

Minnesota River Board Meeting and Speakers Forum

The next Minnesota River Board meeting is scheduled for **Monday, July 27th, 2009** at the **Redwood Area Community Center** in Redwood Falls, MN. The Executive Committee will meet at 8:00 am. The Full Board meeting will begin at 9:00 am. Lunch and speakers will follow at 11:00 am.

*****Please pre-register for the lunch/speaker portion of this meeting. A \$20 registration fee will be collected at the door. To pre-register, please call 507.389.5491 or reply to this email address; karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu *****

A map and directions to the **Redwood Area Community Center** can be found at the following link:

http://www.ci.redwood-falls.mn.us/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={0E9332A5-6976-4262-B514-233089221D5A}&DE={041A42B1-0FD9-452D-8A95-428A69075ADB}

We look forward to seeing you in Redwood Falls! Thank you, Karnell W. Johnson; Minnesota River Board; MSU Mankato
184 Trafton Science Center South; Mankato, MN 56001; 507.389.5491;
karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu

Aronia Berry Field Day to Be Held

Rural Advantage, with the assistance of SHEEK, Inc., will be hosting a Walk-n-Talk field day devoted entirely to the Aronia berry. "All About Aronias" will be held near Sherburn, Minnesota, on Thursday, July 30th from 6:00pm – 8:00pm.

During Rural Advantage's 2009 Third Crop Producer Meetings in February and March of last winter, there was much interest shown in Aronia berries. Rural Advantage is proud to be able to offer a field day to learn more about these amazing berries.

The Aronia berry has become popular for its health benefits. It is believed that these small dark purple berries contain more antioxidants, polyphenols, and anthocyanins than cranberries, blueberries, and most other fruits. The Aronia plant itself is native to the Midwest and is capable of adapting to most soil types and pH levels as well as growing in full sun to shade. They are easy to grow and require little input making them a wonderful addition to the landscape.

SHEEK, Inc. has generously offered the use of their Aronia planting on CREP land near Sherburn. "All About Aronias" will provide the chance to see Aronias in the landscape. Also, Jeff Jensen of Rural Advantage will be sharing information on the Aronia plant and its berries.

This event has no cost and pre-registration is not necessary. "All About Aronias" will be outdoors; please dress accordingly. The Aronia planting will be a short hike into the CREP land. Interested persons should meet at the Kum & Go in Sherburn. The gas station is located just south of Interstate 90 on State Highway 4. Please arrive by 5:30pm to drive to the Aronia site south of town.

For more information, please contact Jill Sackett, Extension Educator/Conservation Agronomist at the Rural Advantage office. 507-238-5449 sacke032@umn.edu

Group considers appeal over transmission lines - Associated Press

A citizens group says it's considering legal action after Minnesota regulators declined to reconsider approval of a power line project that will touch four different states. The Citizens Energy Task Force opposes the CapX2020 transmission line project, which eleven utilities plan to

build in Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota and South Dakota. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission on Tuesday declined to rehear the case, making way for a possible appeal. Also Tuesday, the PUC modified its requirement that the Brookings line from eastern South Dakota to the Twin Cities area carry wind energy and other renewables. The PUC allowed a way for the utilities to sidestep that if they demonstrate that meeting the rules isn't practical or isn't in customers' best interest. (Updated: 07/14/2009 05:18:04 PM CDT)

Toyota using Cargill bio-fiber in Prius floor mats by Dan Haugen, MinnPost

Now, Toyota customers can put it in their floor mats. Toyota announced today Prius customers can buy "deluxe" floor mats made from Ingeo, a corn-based fiber from a Cargill subsidiary. The material is manufactured in Nebraska by NatureWorks. Making the floor mats out of plant material instead of petroleum-based nylon produces 90 percent less carbon dioxide emissions, according to the company.

Working Trees: Energy, Food, and More

ST. PETER, Minn. (07/27/2009) – Rural Advantage and University of Minnesota Extension will be hosting a Walk-n-Talk field day on Monday, July 27th, at Seven Mile Creek Park from 6:00pm-8:00pm. The event, titled "Working Trees: Energy, Food, and More", will focus on the species found in the woody planting at Seven Mile Creek Park.

