

Riverblast

Hey fun lovers, the Big Blast is charged up and scheduled to go off Labor Day Friday and Saturday September 2nd and 3rd in New Ulm. The Valley's most loved event up and down the river will take place again for the 11th year in a row. Join your family of the river to celebrate, take pride, learn and enjoy our Minnesota River.

Free, yes, free admission, incredible entertainment, great food, adult and soft refreshments, bicycle tours, horse drawn carriage rides, camping on site, photo opportunities, Regional River History Center and Information Center open all weekend and much much more. Don't forget your fishin' pole, lawn chairs, bicycles, walkin' shoes and whatever else you need, it's gonna be a mega blast.

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

Celebration for Stonehill Regional Park at Del Clark Lake and the Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Watershed District

Stonehill Regional Park and Del Clark Lake are 25 years old and the Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed District has its 40th anniversary this year. There will be FREE admission to the Park on Wednesday August 10th, a whopper feed at a reduced price from 5-7 p.m. and a tour of watershed projects will begin at 6:30 p.m. in an air conditioned bus. You can also view many displays and pictures of the area as it developed into the beautiful park it is today. If you haven't visited the Stonehill Regional Park and Del Clark Lake this is a great opportunity to check it out and for those that are familiar with the park please feel free to come and share in the celebration.

For more information: 320-598-3319 or <http://www.lgpybwatershed.org/>

Cover Crops and Alfalfa Mulch Walk-n-Talk to be Held August 22nd

Join Rural Advantage, University of Minnesota Extension, and Carmen Fernholz for a walk-n-talk field day on cover crops and alfalfa mulch on August 22, 2011, starting at 1pm at the Fernholz farm near Madison, Minnesota.

How do you ensure your crops are getting enough nutrients? Organic producer Carmen Fernholz is attempting to answer that question with a fresh, new technique. With funding from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and some assistance from researchers at the University of Minnesota, Fernholz will be conducting his second year of on-farm research. He is looking at obtaining enough nitrogen from the use of alfalfa mulch and cover crops to grow a healthy, high yielding corn crop.

Attendees will hear an explanation of Fernholz's alfalfa mulch research and will learn about utilizing various cover crops in organic or conventional agriculture systems. A tour of the mulch and cover crop acres will be given. Attendees will also be able to view the machinery Fernholz uses to apply the alfalfa mulch and plant the cover crops.

This is an outdoor event and will be held rain or shine. Please dress accordingly.

Directions: From Madison (2484 Hwy 40 – Madison, MN) – Travel East on Hwy 40 for 1 mile. You will see an A-frame house on the North (left) side of the road; this is the Fernholz farm.

Contacts for this event: Jill Sackett, UMN Extension / Rural Advantage, 507-238-5449 or sacke032@umn.edu

Make-and-take snowshoe workshop at Lac qui Parle State Park

With the coming of fall, the winter months are just around the corner. Prepare early this year to enjoy the snow by making your own snowshoes during a two-day workshop at Lac qui Parle State Park. On Saturday, Oct. 15 from 9 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and Sunday, Oct. 16 from 10 am to 2 p.m., workshop

presenters will teach attendees how to string the laces on pre-built wooden snowshoe frames, then demonstrate how to use them.

For just \$75 and a few hours time, you can make and take home your very own pair of traditional Ojibwe-style (pointed end) snowshoes. The snowshoes will not only give you the ability to explore Minnesota's winter wilderness, but will give you the added satisfaction of knowing you made them yourself."

The \$75 registration fee includes the snowshoe kit and materials. Lunch will not be provided, so attendees should bring a sack lunch. Class size is limited to 12 people and advance registration is required so that the appropriate quantities and sizes of snowshoe kits may be ordered. Registration deadline is Oct. 3. To register, contact the park office at (320) 734-4450 ext 225 or e-mail cara.greger@state.mn.us .

The workshop will be held in the park education center. A State Park vehicle permit is required to enter the park and is available at the park office.

Changes coming to grants for Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring

Each year, the MPCA opens a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Surface Water Assessment Grants (SWAG) that support lake and stream water chemistry monitoring. One important change this year for prospective applicants to note – only those lakes or stream sites included in the RFP appendices will be eligible for monitoring through SWAG. The MPCA and its local partners specifically chose these sites as priority resources within each major watershed.

By limiting sites eligible for monitoring through SWAG, the MPCA will be able to support a second type of grant for event-based stream sampling, such as during spring snowmelt and rain events, on specific sites being monitored for flow.

This event-based water chemistry sampling, combined with flow information, will allow the MPCA to determine pollutant loads, which is critical information for investigating pollution sources.

