

MPCA ISSUES OPERATING PERMIT FOR RENVILLE COUNTY LANDFILL

St. Paul, Minn. -- The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has issued a new five-year permit allowing Renville County to continue the operation and development of its sanitary landfill in Henryville Township, about seven miles south of Olivia.

The landfill has received waste since 1971. About 32 acres of the 94-acre site currently are designated for holding solid waste, including demolition waste. The landfill also accepts waste tires for temporary storage before they are transported to a processing facility, and appliances and scrap metal for temporary storage prior to recycling.

Approximately 6.5 acres out of the nine acres approved for actual waste storage cells in 1991 have been constructed. Cell 1 was constructed and began accepting waste on June 1, 1994. Cells 2 and 3 were constructed in 1999 and 2003, respectively. Cells 1 and 2 were closed in 2002 and 2007, respectively. Cell 3 is currently being used for waste storage, while Cell 4 remains to be constructed.

According to a 2008 annual report, the remaining capacity is approximately 214,000 cubic yards in the municipal solid waste area and 152,320 cubic yards in the demolition disposal area. These capacities represent approximately 13.1 years and 54.7 years of operational volume, respectively.

The facility's monitoring systems includes a series of vents to reduce the underground movement of methane gas produced during waste decomposition, groundwater monitoring wells, and upstream and downstream surface water monitoring of the West Fork Beaver Creek.

Under the authority of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sets environmental standards to be met by municipal solid waste landfills. The MPCA has the authority to issue permits and specify limits, perform compliance monitoring and enforce federal standards.

For more information about the Renville County landfill permit, contact Tony Bello, MPCA-St. Paul office, 651-757-2219 or toll-free at 1-800-657-3864. A public information meeting about the permit was held July 28 during a public comment period. For more information about the landfill program, visit the MPCA Web site at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/cleanup/landfills.html>

Becoming a Better Naturalist the Old-Fashioned Way By Cindy Gentz (CM Reader Submission)

As I dipped my paddle into the weeds, I had the feeling that I was paddling through a lake of cattail, not water. Just as I was steeling myself for the scramble out of the canoe to start dragging, a duck exploded into the air in front of me.

I tried paddling again and another one launched itself out of cover. As my boyfriend and I moved to our blind, we must have roused at least 20 ducks. In the inky stillness of early morning (middle of the night! I grumbled to myself), it was hard to tell what species they were, but some at least were green-winged teals and mallards. I hadn't ever experienced bird watching quite like this, and I loved the mystery of the darkness surrounding them, and the surprise every time one bolted.

I wasn't really sure why I was along on this trip. I don't hunt, although I toy with the idea of taking hunters' safety and trying for a deer sometime, but duck hunting seems a bit hard-core for me. Plus, I think duck tastes like pondweed. I am an enthusiast of just about all things out-door, but I am more enthusiastic during daylight hours. In a moment of generosity and optimism about my helpfulness, my boyfriend had invited me on a duck hunt with him and a buddy, so here I was.

After disturbing the ducks, we made it to the blind quietly swearing as the canoe got stuck every few feet. The guys silently went about their routine of unloading and setting up, and I tried to help but then got out

of the way until they were finished. Apparently, I made a good pack mule and a tolerable paddler, but I was too inexperienced to be trusted with the placement of guns, decoys and ammo.

The sky was turning gray as we settled into the blind. The vague shapes of trees and the shore became more visible every few moments but a layer of fog stayed above the water, making the experience surreal.

I realized that I was as tense and excited as my companions. Normally on an early morning out doors I would have been day dreaming, noticing birds when they passed overhead, but mostly lost in a dream world half way between waking and sleeping. This morning, though, the hunting aspect made me more aware, more engrossed in the world waking up around me. I was alert to the sounds of the water lapping at my feet, the minute changes in wind direction, and the increasing light. I wasn't a passive observer, waiting for nature to come to me. This time, even though I was seated, I was involved, searching for birds in the early morning sky.

This hunting trip was another piece of evidence to support a theory I have been nursing for sometime...

[Find out Cindy's theory on our website.](#) **Conservation Minnesota Spotlights sponsored by:**

Make your home safer and avoid everyday toxins

Clean Water Fund invites you to join us for a free Healthy Home Presentation. Minnesotans are involuntarily exposed to toxic chemicals in everyday consumer products, including toys, baby bottles, plastics, cosmetics, pesticides and food. These toxic substances accumulate in our bodies and pose a significant threat to our most vulnerable-our children. Our presentation will include easy steps to make your home safer and avoid everyday toxins. Everyone is welcome! Email [Julie Jansen](#) if you can attend or if you have questions. This is part of Clean Water Fund's Healthy Legacy Campaign.