Lois Braun of University of Minnesota and Jeff Jensen of Rural Advantage will be sharing their experiences with growing hybrid hazelnuts. Braun will also be discussing the mound layering work that she has been working on. Examples will be available during the field day. Jensen grows and sells hybrid hazelnuts and is a proponent of the opportunities to be found in hazel production.

Also attending will be Gary Wyatt of University of Minnesota Extension. Wyatt will be discussing growing hybrid willow and hybrid poplar for biomass and bioenergy. He will also be available to answer questions pertaining to Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and the production of woody decorative florals.

This event is open to all interested parties. There is no cost and pre-registration is not necessary. Seven Mile Creek Park is located between the cities of Mankato and St. Peter directly off of State Highway 169. "Working Trees: Energy, Food, and More" will be held in the East section of Seven Mile Creek Park (the area between State Hwy 169 and the Minnesota River). This is an outdoor event. Please dress accordingly.

For more information or further directions, please contact Jill Sackett, Extension Educator/Conservation Agronomist. 507-238-5449 sacke032@umn.edu

Grant Opportunities:

Clean Water Partnership Funding

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is accepting proposals for Clean Water Partnership (CWP) grant and loan funding as of July 20, 2009. Proposals will be accepted from local governmental units interested in leading a nonpoint source pollution control project to *protect* or *improve* water bodies. Priority for funding will be given to projects preventing degradation of unimpaired waters. For a project to be considered a protection/prevention project, proposers will need to document that the water body(ies) being addressed is currently meeting state water quality standards for a particular pollutant of concern, or has not been assessed but is known to be supporting beneficial uses. MPCA anticipates allocating more than \$2 million for grants and about \$2 million for loans this year. Eligible applicants for CWP grants and loans include watershed districts, tribal authorities, cities and counties, and watershed management organizations.

MPCA will accept two types of proposals:

1. Resource investigation/diagnostic study projects monitor, assess and develop a diagnostic study on the status of a water body(ies), and also develop an implementation plan to address the needs of the water body(ies). Resource investigation projects are only eligible for grant funding.
 2. Implementation projects will implement activities identified by a comprehensive assessment and planning process in the watershed or around the water body of concern. Such assessment must consist of an MPCA-approved CWP Phase I, or equivalent diagnostic study and implementation plan. Implementation projects are eligible for both grant and/or loan funding.
- There is a \$250,000 limit on each grant funding request. There is no limit for a loan request
 - The due date for proposals is 4:30 p.m. CDT on September 18, 2009. Proposals must be sent electronically to the CWP Proposal Mailbox: CWP-319.grant.program@pca.state.mn.us
 - CWP Grants will be administered via standard three-year grant agreements. Proposers who are awarded funds will be able to begin project work as early as the beginning of 2010.
 - For more information: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/publications/newsletters/waterfront-0709-extra.pdf>

Job Announcements:

Recycling/Water Plan/Wetlands Administrator – Brown County

This position will develop, coordinate and implement county water plan, recycling and related solid waste programs and educational activities; administer Wetland Conservation Act of 1991 in Brown County; assist in Planning & Zoning Department activities including feedlot registration and inventory management and review and approve designs of Individual Sewage Treatment Systems; and provide staff support for county park department.

Position is currently in Grade Level XIII with an annual entry level to midrange salary of \$38,029 - \$44,775 DOQ. Excellent benefit package. Brown County applications are to be submitted to Leah Crabtree, Personnel Director, Courthouse PO Box 248 New Ulm, MN 56073. Phone (507) 233-6603 or online at: <http://www.co.brown.mn.us>. Receipt of applications closes at the conclusion of regular business hours on July 29, 2009. For more information: <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/browncountyposition.pdf>

MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT – EDUCATION INTERN

MCWD is looking for an Education Intern. Candidate will develop/enhance their knowledge of public outreach and education, watershed management, and local government, while assisting in the implementation of the MCWD education and communications program. The CLOSING DATE is July 24, 2009. Salary: \$11.00/hour, 40 hours/wk

For more information and application requirements, go to www.minnehahacreek.org/work.php. Julie Westerlund; Education and Communications Manager; Minnehaha Creek Watershed District; 952-471-0590 x 209; jwesterlund@minnehahacreek.org

Events:

July 22nd (Wednesday) is a **Senator Franken Staff Open House** from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. at Earth River Room, Intergovernmental Center, 10 Civic Center Plaza, Mankato. Those who are concerned about issues affecting greater Minnesota--whether dairy policy, the wind industry, broadband, climate policy, or other matters--should stop by the closest meeting and share their concern with Senator Franken's staff.

