

Rural Entrepreneurship seminar to be hosted by Rural Advantage

FAIRMONT, Minn. (03/09/2009) — Rural Advantage will be hosting the third of four 3rd Crop Producer Meetings on Monday, March 9, 2009. "Rural Entrepreneurship" will focus on some of the opportunities in rural entrepreneurship as well as Agri-tourism and Minnesota recreation trends. Presentations begin at 10:00 am and adjourn at 3:00 pm.

The morning session will begin with Norm Erickson discussing his experiences with Hybrid Hazelnuts. Erickson produces Hybrid Hazelnuts on a farm near Lake City, Minnesota, and feels that opportunities abound for Hazel producers. The second speakers of the day will be Heidi Morlock and Ann Houghton from the Belle Plaine – Jordan area of the state. They will present on their various produce and products as well as their marketing scheme. Bill Hein, owner/operator of Straight River Farm near Faribault, Minnesota, will follow. He will be speaking on the various fruit that he produces on his farm along with the marketing scheme that works for his operation. The last speaker of the morning will be Tim Ogilvie of National Hunting Leases. Ogilvie will discuss how to build a lease program for land owners with recreational (native grasses, woods, etc.) lands.

After the lunch break, Kent Gustafson of University of Minnesota Tourism will present "Agri-tourism 101: Adding Value to the Local Economy." The presentation will lean towards starting agri-tourism destinations here in Minnesota. Following Gustafson will be Lynn Hacker, Hacker's Tree Farm of Sleepy Eye, Minnesota. Hacker will discuss their experiences with tree production as well as sales of trees, wreaths, roping, and more. The third speaker of the afternoon will be Yvonne Noorland, one of the owners of The Whittler's Lady in Truman, Minnesota. Noorland will be discussing her experiences with starting and operating a Bed and Breakfast. The last speaker of the day will be Dave Vogel, Explore Minnesota Tourism, who will be presenting on the different recreational trends in Minnesota.

Registration for the 3rd Crop Producer Meetings is free. Arrive at the Knights of Columbus Hall located at 920 E. 10th St. in Fairmont, MN at 9:30 am for registration and coffee. Or, stop by as your schedule permits. Lunch will be on your own. Any questions can be directed to Jill Sackett at 507.238.5449 or sacke032@umn.edu.

The Real Food Challenge

This organization serves as both a campaign and a network. The campaign is to increase the procurement of real food on college and university campuses. By leveraging their purchasing power we can catalyze the transformation of the larger food system. The network offers a chance for students and their allies (those working on the campaign along with those who've yet to sign on to make connections, learn from one another, and grow the movement. For more information go to: <http://realfoodchallenge.org/>

The Minnesota Soil and Water Conservation Society Annual Training Conference and Business Meeting

This meeting will be April 3, 2009 in Rogers, Minnesota. Speakers will describe some of the latest work on bio-energy systems and provide updates on state and federal conservation programs. An agenda and registration form are available at <http://www.minnesotaswcs.org>.

Mother Jones magazine - Food

The latest issue of Mother Jones focuses on food. Not all of it's online yet, but a few articles are. Among them:

- Michael Pollan Fixes Dinner: America's favorite food intellectual talks about ethanol, the carrot lobby, and secularizing food. <http://www.motherjones.com/interview/2009/02/michael-pollan-fixes-dinner>

- Why Biofuels Are the Rainforest's Worst Enemy: Forget petroleum. The next planet-destroying fuel is already here. <http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2009/03/why-biofuels-are-rainforests-worst-enemy>

Clean Coal Technology by the Coen Brothers

For those of you that appreciate the lighter side of clean coal technology - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-U1Z0vezw>

The New Frontiers of Socially Responsible Investing: Where We Started, Where We Are, and Current Trends

Thursday, March 19, 2009, from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. is offered by the BAELN 2008-2009 Season The Path Less Traveled. This event will be held at the MN Pollution Control Agency office located at 7678 College Road in Baxter/Brainerd. The event is free. Refreshments will be provided. All are invited.