- Thursday, October 22, 7:00 PM
- Centenary United Methodist Church; 501 South 2nd Street, Mankato (corner of 2nd St and Cherry)

Grant Opportunities:

Conservation Partnership Grants – Minnesota Waters

Minnesota Waters is pleased to offer its members Conservation Partnership grants for the third year in a row. This grant program is funded with support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Michelob Golden Draft Light. Conservation Partnership grants offer funding to support projects initiated and managed by our state's most effective local water resource managers-citizen groups working to protect Minnesota's lakes and streams.

Conservation Partnership grants provide funding for citizen-led lake and river improvement projects across the state, including, but not limited to:

- Shoreland habitat improvement projects
- shoreland restoration projects
- inventorying and assessment projects
- AIS prevention projects
- Outreach and education projects benefitting lake and stream health

The 2009-10 grant application cycle is now OPEN. Please note, due to funding delays, we have a shorter deadline this year: Applications must be postmarked no later than December 11, 2009. Please download Conservation Partnership grant criteria and application at: <http://www.minnesotawaters.org>

Conservation Partnership grants are available to all Minnesota Waters members and affiliates. Seven \$5,000.00 grants will be awarded. Funded projects will be short-term (12 months) in duration to demonstrate quick, tangible results for implementation during 2010. Please contact Erica LeMoine at erical@minnesotawaters.org with any questions.

Job Announcements:

Farm to School Extension Coordinator

The University of Extension Center for Family Development is hiring a full-time, academic administrative Farm to School Extension Coordinator. The Farm to School Extension Coordinator will manage Farm to School initiatives within Health and Nutrition programs. These initiatives currently include:

- - Developing an engaging nutrition education program that emphasizes the use of local foods in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Education (SNAP-Ed).
 - - Increasing the use of and access to local foods in community programs and PreK-12 schools throughout Minnesota, with special attention to
 - schools and community programs eligible for food support.
 - - Increasing the number of servings of Minnesota grown fresh fruits and vegetables in schools and students' and families' knowledge of
 - Minnesota grown fresh fruit and vegetables in select pilot sites.

This position will integrate several funding sources to create one seamless Farm to School program within Extension. This position works in cooperation with the Health and Nutrition administrative team, Extension Educators, and key University and agency staff connected to the Farm to Table and local foods initiatives. This position will report to the Program Director.

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

Events:

October 20th (Tuesday) is the **Policy Form Series: Clean Water Legacy: Progress and Challenges in Protecting, Restoring and Preserving the Quality of Minnesota's Waters** from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Gray Freshwater Center in Excelsior, MN. For more information: <http://www.freshwater.org/index.php/contact-us>

October 20th (Tuesday) is the **Quarterly Meeting of the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance** at the Hutchinson Event Center (1005 Highway 15 South Plaza 15). The meeting starts at 6 p.m. with a social hour and food while the formal meeting begins at 7 p.m. and we strive to wrap up by 9 o'clock.

October 26th – 27th (Monday and Tuesday) is the **Water Resources Conference** at RiverCentre, St Paul. The Minnesota Water Resources Conference presents innovative and practical water resource management techniques and highlights research about Minnesota's water resources. For more information, <http://wrc.umn.edu/waterconf/index.htm>

November 7 (Saturday) is the **Crisis as Opportunity: Redesigning the Good Life Conference** from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the School Sisters of Notre Dame Mankato Provincial House Conference Center (170 Good Counsel Drive. For more information: <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/thegoodlife.pdf>

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

Water Quality Articles:

[Local pumpkins weather cool summer](#) (Faribault Daily News). Local growers are anticipating a healthy pumpkin harvest in spite of the cool summer.

[Farmer's compost site provides Winona a valuable service](#) (Winona Daily News). Perched atop a 40-foot tall mound of leaves at his East Burns Valley farm, Dick Gallien stuck out his hand Tuesday and plunged it into the decomposing pile. It was hot, he said.

[Nonprofit study of 15 MN nonprofits shows value of advocacy and community planning](#) (MinnPost). Fifteen Minnesota nonprofit organizations were the focus of a comprehensive study released today, and the results detail the many great benefits they provide state residents.

[Xcel gets MN rate hike; customers to get refunds](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Xcel Energy was cleared on Tuesday to raise its electric rates in Minnesota, but most of the company's customers stand to get refunds and might even see their bills go down.

