected as reference lakes. Three rivers in south-central Minnesota and one in western Minnesota were also included in the study.

Several contaminants, including hormones and pharmaceuticals, were detected in many of the lakes and rivers sampled for this study. The most frequently detected compounds in the water were:

- Bisphenol-A (82 percent of the lakes, 57 percent of the river)
- Acetaminophen (A common pain medication) (50 percent of all samples)
- 4-octylphenol diethoxylate (an ingredient in some detergents) (36 percent of the lakes, 71 percent of the rivers).

To see the whole report go to: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/publications/tdr-g1-08.pdf>

### **Out of a Jam**

During a period of unemployment Sandy Kuhlers, rural Fairmont, found a way to get herself out of a jam, pun intended, by selling ... jam. Kuhlers, known as "The Jam Lady," made a profit selling homemade jams and jellies at a friend's garage sale. Following that success she launched Simply Homemade, what has become a virtually full-time venture.

Kuhlers left the traditional workforce to raise her children and made her first small batch of jams for her family around 1988. A few years later a friend was having a garage sale and invited the unemployed Kuhlers to bring some items of her own to sell. "I had nothing really, but some stuff I had made," she explained. "I made about \$100 in two days on things I made from home."

Spurred by the prospect of bringing in some income to help with the household expenses, while at the same time doing something she enjoyed, Kuhlers decided to take her products to the local farmers' market. "I did

great there. I made about \$500 the first year and it took off rather quickly from there.” Participating in the market was a bold move for her she said, “But I like to make people happy through food so...”

Making and selling her products is a sustainable venture. “It sustains my home, helps make the bills and people love it,” she laughed. Kuhlers cannot supply herself with present demand. She grows her own gooseberries and some rhubarb, but most other fruits and berries she needs come from area growers. The demand for Simply Homemade products opened up new markets for local growers, including specialty growers who supply her with organic elderberries.

She still participates in the local farmers’ market, but her horizons continue to broaden. The nearly 30 items she sells can be found at about 20 retailers including Hy-Vee markets in Fairmont, Northern Iowa and Nebraska, St. Peter Food Co-op and other outlets around Minnesota. And Kuhlers travels to craft shows where she enjoys a favorable reception.

“I sell quite a few (jars) when I pick the right one,” Kuhlers said of the shows. “I sell to a lot of health conscious people who want real sugar, gluten-free and hand made” items. Among top sellers are her hot pepper jellies and strawberry-rhubarb jams. For a complete list of products visit [www.simplyhomemadefoods.com](http://www.simplyhomemadefoods.com).

For most of the year making her product is very full-time – to the tune of about 10,000 separate jars. As a matter of fact, Kuhlers has a helper that works with her when she cans, labels and stores her jams and jellies.

For others looking to duplicate her success Kuhlers said it could be a reasonable pursuit, but warns that it takes a lot of time to harvest, make, deliver, label and do the bookkeeping necessary to be profitable.

“I’ve made a profit, it makes me happy and it’s worth doing. There is enough to cover bills when we need to,” she said. “It replaces the need for a full-time job outside of the home for sure.”

Rural Advantage is a nonprofit corporation based in Fairmont, Minnesota. Their mission is to promote the connections between agriculture, the environment and rural communities in order to improve ecological health, economic viability and rural vitality. Their work centers around efforts to reduce agricultural nonpoint source pollution with major programming focused on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Crop Initiative, ECoPayPack development and building the Madelia Model concept. Contact them at 507-238-5449 or visit their website at <http://www.ruraladvantage.org/> for more information.

### **WaterFront Bulletin – December 2009 Issue**

The December issue will soon be posted at: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/tmdl/waterfront/index.html>

#### **Funding Updates**

- MPCA awards Clean Water grants
- MPCA awards federal stimulus grants
- EPA seeking grant apps for environmental ed

#### **Project Updates**

- Comment period open until Dec. 23 for Six Lakes TMDL
- MPCA approves implementation plans for Lower Wild Rice, Lower Cannon rivers

#### **Worth Noting**

- Minnesota River Trends report a mixed story

### **Xcel providing rebates for customers who install solar systems – Minnesota Public Radio**

by [Toni Randolph](#),

St. Paul, Minn. — Xcel Energy will provide rebates to business and residential customers who install solar systems that meet efficiency requirements.

It's one of several new programs Xcel is offering to meet state requirements for reducing the amount of energy the utility sells. Crystal Manik of Xcel Energy says the utility will also offer residential customers energy audits and free installation of some energy-efficiency improvements.