These days, many of us are questioning the worth of our investments. We all want to see our investments perform well and reward us with income. But for some investors, monetary return isn't enough. They seek to invest their money in successful companies whose values match up with their own. This investment strategy, which seeks to maximize financial return and social good, is known as socially responsible investing (SRI). Jess Eiyneck is an independent financial advisor with Progressive Asset Management. He will provide an overview of socially responsible investing (SRI) including its history, how it is implemented, and current developments in the landscape. Jess' presentation will also incorporate tools and resources that anyone can use to evaluate their own financial portfolio based on their values. If you have questions concerning this presentation, please contact Phil Hunsicker at 218-824-5095 or phunsicker@1000fom.org.

The Brainerd Area Environmental Learning Network (BAELN) works to create opportunities for people in the environmental field, and the community, to receive timely information on environmental and sustainability issues, along with the chance to network with others. This season's theme "The Path Less Traveled" offers topics that can help us improve our communities and the environment in which we live. Each gathering held the third Thursday of the month from 3:00-5:00 p.m., will include an hour-long presentation with time for questions, networking and refreshments. The events are free and all are invited to come explore the path less traveled. BAELN is a collaborative effort of the following organizations: 1000 Friends of Minnesota, Central Lakes College, Crow Wing County Soil and Water Conservation District, Initiative Foundation, MN Department of Natural Resources, MN Department of Transportation, MN Pollution Control Agency, The Nature Conservancy, Paul Bunyan Trail Association, and University of Minnesota Extension.

Upcoming events:

- April 16: Treating Stormwater as an Asset: Three Things You Can Do Rain gardens, rain barrels and shoreland buffers are cropping up in the area. Find out more about these practices, why they are important and what would work for you.
- May 21: Making Solar Power Accessible to People of All Income Levels Discover more about solar energy, what's happening with solar in our region and how you can take advantage of its benefits.
- June 18: Taking Charge: One Family's Journey toward Energy Self-Sufficiency Living off the grid, without reliance on public utilities for things like electricity and water, is becoming a more common practice. Hear how people are doing it and glean lessons that you can apply to your own way of life.

Job / Intern Opportunities:

GYPSY MOTH DETECTION TRAPPING SURVEY TRAPPER (Minnesota Department of Agriculture)

- **Deadline for Applications: March 16, 2009 Northern Minnesota**
- **Position description:** The European gypsy moth causes extensive damage when the caterpillars defoliate North American forests. The gypsy moth survey program is used to detect this invasive species in Minnesota. Job duties include assembling, setting, monitoring and removing up to 700 cardboard detection traps within a designated route. Trappers collect data using a hand-held global positioning system (GPS) unit (training provided) and report to a lead worker. Trappers work from home and **MUST** live in the area in which they trap. A reliable vehicle is necessary for driving trap routes. Mileage is reimbursable.
- **Salary range:** \$12.44 - \$16.17 hourly
- **Commitment: Northern Minnesota:** Mandatory training in Duluth, MN on June 3, 4 and 5. Position runs through October 15. Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Monday - Thursday. There are three to four weeks of scheduled unpaid leave during the season for approximately 14-15 weeks of employment.
- **Qualifications:** Minimum qualifications are: 1) a high school diploma or GED, 2) must live in or near a trapping route, 3) must possess and maintain an active/valid driver's license with an acceptable motor vehicle record subject to review and must maintain liability insurance on your own vehicle if using it for work purposes. To qualify for this position, candidates must be able to meet all of the following physical requirements: 1) the ability to drive/sit for prolonged periods of time, 2) the ability to drive on all kinds of roads, up to 250 miles per day, 3) the ability to get in and out of a vehicle up to 60 times per day, 4) the ability to walk and set up, monitor, and remove traps (25-60 per day) under various weather conditions and terrain. Some positions will require extensive hiking in rough, wooded terrain, particularly in the northeast, and 5) the ability to lift up to 20 pounds. The ideal candidate has a background in biology or a related field, and has the ability to work well with minimum supervision and with others as a team. Must be able to set goals, and meet deadlines, be flexible and possess good interpersonal skills. Map-reading, navigation skills and attention to detail are critical to the performance of the job.
- **To apply:** Apply on-line at www.careers.state.mn.us. You may copy and paste your existing resume or let the software create a resume for you. If you do not have access to the internet and cannot submit your resume on-line, submit your paper resume and application to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Attention: Rodie Kinney, 625 Robert St. N, Saint Paul, MN 55155 or by fax to (651) 201-6125. To be considered for this vacancy, indicate the job title and/or posting number in the Specific Opening area of the employment application. You must indicate a high school diploma or GED. To receive the paper application, please call (651) 201-6023.
- **Contact for more info:** Terry Varing, Gypsy Moth Unit, (651) 201-6165; E-mail: terry.varing@state.mn.us or gypsy.moth@state.mn.us