Look for both RFPs to be released in fall 2011. Lists of eligible sites for each RFP are expected to be posted soon on the [SWAG webpage](#). Be sure to check out the recent changes to the web page, including photos of local projects.

If you have questions regarding either RFP or if you want to be added to the program's e-mail distribution list, please contact Ron Schwartz at ronald.schwartz@state.mn.us (Waterfront Bulletin, August 2011)

Competitive state grants available for water quality projects

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) announced today that \$16.6 million in competitive grants is available for projects that will protect and restore Minnesota's streams, rivers, lakes and groundwater. Funding for the competitive grants is provided by the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment.

BWSR Executive Director John Jaschke said interested citizens should contact an eligible local government unit to find out how they can support the grant application process and participate in local efforts to protect and restore water quality.

"Most of these dollars will be spent on conservation projects on privately owned lands, so citizen involvement is the key to the success of this grant program," said Jaschke.

Eligible projects include those that control stormwater runoff in urban and agricultural areas, or that will improve water quality by replacing problem septic systems, upgrading feedlots, or establishing native vegetation along shorelines in environmentally sensitive areas. Summaries of previously funded projects and more information about BWSR's role in the Legacy Amendment is available on the BWSR website: www.bwsr.state.mn.us/citizens.html

Minnesota's cities, counties, soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs), watershed districts, watershed management organizations, and joint powers organizations of these local government units are eligible for the grants.

The application period will begin August 8, 2011, and the deadline to apply is Sept. 20, 2011.

In addition to the competitive grants, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) has \$4.5 million available through its AgBMP Loan program, and interested landowners should apply for a loan during this same application period by contacting their SWCD.

Suzlon Rotor Corp. receives \$490,000 penalty for pollution violations

In a court settlement with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Suzlon Rotor Corp. has agreed to resolve air quality, hazardous waste, solid waste, and stormwater violations at its wind turbine blade manufacturing plant in Pipestone.

Under the terms of the consent decree, entered July 7 in Pipestone County District Court, Suzlon has completed corrective actions, and will pay a civil penalty of \$490,000.

A 2009 MPCA inspection revealed sandblasting operations far exceeded emissions standards for airborne particles. In addition, the company failed to evaluate waste for hazardous substances, or properly manage its hazardous waste. Other hazardous waste violations included improper disposal of lead-containing damaged turbine blades in a landfill. The lead has been recovered from the landfill.

The company did not have an air quality permit authorizing it to conduct sandblasting. It sandblasted without using air emission control equipment, and stored waste sandblast material outdoors in uncovered piles. Suzlon also installed a fourth blade-production line without the necessary air emissions permit. And it stored waste material outside, where it was exposed to stormwater, and did not receive a required industrial stormwater permit to do so.

The company is required to cease sandblasting, evaluate hazardous wastes, obtain necessary permits, properly dispose of waste lead, and prepare a stormwater pollution-prevention plan.

In 2008, Suzlon paid a \$19,000 penalty for alleged violations of air quality regulations when it failed to obtain an air quality permit prior to construction and operation of the Pipestone facility. That settlement included an agreement to obtain required permits before conducting new activities that required permits.

When calculating penalties, the MPCA takes into account how seriously the violation affected the environment, whether it is a first time or repeat violation, and how promptly the violation was reported to appropriate authorities. It also attempts to recover the calculated economic benefit gained by failure to comply with environmental laws in a timely manner.

For a comprehensive list of enforcement actions by the MPCA, go to <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/newscenter/enforcement.html> .

Interplastic Corp. agrees to \$15,000 fine, \$263,800 in facility improvements for alleged hazardous waste violations

St. Paul, Minn. – Interplastic Corporation will pay a \$15,000 civil penalty to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and is carrying out two supplemental environmental projects costing a total of \$263,800 for alleged environmental violations at its Minneapolis and Vadnais Heights plants.

The company manufactures unsaturated polyester resins at its Minneapolis plant, and gel coats and colorants at its Vadnais Heights plant. At both sites, Interplastic Corporation is licensed by the MPCA as a large-quantity generator of hazardous wastes.

The MPCA initiated enforcement action against Interplastic Corp. after hazardous waste compliance inspections by Hennepin County staff at the Minneapolis plant on Sept. 18, 2008, and March 31, 2009, and by MPCA staff at the Vadnais Heights plant on March 16, 2009.

Among the violations that Interplastic Corp. allegedly committed was transferring at least 759 55-gallon drums and 33 pails of ignitable hazardous waste resin from its Vadnais Heights site to its Minneapolis site, which is not permitted to accept hazardous wastes generated elsewhere. The waste was allegedly then stored and treated at the Minneapolis plant without an MPCA hazardous waste facility permit.