July 22nd (Wednesday) is a **Senator Franken Staff Open House** from 3:30PM - 5:30PM Room 300, Governor's Room, St. Peter Community Center, 600 South 5th Street, St. Peter. Those who are concerned about issues affecting greater Minnesota--whether dairy policy, the wind industry,

broadband, climate policy, or other matters--should stop by the closest meeting and share their concern with Senator Franken's staff.

July 25th (Saturday) is **A Water Fair – A Conservation event for the whole family** from 9 a.m. to 12 noon at Centenary United Methodist Parking Lot, 2nd and Cherry Streets, Mankato. A few things going on includes Rain Barrel-Making Demonstration, Flow chart on water usage, the movie: "Flow," water activities for kids and tours of the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

July 27th (Monday) is the **Minnesota River Board Annual Meeting** at Redwood Falls Community Center. The formal business meeting starts at 9 a.m. with guest speakers in the afternoon. More information will be forth coming.

August 27th (Thursday) through September 7 (Monday) is the **4th Annual Eco Experience** at the Minnesota State Fair from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. The Eco Experience is located at the Progress Center on the corner of Randall and Cosgrove. Look for the 123-foot high wind turbine blade. LEARN MORE: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/ecoexperience/>

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

Water Quality Articles:

[Survival getting tough for some organic dairy farmers](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). In the Midwest, organic dairy farmers are standing by while prices plunge and survival gets tough. Last year demand grew at a rate of 20 percent, but today it's nearly flat.

[Food co-ops under siege as competition from traditional grocers increases](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). As other grocers and even Wal-Mart expand their offerings of local produce and organics, Mississippi Market and other co-ops face competition in the areas that were once their niche at a time when shoppers are more price-conscious than they've been in decades.

[Everyone's a beekeeper](#) Gardeners have reason to care about bumblebees. They are more effective than honeybees as pollinators of some of our favorite vegetable plants, especially tomatoes, because of their robust vibrations, known as "buzz pollination."

[Legacy Amendment was big winner in race for 2008 political contributions](#) (Finance & Commerce). When it comes to top-dollar Minnesota political contributions, the so-called Legacy Amendment was the big winner in 2008.

[Outdoors money paves way for state's largest forest preservation deal](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). The largest preservation deal in state history will permanently keep nearly 190,000 acres of northern Minnesota forests from being developed.

[Low gas prices hurting sales of some ethanol products](#) (Agri News). Lower gasoline prices, while a boon for drivers, were a gut punch for ethanol producers and promoters of the high-ethanol blend known as E85.

[Elk River Utilities backs away from Big Stone II plant](#) (Elk River Star News). The utilities commission met in special session on its own this past Wednesday to hear one more pitch for the proposed coal-burning plant, and voted to abandon consideration of buying into Big Stone II and to continue assessing less risky options.

[Minn. gets \\$5M for efficient appliance rebates](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu announced Tuesday that Minnesota will receive up to \$5 million in federal funding to encourage residents to purchase energy efficient appliances.

[Duck population drops — or does it?](#) (Owatonna People's Press). The number of ducks in Minnesota dipped drastically in 2009, but Steele County officials say the nosedive in numbers does not appear to be a localized problem.

[Duck stamp sales decline; feds push sales](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Duck sales are down in recent years, possibly reflecting a decline in the duck population and a decline in the number of hunters.

[Wayzata needs weeds, maven of the monarchs says](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Sherry Machen has spent two years working on a grass-roots level to make Wayzata a butterfly capital by planting milkweeds in the west metro city.

[Commentary: We could use a little 'malaise'](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). History has panned President Jimmy Carter's speech, but Americans were, and are again, ready for some frank talk.

[Polaris rolls out electric 'neighborhood vehicle'](#) (MinnPost). The Medina company announced a new neighborhood vehicle called the Polaris Breeze. It's the first product in the company's recently formed On-Road Vehicle Division.

[U.S. Chamber of Commerce wants gasoline tax hike](#) (Politico). Bucking the White House in a dispute over new highway funding, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce lobbied Congress Wednesday to quickly reauthorize a multi-year transportation program and hike the federal gasoline tax to help pay for it.