Pope SWCD Intern

This position is a seasonal position under direct supervision of the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Office Manager and the Pope SWCD Board of Supervisors. The person will work closely with the Pope County Ag Inspector. The seasonal position is primarily responsible for implementing projects in regards to weed management in Pope County. This is a multi-pronged approach focused on our newest invasive weeds that will include: education, documentation, treatment, and re-seeding with local eco-type native seed sources. This position will monitor, treat, and document the locations of infestations with a GPS unit. Weed identification field guides, herbicide, spraying equipment, and local-ecotype seed will be purchased and distributed to landowners. Operation of machinery and farming background or experience preferred. The work hours are 8:00 to 4:30 Monday through Friday. The hours may vary also based on what work is available to be completed. This position will also need to assist with tree planting and some native grass seeding projects as well as other duties as assigned. This position is funded through a grant and has the capability of being available for 2 summers.

For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/popewcd.pdf>

Events:

March 18th (Wednesday) is a **Conservation Drainage Session** starting at 6:00 p.m. with free snacks and refreshments at the Joseph Brown Center in Henderson. This informational session is designed to help the public learn more about this exciting way of water management. Experts who have been working on the development of this concept along with those who have been involved with it for several years will be on hand to provide an overview and answer questions from the public. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/conservationdrainageflyer.pdf>

March 19th (Thursday) is the **Chippewa River Watershed Project Annual Meeting** at the Starbuck Community Center. The evening begins with registration and social gathering at 5 p.m., meal at 6 p.m. and program at 7 p.m. Meals are free with registration. Presentation will be given on the latest monitoring results and the upcoming Turbidity TMDL. To register call Jennifer Hoffman at 320-269-2139 ext 120. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/chippewaannualmeeting.pdf>

March 19th (Thursday) is the second of three **Conservation Drainage Sessions** starting at 6:00 p.m. at the Kilowatt Community Center in Granite Falls. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/conservationdrainageflyer.pdf>

March 24th (Tuesday) is a presentation on **Energy Savings Landscapes** from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. in Montevideo. Learn how trees and shrubs can be used to help you save energy year round. Strategically placed trees and shrubs in shelterbelts, windbreaks and in the home lawn, can enhance property value, aesthetics, wildlife habitat and can reduce energy costs by 25 to 30%. Registration for each workshop is \$ 20. Pre-registration is requested. The public is invited to attend. To register for any of these workshops visit: <http://cfc.cfans.umn.edu/wa/> or contact Kathy Eckwright, 507-389-6972 or 888-241-3214, eckwr001@umn.edu.

March 30th (Monday) is the **Shallow Lakes Forum VI – Development and Implementation of Shallow Lake Management Plan** at the Oak Ridge Conference Center in Chaska. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/sflagenda.pdf>

April 7th (Tuesday) is the last of three **Conservation Drainage Sessions** starting at 6:00 p.m. at the Best Western Hotel in Mankato. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/conservationdrainageflyer.pdf>

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

Water Quality Articles

[DNR is calling all hands](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Organizing thousands of volunteers could become a challenge for the DNR in the face of a budget cut.

[Efficient buildings mean lower utility costs](#) (MN Daily). Area leasing companies and neighborhood associations are working to makes house more sustainable.

[Green house in St. Louis Park sets an example](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). And four west-metro suburbs are planning a fair Sunday to show residents how to do "green" remodeling.