[Minn. Biodiesel Plant Creates Fuel Without Waste](#) (WCCO TV). It's been called 'too good to be true' and a 'miracle' fuel. It's a biodiesel that's made from waste, not food stock. If it's successful, the new plant could replace the need for foreign oil.

[Cougar reported; DNR official skeptical](#) (Mankato Free Press). Melissa Enter and Nathan Bartell are sure the cat they saw near St. Clair Tuesday was a cougar, even if the photo Enter took is unclear.

[Minnesotans are mad for mallards](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Greenheads are beautiful, plentiful and delectable -- three reasons why waterfowlers are excited about Saturday's duck hunting opener.

[Bjorn Lomborg: Act wisely, not rashly, on climate crisis](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Plans to save the environment will only savage the global economy.

[Minneopa Trail bid for '10 completion](#) (Mankato Free Press). Minneopa Trail, an expensive but key link to the regional trail system, was bid to Mankato-based Southern Minnesota Construction Tuesday and is expected to be completed next summer.

[Editorial: Saving waterways involves all of us](#) (Faribault Daily News). There's only so much environmental agencies can do, and then the rest is up to us.

[Court ruling could hurt Minnesota sugar beet industry](#) (Minnesota Daily). A California District Court handed down a ruling last week that has many Minnesotan farmers worried.

[Turbines would give Nicollet County economic windfall](#) (New Ulm Journal). NUPUC officials perplexed over some landowners' objections to proposed wind farm.

[DNR optimistic for this year's pheasant season](#) (Mankato Free Press). Just how one views the results of the 2009 Minnesota August Roadside Survey, which charts the hunting prospects of various wildlife species, most notably pheasants, probably depends on whether your glass is half-full or half-empty.

[EPA proposes first-ever permits for greenhouse gases from power plants and factories](#) (Associated Press). EPA proposes first-ever permits for greenhouse gases from power plants and factories.

[For opportunities in the new green economy, we should look to Norway](#) (MinnPost). With the world economy in recession and climate change wreaking havoc on our environment, we need to make Norwegian-American collaboration something new and more vital.

[USDA pitches 8-million-acre CRP reduction policy option](#) (Minnesota Outdoor News). USDA is looking at policy option to drop the program acreage of CRP to 24 million.

[Duck decline](#) (Marshall Independent). Waterfowl hunters are eager to get to their boats and blinds this weekend, but, even though not all the news is grim, habitat issues all over the state continue to take a toll on the duck population.

[Dennis Anderson: Ducks, many or few, are at the heart of it](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). About 100,000 Minnesotans will hunt on the opener, because tradition pulls them even when waterfowl numbers don't.

[Crop farming in Fillmore County](#) (Fillmore County Journal). How did the cooler temperatures this summer affect crops like corn and soybeans?

[Agriculture reaping benefits](#) (Mankato Free Press). As combines begin moving through the golden soybean and corn fields of southern Minnesota, it is a tale of mostly bounty, but also some crisis in agriculture.

[Commentary: Reality of climate change](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). To many people, the reality of climate change may seem far removed. It can mean that summer is not as hot or winter is not as cold.

[George F. Will: Global warming is coming -- like a glacier](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Doomsayers keep having to adjust their calendars.

[Llewellyn King: At the U.S. Chamber, dissension over carbon legislation](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). Difference of opinion between the chief executive and some of the members including three electric utilities sparks a debate at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

[Fargo site to be part of nationwide environmental monitoring project](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). A new nationwide environmental monitoring network will start collecting data next year at 60 sites.

[Deer population down in region](#) (Mankato Free Press). The fact deer-vehicle crashes are down in south-central Minnesota while the rest of the state is up is no surprise to Ken Varland.

[Outdoors report: Blue-green algae deadly to dogs](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). Hunters afield with their dogs this fall recently got a sobering reminder of the dangers of blue-green algae.

[Mississippi River: An urban wilderness](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). The newest of Minnesota's five national park sites sits right in the middle of the state's biggest population center.

[Ag Sec. Tom Vilsack wants mandatory recalls on tainted food](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack says the Obama administration is working to improve food safety.

[E. Coli Path Shows Flaws in Beef Inspection](#) (New York Times). Stephanie Smith, a children's dance instructor, thought she had a stomach virus. The aches and cramping were tolerable that first day, and she finished her classes.

It is horrifying that we have to fight our own government to save the environment. – Ansel Adams

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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