[County considers wetland program](#) (Owatonna People's Press). A possible 10,000 acres of Steele County land could qualify as wetlands through the Minnesota Wetland Preservation Program — and could become tax exempt.

[Filmmakers turn to local expert](#) (Fairmont Sentinel). Linda Meschke, a local expert in conservation and president and founder of Rural Advantage, is taking part in a series of interviews with filmmakers dedicated to educating the public about the dangers of hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico.

[Feedlot ordinance has little impact on development](#) (Faribault News). Rice County Commissioner Jake Gillen felt opening up the feedlot rules last year would help livestock farming survive. Now, in his estimation, the clock is ticking and the business of livestock in Rice County could soon cease to exist.

[Notable guests at Farmfest](#) (Mankato Free Press). It's not an election year, but Farmfest will have an impressive line-up of politicians nonetheless for the three-day agricultural exposition starting Aug. 4.

[Minnesota among nation's farmers market hot spots](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The popularity of buying locally has led to a statewide explosion of farmers markets. In five years the number has tripled to about 130.

[Despite setback, Big Stone II still slated for 2010 construction](#) (Minnesota Independent). Despite a metro-area city backing out of the project, representatives for the proposed [Big Stone II power-generation facility](#) say they remain optimistic about the plant's future, while opponents are still insistent that the new plant will mean dirty power for the Dakotas and Minnesota.

[County wants to burn more garbage at Minneapolis incinerator](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Hennepin County wants to burn more garbage at its downtown Minneapolis waste-to-energy plant, but the plan is running into opposition. Some neighbors are worried about whether pollution

from the plant is bad for their health. Others say burning waste -- even to produce electricity -- is not the best thing to do with it.

[Goose-reg changes still on DNR's to-do list](#) (Minnesota Outdoor News). Despite a bust in production of Eastern Prairie Population geese on their Canadian breeding grounds, the DNR plans to forge ahead with a proposal to extend the season and increase the bag limit in most areas of the state this fall.

[Kayaking's newest niche](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). Pedal-mounted Hobies built for fishing get anglers where regular boats can't take them — for a fraction of the cost.

[Almanac: Group gives fish their own voice](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Ducks have their groups, such as Ducks Unlimited or the Minnesota Waterfowl Association. Ditto for pheasants, ruffed grouse, deer and turkeys. But over the years Minnesota's 1.4 million anglers have struggled to have a single voice speak for them on important fishing issues.

[DNR officials concerned over thefts of state flower](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). The showy lady's slipper is a beautiful wild orchid -- pink and white, with a distinctive pouch-like shape. It also happens to be Minnesota's state flower.

[Commentary: Cap-and-trade would cripple pork industry](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Livestock gets falsely blamed for global warming.

[Minn. DNR continues fight against invasive species](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). The Minnesota DNR is stepping up enforcement efforts to slow the spread of invasive species in lakes.

[Bill Schneider: No Child Left Inside](#) (Fillmore County Journal). When I was a kid, about all I ever did inside was sleep, eat, and torment my grade school teachers. Every other waking moment was spent outside - not just fishing, hunting, and camping, but doing all the little things I thought up myself, like catching nightcrawlers, investigating anthills, watching toads come out on a rainy night, or making my first backpack from wood scraps, wire and burlap (that was before they invented duct tape).

[Mississippi kayaker stops in cities on way to New Orleans](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). A loosely planned kayaking odyssey stretching the length of the Mississippi River made a stop in the Twin Cities area Friday.

[Proposal to ease pollution standards raises questions](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). A proposal to ease Minnesota's Clean Water Legacy's pollution targets at two popular recreational lakes has raised concerns by activists and neighbors.

[Couple plants eco-friendly 'rain garden'](#) (Owatonna People's Press). A rain garden, or bio-retention cell, is designed to store and filter stormwater run-off. The idea is to allow the water to make its natural progression into the aquifer rather allowing it to shoot off into the sewers, bringing pollutants and garbage with it.

[In several metro communities, even the concrete is going green](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). Mahtomedi's public works building is not only new, but parts of it are cutting-edge green as well.

The purpose of conservation: The greatest good to the greatest number of people for the longest time. – Gifford Pinchot, first Director of the U.S. Forest Service

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.

Thanks,

Scott

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