In addition, Interplastic Corp. allegedly shipped ignitable hazardous waste resin from its Minneapolis plant to a third-party without the required manifests via a carrier not licensed or permitted by the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

Other alleged violations involved the improper storage of ignitable hazardous waste resin and glycol at the Minneapolis plant and failure to evaluate wastes within 60 days of their generation to see if they are hazardous.

In accordance with the stipulation agreement, Interplastic Corp. has stopped shipping ignitable hazardous waste gel coat or resin from its Vadnais Heights site to its Minneapolis site, and this waste is no longer being treated at the Minneapolis site. The company has also corrected the other deficiencies noted during the hazardous waste inspections.

One of the supplemental environmental projects that Interplastic Corp. has agreed to perform is installation of a dust-collection system at its Vadnais Heights plant at a cost of \$110,200. This will decrease the amount of dust the company must dispose of as solid waste by about 60 55-gallon drums annually. It will also decrease the amount of raw material used in the production process, and decrease employee exposure to airborne dust.

The other supplemental environmental project involves improvements to the branch vent line to the thermal oxidizer at the Minneapolis plant at a cost of \$153,600. This will decrease the amount of hazardous waste generated by about 30 drums annually, decrease the amount of solid waste generated by about 30 drums annually, and decrease fume emissions to the air.

The stipulation agreement is one of the tools the MPCA uses to achieve compliance with environmental laws. When calculating penalties, the agency takes into account how seriously the violation affected the environment, whether it is a first-time or repeat violation, and how promptly the violation was reported to appropriate authorities. A stipulation agreement also attempts to recover the calculated economic benefit gained by failure to comply with environmental laws in a timely manner. For more information about enforcement actions by the MPCA, go to <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/pyri5fb>.

Scott Clean Water Education Program News

This is a bi-monthly publication providing education updates of the Scott Clean Water Education Program. In this issue are stories on: Residents Test Soil for Nutrients, In-Field Erosion & Sediment Control Seminar, and Blue Thumb Workshops. The newsletter can be found at: <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/scwepaugust.pdf>

Prinsburg business is fined \$17,700 for environmental violations

Willmar, Minn. — Prinsco Inc., a manufacturer of plastic drain pipe in Prinsburg, in southwestern Kandiyohi County, has agreed to pay a \$17,700 penalty to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) for alleged wastewater and stormwater violations. The company has also taken action to bring the business into compliance with federal and state regulations.

An MPCA inspection of the facility in 2010 found that Prinsco operated without the required federal and state permits for discharging industrial wastewater to waters of the state (Chetomba Creek) and for managing industrial stormwater. The business discharged nearly 10,000 gallons of industrial wastewater a day from a cooling system to Chetomba Creek via drain tile.

As part of the agreement, Prinsco has obtained the required industrial wastewater and stormwater permits, and is now allowed to discharge its cooling water to the creek. It is managing its stormwater in an appropriate manner, and has started collecting the required water samples.

The agreement, known as a stipulation agreement, is one of the tools the MPCA uses to achieve compliance with environmental laws. When calculating penalties, the agency takes into account how seriously the violation affected the environment, whether it was a first-time or repeat violation, and how promptly the violation was reported to appropriate authorities. The agency also attempts to recover the calculated economic benefit gained by failure to comply with environmental laws in a timely manner. For more information about managing solid waste, go to the MPCA website at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us>.

Grape Production Field Day

Join Winterhaven Vineyard and Nursery, University of Minnesota Extension, and Rural Advantage for a walk-n-talk field day on grape production and mechanized harvesting. The field day will be held August 23, 2011, starting at 1pm near Janesville, Minnesota, and will end at 3pm. Ray Winter and family, owners and operators of Winterhaven and Indian Island Winery, will be leading the tour.

Winterhaven Vineyard was established in the spring of 2000 while Winterhaven Nursery was established in 2001. The vineyard currently covers approximately 12 acres with over 6,000 vines. There are 17 different varieties of grapes with focus on cold-hardy varieties. The nursery sells bare-root and potted grape vines. A mechanized grape harvester was obtained in 2009 and Indian Island Winery was established the following year in 2010.

Ray Winter will be sharing his 11+ years of grape experience with attendees. Hear about how Winterhaven got started, ask questions about their grape production techniques, and see the harvester and other equipment used to make the operation a success.

This is an outdoor event and will be held rain or shine. Please dress accordingly. Trams will be used to travel from the parking area to the vineyard.