"So really these programs are about providing them with a variety of options," Manik said. "If they're looking to do something as simple as change out a shower head in their home or something, that's more complicated."

Xcel says the programs will save enough energy to power 138,000 homes for a year. Minnesota requires utilities to reduce their sales by one-and-a-half percent every year. (December 7, 2009)

## **Job Announcements:**

### **Local Food Program Intern**

The Minnesota Project is hiring a local food program intern. The intern will help design and implement our new project to provide trainings on using local foods for chefs and college campus buyers in Minnesota, and to create a written manual about using local foods in food service establishments. For more information: Annalisa Hultberg; Coordinator, Heartland Food Network; The Minnesota Project; [ahultberg@mnproject.org](mailto:ahultberg@mnproject.org); 651-789-3327

Full job description: <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/localfoodintern.pdf>

## **Events:**

December 11<sup>th</sup> (Friday) is the **annual meeting of the Mankato Area Environmentalists** starting at 3:30 p.m. in the small conference room at the Blue Earth County Library. The primary business will be to elect officers and board members for 2010 and, time permitting, set goals for the new year.

December 17<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) is the **Energy Conservation in Minnesota: Meeting the Challenge forum** from 12 noon to 4 p.m. at A.G. Hill Ballroom, Kaglin Commons, Macalester College (1600 Grand Ave.) St. Paul. Forum presenters will address the Conservation Improvement Program (CIP), which mandates an annual 1.5 percent annual energy savings goal. All Minnesota utilities will be expected to meet this goal beginning in 2010. The cost per person is \$30 for MEI members and \$60 for non-members. For more information <http://www.mn-ei.org/events/upcoming.html#energy>

**Check out additional upcoming events and workshops on the Minnesota River Calendar at:**

<http://mrbdc.mnsu.edu/calendar/index.html>

## **Water Quality Articles:**

[Poison planned to keep Asian carp from Great Lakes](#) (Associated Press). Illinois environmental officials will dump a toxic chemical into a nearly 6-mile stretch of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal Wednesday to keep the voracious Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes while an electrical barrier is turned off for maintenance.

[Pheasant season: the best yet to come?](#) (Minnesota Outdoor News). By most accounts, the pheasant-hunting season in Minnesota thus far has been a slow one: thank the weather, and subsequent standing corn.

[Waconia ballroom septic system to shut down](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). It will be converted to a holding tank while permanent solution is considered.

[Scott County to remove 100 sites from farming program](#) (Associated Press). One Minnesota county is going after landowners who are benefiting from agriculture tax breaks but don't use their property for farming.

[Climate classwork in Copenhagen](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). A delegation from the Will Steger Foundation and Apple Valley high school students will attend the annual U.N. summit.

[Cities sign up for guaranteed savings](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Some metro cities are getting a guarantee from contractors that improving public buildings is win-win-win.

[Fears mount over giant carp reaching Great Lakes](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Fears that giant, voracious species of carp will get into the Great Lakes and wipe out other fish have led to rising demands that the government close the waterway connecting the lakes to the Mississippi River - an unprecedented step that could disrupt the movement of millions of tons of iron ore, coal, grain and other goods.

[Study: Aspen warm to extra CO2 in air](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The trees are growing faster thanks to the increase in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere linked to global warming.

[A guy and a truck provide recycling pickup in Bemidji](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). The City of Bemidji used to provide a curbside recycling service. But the 10-year-old program got the axe in 2007 because of budget cuts.

[Citizen's League: More public involvement needed to solve Minnesota's water pollution problem](#) (Twin Cities Daily Planet). The Minnesota PCA has made valiant efforts at testing the state's lakes and rivers for contaminants, and what they've found isn't pretty.

[Minn. woman sues Cargill for \\$100M over tainted meat](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). A Minnesota woman who was paralyzed after being sickened by an E. coli-contaminated hamburger is seeking \$100 million from the company that supplied the meat.

[Duck season winds down with a whimper](#) (Minnesota Outdoor News). If there is something positive to be said for the state's duck season, which ended Tuesday, it's that hunters had open water for most of the season's 60 days.

[Editorial: Ethanol a sweet lie](#) (Minnesota Daily). To the chagrin of a struggling ethanol industry, the Environmental Protection Agency has just prolonged its consideration of a policy that would raise the federal maximum ethanol content of gasoline from 10 to 15 percent.

[MPCA says more greenhouse gas regulations not the answer](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Attacking global warming through cap-and-trade legislation would likely result in quicker results than regulations would produce, according to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

*In some mysterious way woods have never seemed to me to be static things. In physical terms, I move through them; yet in metaphysical ones, they seem to move through me. – John Fowles*

**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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