

### **Minnesota River Watershed Alliance Meeting**

Last night, participants of the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance gathered for their April quarterly meeting to talk about the various projects they are involved in. The group discussed the upcoming Blue Earth River Paddle and Minnesota River Paddler Program Launch on June 12<sup>th</sup>. This event will kick off with a paddle down the Blue Earth River from the Rapidan Dam County Park to Highway 90 at 9 o'clock and a Post-paddle Ceremony with music starting at 2 p.m. back at the park. Other topics of discussion at the meeting included the ongoing progress of the Minnesota River Film Documentary, development of a Minnesota River Waterway Trail, Minnesota River Valley – Lake Pepin Friendship Tour for late August and the possibility of a Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener to be held somewhere in the Minnesota River Basin. More information on this initiatives will be highlighted in future Minnesota River Weekly Updates.

### **Earth Day Open House**

Redwood and Renville Counties will be sponsoring an Earth Day Open House on Thursday, April 22, 2010, from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at the Redwood Falls National Guard Armory in Redwood Falls, MN. The event is free and open to the public and will feature over 20 exhibitors with displays and demonstrations for all ages. Topics include renewable energy, radon gas, composting, recycling, conservation, water quality, and more. Free professional sensitive document shredding will be available. Take part in the lead tackle exchange program, visit with Ron Bolduan (Nature Photographer), see "Clancy" the mercury detecting dog, and sign-up for door prizes. A free BBQ lunch will be provided from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. (while supplies last). Celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Earth Day!

For more information, contact the Redwood County Environmental Office at (507) 637-4023 or <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/renvilleearthday.pdf>

### **Earth Sabbath Celebration**

Come join us at Earthrise Farm on June 6 for the 15th annual celebration of the Earth Sabbath. The day begins at 1:00 and features Sabbath Sites: Blacksmithing, Weaving, Miniature Horses, Walking the Evolving Universe Story, tours, DVD "Story of Stuff", Live Music, Silent Auction and much more.....

At 6:00 join us for the Sabbath Ceremony followed by an Earthrise grown and roasted turkey, baked beans, tabouli, garden greens and rhubarb crisp. Following this meal we will feast on the beautiful concert music of Sara Thomsen. We'd love to have you come. If you need to stay overnight we will soon be listing accommodation places on our website <http://earthrisefarmfoundation.org/>. More information is also included on our website.

Please bring a loaf of your favorite bread to share and call or e-mail us if you think you can stay and eat supper with us. Admission for the events of this day is \$15.00 per adult or \$25.00 for the entire family.

### **Southern MN Lakes & Rivers Summit For Citizen Leaders**

This Summit on May 1<sup>st</sup> (Saturday) from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. will provide a full morning of Networking with your peer citizen leaders along with Professional Presentations and Informative Booths covering the ways you can protect and improve our waters. The summit will take place at the Rice County Government Services Building – Room 3A & B (320 3<sup>rd</sup> St. North West) in Faribault. Sponsored by Minnesota Waters and Cannon River Watershed Partnership. Presentations include:

- Shoreland Buffers Panel
- Successful Lake/River Associations: Getting Projects in Motion
- Effective Communications and Membership Development

<http://www.crowp.net/Index/MN%20Waters%20Summit%20Handout.pdf>

Here is the entire list of statewide regional Parks and Trail sessions for FYI..... These are going to be very important meetings which will inform the public about this new Legacy Fund and who knows - may even

**“influence”** the direction and priorities for funding parks and trail projects statewide concerning the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund.

**The MN River Valley stakeholders need a strong showing and voice at these regional workshops/meetings especially at the Mankato and Marshall locations** . Please share this information with others and I will continue to provide information as it becomes available.

- May 20<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the McColl Pond Environmental Learning Center (13550 Dakota Avenue South) in Savage
- June 8<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday) from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Bryant Lake Park (6800 Rowland Road) in Eden Prairie
- June 9<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday) from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Southwest Minnesota State University (1501 State Street, Room 117, Conference Center) in Marshall.
- June 17<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at South Central College (1920 Lee Boulevard E119 and E121) in North Mankato.

### **Cows on Drugs**

Now that Congress has pushed through its complicated legislation to reform the health insurance system, it could take one more simple step to protect the health of all Americans. This one wouldn't raise any taxes or make any further changes to our health insurance system, so it could be quickly passed by Congress with an outpouring of bipartisan support. Or could it?

For the entire article: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/18/opinion/18kennedy.html>

### **Breeding Bird Atlas**

The Breeding Bird Atlas is a five year, multi-partner effort to identify as many breeding species in as many different locations in the state and we are looking for volunteers to help.