Directions: 18018 631st Avenue – Janesville, Minnesota 56048 (To make parking easier, we'll be meeting at Indian Island Winery. This is a change from the original advertising.)

From Janesville – Travel West on State Highway 14 to Smith's Mill. At Smith's Mill, turn left (south) onto Blue Earth County Road 37. Take Blue Earth County 37 for five miles. The winery will be on the right.

Contact for this event: Jill Sackett, UMN Extension / Rural Advantage, 507-238-5449, sacke032@umn.edu

Job Announcements:

Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist – Meeker and McLeod Counties

Work in a joint capacity with Pheasants Forever, Inc. (PF), Meeker SWCD, McLeod SWCD, USDA, and the Farm Bill Assistance Partnership (MN DNR, MN BWSR, and PF) to promote, accelerate enrollment, coordinate and implement the conservation provisions of the Federal Farm Bill and other related wildlife conservation programs. Activities will include program promotion, contract coordination, Conservation planning, conservation plan modification, site assessment and reporting. Provide technical assistance for wildlife habitat enhancement techniques to private landowners and public organizations. Meet with local chapters of Pheasants Forever to influence habitat management efforts and participate in statewide habitat meetings. Attend Farm Bill Assistance Partnership training and assist in coordinating technical assistance efforts. Implement specific conservation program to improve wildlife habitat. Assist or coordinate activities and projects as assigned by supervisor relevant to PF, the Farm Bill Assistance Partnership and Meeker/McLeod SWCDs.

Duties will also include promotion and incorporation of the Greenleaf Working Lands Initiative objectives and other private lands habitat programs. Biologist will also write grants to further local conservation

efforts and coordinate local efforts with state and national programs. The position will remain open until August 26, 2011. To apply, www.pheasantsforever.org/jobs

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

District Manager – Sherburne SWCD

The Sherburne Soil and Water Conservation District based out of Elk River is hiring a District Manager for an annual salary of \$50,000 to \$70,000. This is an “at-will” contract employee of the Sherburne SWCD providing leadership for financial management, personal, program planning, education and outreach and conservation project management. The District Manager acts on behalf of the Board of Supervisors and is supervised by the Board Chair. The District Manager must be a highly motivated, productive, self-starter with demonstrated leadership ability. The District Manager is charged with leading the organization and building an organizational culture that supports and implements the SWCD Mission established by the District Board.

This is a self-directed, management position responsible for program and organizational outcomes operating under the policy and operational direction of the elected Board of Supervisors. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/sherburneswcd.pdf>

Grant Opportunities

BWSR to issue RFP for \$21 million in Clean Water funds

On Aug. 8 the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an estimated \$21 million in Clean Water funding for implementing non-point restoration and protection projects. The application deadline is Sept. 20. Visit BWSR’s home page on Aug. 8 at www.bwsr.state.mn.us to view the RFP. Training webinars for potential applicants are scheduled for Aug 10, 11, and 17. Registration is required for the training sessions. Visit www.bwsr.state.mn.us/training/index.html for registration information. (Waterfront Bulletin, August 2011)

Blog: Legacy Grants Now Available to Citizen Groups (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Citizen groups can now receive Legacy Amendment grants to improve water quality, including lake associations and nonprofit groups.

Events:

August 13th (Saturday) is the **North Star Chapter of the Sierra Club Bicycle Outing** from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. It will run from Osakis to Alexandria and back along the Central Lakes Trail, about 30 miles, with stops for birds and wildflowers. The trail runs past lakes and through prairies, marshes, and some woodlands, so participants will see a large variety of birds and seasonal wildflowers. Bring your water, lunch, and snacks, as well as sun protection. To register and receive trailhead information, as well as for notification in case of inclement weather, contact Kay Slama at 320-796-5871 or slama@morris.umn.edu

August 15th (Monday) is the **Bus Tour of Niche Crops Operation** leaving from Montevideo at 11 a.m. from the Land Stewardship Project office (301 State Road) and return at approximately 6:30 p.m. Using niche crops as the basis for profitable biofuel and livestock enterprises will be the focus of a free bus tour. Participants are encouraged to bring a sack lunch to eat on the bus. To register, contact Jessi Wood at 320-269-2105 or jwood@landstewardshipproject.org.