[Green: Investors put \\$20 million into Faribault glass firm](#) (Finance and Commerce). SAGE Electrochromics, a Faribault-based provider of energy-efficient glass products for buildings, announced Tuesday that it had secured \$20 million in new financing from a group of firms that invest in renewable-energy products.

[St. Kate's faculty members compile environmental-literacy report card](#) (MinnPost). College of St. Catherine Associate Dean Anthony Murphy, Ph.D., and Associate Professor Andrea Olson, Ph.D., have compiled the results of "The Third Minnesota Report Card on Environmental Literacy," a survey funded by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

[Agencies debate while mine pit fills](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Water has been rising in a huge abandoned mine pit near Bovey for about 15 years, and resident's concerns are rising along with it. The high water is already finding its way into basements, and some residents think it could spill out of the pit some day, inundating the small town.

[Reusable Bags Helping To Feed Hungry People](#) (WCCO TV). In these tough economic times, food shelf donations are needed more than ever. So a local grocer has come up with a new way to help hungry people and help the environment.

[Minnesota's shoreland rules getting another look](#) (Agri News). About 75 people attended a public meeting Feb. 4 designed to share information about Minnesota's shoreland rules.

[Obama plan cuts off federal payments to thousands of Minnesota farmers](#) (MinnPost). Some Minnesota lawmakers are criticizing President Obama's newly unveiled farm budget, which seeks to slash federal payments to large farms and reduce federal support for crop insurance.

[Hunters maintain support of venison donation program](#) (Outdoor News). Despite a faltering economy and concern about lead in venison, hunters gave nearly as much money to the state's venison donation program last year as they did in 2007.

[Big issues take a giant toll in smaller towns](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Undermanaged elk and deer herds, diseased cattle and damaged crops are hot issues in Northwest.

[Wind farms can energize Minnesota's economy -- and policy changes would help](#) (MinnPost). Minnesota's Renewable Energy Standard (RES) requires 25 percent of the state's electricity to come from renewable sources by 2025.

[Sales tax increase that does some good](#) (McLeod County Chronicle). Minnesota voters, at November's election, approved an addition to our sales tax which would be dedicated to the outdoors, environmental issues, etc.

[Farmers suddenly find ax poised over their subsidies](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). It's not just Wall Street moguls who will feel the wrath of President Obama's budget.

[Meet the Lessard Council](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The four legislators and eight other Minnesotans who will decide what to do with the revenue from the sales-tax increase.

[Dennis Anderson: More power to the people](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The model of the Lessard Council, with citizens overseeing the spending of public money, is one that should be duplicated.

[DNR to track golden eagles through Wis., Minn.](#) (Associated Press). The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is planning to strap small GPS units on golden eagles over the next three years to see where the birds go when they migrate from.

[Dann Siems: Picture just one agency for natural resources](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). DNR. SWCDs. WDs. PCA. BWSR. EQB. MDH. MDA. WMO. ESD. LCCMR. LOHC. CWC. These acronyms represent a partial list of Minnesota's natural resource management entities. Each has a unique and largely independent history leading to overlapping bureaucracies with conflicting mandates.

[Kids learn soil erosion](#) (MinnPost). Thanks to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), students get a firsthand look at how different soil coverage can have a dramatic impact on the amount of erosion taking place on farm fields.

[Our View: Stay true to amendment](#) (Mankato Free Press). The wording in the constitutional amendment passed by state voters to increase funding for the outdoors and arts was clear enough. The ballot said that the extra money raised by a sales-tax increase must not substitute for traditional sources of funding.

[Outdoors/arts amendment: Millions up for grabs](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Groups are jostling to stake their claims to the only pot of new state tax money available. A hike in the state sales tax will fund a wide variety of programs. But which ones?

[DNR cuts training, travel to pay back improper conference costs](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). To pay back improper conference expenses, the DNR is cutting training, travel and equipment for Minnesota's wildlife enforcement.

The human race is challenged more than ever before to demonstrate our mastery, not over nature but of ourselves. – Rachel Carson

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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