*Want to learn more about the birds that breed in your area, and help contribute to bird conservation efforts in Minnesota. You can do both by becoming a volunteer surveyor for the Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA).* <http://www.mnbba.org/>

### **Grant Opportunities:**

#### **MPCA Offering \$3 Million in Grants for Water Quality Projects**

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) is seeking grant proposals from local government units and other interested parties to reduce nonpoint source water pollution. Nonpoint source pollution comes from many sources, such as urban areas and farm fields, and not a single point, such as an industrial discharge.

Eligible applicants may apply to the MPCA through a competitive application process through May 21, 2010.

The MPCA anticipates \$3 million will be available this year, pending congressional appropriation, for projects implemented from July 1, 2010 to July 1, 2011. The funding comes from the Federal Clean Water Act Section 319 Nonpoint Source Grant Program (Section 319), administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

This year, the MPCA will offer these funds for development, education or applied research (DER) projects and for Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) restoration projects.

DER proposals must offer a statewide or regional applicability that

- demonstrates new or innovative technology,
- demonstrates new best management practices (BMPs),
- develops educational programs related to reducing nonpoint-source pollution, or

-- answers a research question related to the goal of reducing nonpoint-source pollution.

In addition to DER proposals, funds are also available for projects addressing TMDL implementation plans approved by the MPCA by May 20, 2010. TMDLs identify sources of pollution, the amounts of pollutants, and how to reduce the pollutants to a level that allows rivers and lakes to meet water quality standards.

The complete request for proposal and proposal forms are available at [www.pca.state.mn.us/water/cwp-319.html](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/cwp-319.html). Questions should be e-mailed to [CWP-319.grant.program@state.mn.us](mailto:CWP-319.grant.program@state.mn.us).

For more information, go to the MPCA Web site at [www.pca.state.mn.us](http://www.pca.state.mn.us) or contact Sara Johnson, Section 319 Coordinator for the MPCA at 651-757-2473, by e-mail at [sara.johnson@state.mn.us](mailto:sara.johnson@state.mn.us).

## **Job Opportunities:**

### **District Water Plan Technician**

This position coordinates the implementation of the Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan for Benton County, provides technical assistance under policies established by the Benton Soil and Water Conservation District and performs Wetland Conservation Act duties required of the district. Benton SWCD is currently coordinating Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) studies for Little Rock Creek and Little Rock Lake. Initially this position will coordinate these TMDL activities. At the conclusion of the TMDL projects, expected to last approximately one year, the position responsibilities are expected to change. A detailed list of duties and qualifications can be found on the position description. A diverse background in watershed management and an understanding of water quality principles is desired. Typical duties may include:

- Coordinate implementation of the Benton County Local Water Management Plan
- Coordinate Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) studies for Little Rock Creek and Little Rock Lake
- Perform Wetland Conservation Act duties required of the District
- Assist with the district annual tree program
- Provide technical and engineering support to cooperators
- Assist in delivering educational programs in Benton county
- Assist with numerous other assigned duties

*MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS* - Applicants must possess:

- A Four-year degree in Natural Resources or related field, or eight years of related work experience.
- A vehicle and a valid Minnesota Drivers' License as personal vehicle may be used to complete job duties.

The deadline for applications is April 29<sup>th</sup>. Application materials can be found on the Benton SWCD website at [www.soilandwater.org](http://www.soilandwater.org). Please feel free to pass on to others that may be interested.

### **Program Officer**

I am delighted to have been chosen as program director of The McKnight Foundation's environment program. I look forward to working with you in the years ahead toward our shared environmental goals.

The Foundation is now seeking a program officer to help us target our grantmaking to restore the water quality and resilience of the Mississippi River, through strategies to preserve wetlands, reduce farm pollution, and improve related interagency-intergovernmental coordination. Our ideal candidate would also have knowledge of energy and climate change issues.

I hope you will consider helping us in our search. We have posted information online about the open position. I encourage you to review the posting, and forward this link as appropriate to relevant colleagues and networks: <http://www.mcknight.org/about/jobs.aspx>

Sincerely, Ron Kroese, Program Director, Environment

## **Events:**

April 22<sup>nd</sup> (Thursday) is the **Earth Day Open House** from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Redwood Falls National Guard Armory in Redwood Falls. Sponsored by Redwood and Renville counties, the event is free and open to the public and will feature over 20 exhibitors and displays and demonstrations for all ages. For more information contact the Redwood County Environmental Office at (507) 637-4023 or <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/renvilleearthday.pdf>

April 22<sup>nd</sup> (Thursday) is **A river runs through us: Spirit and stories of the Minnesota River** at 7:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Mankato (937 Charles Avenue). Speakers and storytellers for the event will be Carrie Jennings of the Minnesota Geological Survey, Kim Musser and Scott Kudelka of the Water Resources Center and Art and Barb Straub, river advocates from Le Sueur. For more information, [www.uumankato.org](http://www.uumankato.org)