August 18th (Thursday) is the **Field Day on Perennial Grasses for Bio-Energy Production** from 1:45 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. at the Prairie Horizons Farm (29731 302nd St. – Starbuck, MN) near Starbuck, Minnesota. Rural Advantage and University of Minnesota Extension with Prairie Horizons Farm, the Land Stewardship Project, and the USDA-ARS Soils Lab are to host an afternoon of discussion on using perennial grasses for bio-energy production. For more information on the USDA-ARS Field Day, call 320-589-3411 or visit www.ars.usda.gov/mwa/ncscl

August 20th (Saturday) is the **Causes of the US/Dakota War of 1862 program** at 1:00 p.m. in the Historic Commissary at Fort Ridgely State Park and Historic Site. The causes were many and complicated. Historian John LaBatte discusses his research on this subject. Many of John's Dakota and white ancestors were involved in the war. At 2:30, John will conduct a Battlefield Tour. Fort Ridgely was attacked twice in 1862 by Dakota Indians and is recognized by the National Park Service as a National Battlefield. One fee is charged for both events. Sponsored by Nicollet County Historical Society. For more info call (507) 426-7888, (507) 934-2160 or visit <http://www.nchsmn.org/>

August 27th (Saturday) is the **Dakota Family Caravan to Fort Snelling program** at 1:30 p.m. by Mary Bakeman in the Historic Commissary at Fort Ridgely State Park and Historic Site. Following the conclusion of the US/Dakota War in 1862, about 1600 Dakota people were taken to Fort Snelling. Mary Bakeman is the owner of Park Genealogical Books and has been researching and writing family histories for 30 years. Mary will have books for sale. A fee is charged. Sponsored by Nicollet County Historical Society. For more info call (507) 426-7888, (507) 934-2160 or visit <http://www.nchsmn.org/>

September 3rd (Saturday) is the **Fort Ridgely Cemetery Walk and Perpetual Vaudeville** starting at 5:00 p.m. at Fort Ridgely State Park and Historic Site. Family histories of persons buried in Fort Ridgely will be shared by their descendants. Hear the stories of people who are part of the history of this region. Following the Cemetery Walk, stroll over to the amphitheater and enjoy Peter Bloedel as he performs his Perpetual Vaudeville program. Starting at 7:00pm, Peter will combine magic, juggling, music and comedy for a fast paced event. Voluntary donation. Sponsored by Nicollet County Historical Society. For more info call (507) 426-7888, (507) 934-2160 or visit <http://www.nchsmn.org/>

September 19th (Monday) is the **Minnesota River Board Meeting** in Windom starting at 9:00 a.m. For more information contact Karnell Johnson at 507-389-5491 or <http://www.minnesotariver.org/>

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

Environmental/Conservation Articles:

[‘U’ president getting ag education](#) (Fairmont Sentinel). Just one month into his tenure as president of the University of Minnesota, Eric Kaler used his first official trip outside the Twin Cities to assure farmers how important agriculture is to the university.

[Rescued herons stretch their wings](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The last two birds found in the tornado-ruined rookery on the Mississippi River have a new home at a lake in Inver Grove Heights.

[Pawlenty: Climate change may be ‘because of natural causes’](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Former Gov. Tim Pawlenty's position on climate change has now shifted from “one of the most important issues of our time” to “most of it, maybe all of it, is because of natural causes.”

[Minn. DNR launches zebra mussel decontamination program](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). New high-pressure washers will be stationed at public access points at a few Minnesota lakes this weekend as part of a ramped-up effort to prevent the spread of zebra mussels and other invasive species.

[Commentary: In Minnesota town, the sewage flows, but the funding doesn't](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). While long-term deficit reduction is necessary, the political decision to cut the current federal budget is already being felt in Dakota.

[Minnesota Farm Bureau comments on next Farm Bill](#) (Alexandria Echo Press). Minnesota Farm Bureau President Kevin Paap provided comments on the next farm bill at Farmfest.

[Bikers, walkers get nod in transit plan](#) (Mankato Free Press). Mankato seems intent on quickly making noticeable improvements for people who like to walk, ride bikes and use public transportation.

[Duck and goose numbers improve; wetland conditions excellent](#) (St. Cloud Times). The state's estimated breeding duck population was 687,000 compared to last year's estimate of 531,000.

[Yards can go au naturel in Minneapolis](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Attempts to eschew the lawn in favor of prairie plantings have been stymied by the city's 8-inch limit.

[Smart policy sprouts on St. Paul rooftop](#) (91.3 KUWS). Two years ago when planners designed the new St. Paul Fire Department headquarters, they were thinking with sustainability in mind.

[Target's waste-not plan](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Commercial shoots can be a wasteland, so Target hires a company to see that it's not.

We need freedom to roam across land owned by no one but protected by all, whose unchanging horizon is the same that bounded the world of our millennial ancestors. – Edward O. Wilson

[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.](#)

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,](#)

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