April 24<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) is the **2010 Minnesota River Banquet** with the social hour starting at 5 p.m. in the lower level of Turner Hall in New Ulm. The dinner starts at 6:30 and program at 7:30 with an update on Minnesota actions, issues and advocacy opportunities for the public. It will also feature a startling snapshot look at the phenomenal fisheries in the backwater area of the river near New Ulm and Minnesota River Jeopardy will be back. For those who wish to come early and pay a visit to the Regional River History and Information Center the doors will be open starting at 2 PM until 4:30. The center is the big brick building located in Riverside Park at 1st South and Front St. This event is in its 21st year and as always is being hosted by the Coalition for a Clean Minnesota River. Pre-registration is open and can be done by email providing a name and the number attending to [yasure@lycos.com](mailto:yasure@lycos.com) or by sending a check for \$20 per person to CCMR P.O. Box 488 New Ulm MN 56073 notating banquet tickets on the check. CCMR is a basin-wide non-profit 501 c 3 federal tax exempt organization. All donations are tax deductible deducible.

April 27<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday) is **April's re-skilling workshop – cheese-making (butter and yogurt, too)** at 6:00 p.m. at the SSND Conference Center. Organic farmer Heidi Thompson of [Thompson's Painted Hill Farm](http://Thompson's Painted Hill Farm) will lead us through all the steps to making cheese at home. As a bonus, we'll whip up a batch of butter and yogurt, too. Suggested donation \$10-\$20 (more if you can, less if you can't.)

May 6<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) is a **Minnesota River Basin Trends Presentation** from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Montevideo Chippewa County Public Library. Kim Musser and Scott Kudelka from the Water Resources Center at Minnesota State University Mankato will give a talk about trends related to the Minnesota River Basin including water quality data, demographics, agricultural, wildlife, conservation practices and recreation usage.

May 8<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) is the **Hungry Hollow Creek Clean Up** sponsored by CURE and Granite Falls Chamber from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon. Meet at Carl's Bakery on Main Street in Granite Falls. Hungry Hollow Creek flows into the Minnesota River just below the Granite Falls dam. Bring boots, gloves, pick up trucks and clothes that can get dirty. For more information call the Granite Falls Chamber at 320-564-4039 or the CURE office at 1-877-269-2873.

May 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> (Saturday and Sunday) is the 19<sup>th</sup> **Annual River and History Weekend** at Lac qui Parle County Park (Nash's Grove) on the Lac qui Parle River. Line up your canoes and kayaking partners, get that camping gear dusted off and plan on attending CURE's premiere outdoor event of the season. For more information, [www.cureriver.org](http://www.cureriver.org)

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

## **Water Quality Articles:**

[Digging in: What to know to grow](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). You can plant to put food on the table, but remember to start small, improve your soil, choose plants wisely and expect the unexpected.

[Ethanol industry stepping up its influence in Washington](#) (Associated Press). Is corn-based ethanol fuel the wave of the future, creating domestic jobs and vital to the nation's energy supply? Or is it a taxpayer boondoggle responsible for higher food prices?

[Natural resources bill hits a snag at the Capitol](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). A \$26 million environmental spending package was endorsed by the Minnesota Senate on Tuesday, but a bigger one was derailed when it got caught up in a lingering dispute over contested definitions and guidelines.

[Summer will be test for upcoming EPA ozone standard](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Air quality regulators will be watching to see how many alerts Minnesota issues this summer because of high ozone levels.

[Conservation group plans campaign against Rep. Bachmann](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). The League of Conservation Voters says it will campaign against Minnesota Rep. Michele Bachmann in this fall election.

[DNR expects rebound after fish winterkill](#) (Minnesota Outdoor News). A recent scan of some southwestern Minnesota lakeshore probably had local anglers fearing the worst - that the harsh winter of 2009-10 had decimated fish populations.

[Dennis Anderson: Hundreds of walleyes dumped](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Carcasses found in three spots are an embarrassment for the eight Chippewa bands that net Lake Mille Lacs.

[Artists are discovering that creativity is in their nature](#). (St. Paul Pioneer Press). Everything's going green at the Living Green Expo, including the art. "Greening the Horizon: Art Returns to Nature" features 10 local artists exploring environmental issues through painting, pottery, collage, wood turning and mixed media.

[Editorial: Recreational parks making progress](#) (Mankato Free Press). The Mankato region is showing significant growth as a place for recreational opportunities. That's good for local residents but also for tourism.

[Editorial: The right way to dispose of drugs](#) (Mankato Free Press). Blue Earth County is doing drug collections and doesn't need to know anything about where you got the stuff — whether it be aspirin, prescription pain killers or illegal street drugs.

*If all mankind were to disappear, the world would regenerate back to the rich state of equilibrium that existed ten thousand years ago. If insects were to vanish, the environment would collapse into chaos. – Edward O. Wilson*

**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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