

Minn. River Board's Conservation Market plan beginning to take shape across the state

By Tom Cherveney, West Central Tribune tcherveney@wctrib.com

MONTEVIDEO — What if it was possible to reduce the amount of pollution reaching a waterway by making it profitable for landowners to increase the acres of wildlife habitat in its watershed?

That's the promise of ecosystem credit trading, and why a team supported by the Minnesota River Board is working to create the Conservation Marketplace of Minnesota. It would play the role of linking those who could save money by buying eco-credits, and farmers who could profit by selling them.

It could compensate landowners for conservation practices that reduce targeted pollutants in waterways, such as phosphorus.

Growing perennial crops like alfalfa for haying, or planting native grass buffers that offer habitat for pheasant and other wildlife along waterways, may be among the qualifying practices.

"You mean, people will pay me for this?" is the question the team wants to answer with a resounding "yes," according to Susie Carlin, Minnesota River Board program director, and Jim Klang of Kieser & Associates, of Kalamazoo, Mich. They outlined the progress toward creating Minnesota's first largescale, eco-services credit trading system to members of the Minnesota River Board at its meeting Monday in Montevideo.

Three watershed groups representing the Sauk River, Blue Earth River and middle and lower reaches of the Minnesota River are working together to launch the marketplace. Grant funding and in-kind services totaling more than \$1 million have been committed to its start, according to Carlin, whose offices are located at the River Basin Center at Minnesota State University-Mankato.

In the Minnesota River basin, new and stricter requirements are forcing wastewater treatment plants to reduce phosphorus discharges.

The marketplace would provide the treatment plants with an option: Instead of investing in very expensive upgrades, they could purchase credits representing the pounds of phosphorus they must reduce under the new requirements.

Landowners could sell the credits by implementing conservation practices that are effective at reducing phosphorus from nonpoint sources. Klang said the goal is to make this a voluntary marketplace, similar to the Chicago Carbon Trading Market.

To work, it must be able to show that pollution reduction goals are being met, that it can save money for those buying credits and that it can compensate landowners at rates that match existing government programs.

Along with financial rewards, the credit system could offer more flexibility than do some government programs. It also could allow "stacking," or selling credits for multiple benefits, according to Klang and Carlin.

Along with meeting these tall orders, this approach must also meet the risks that come with any marketdriven process, Klang said. He acknowledged just how challenging it can be: Carbon traded for as much as \$8 a metric ton on the Chicago market at one point; more recently, it plummeted to 15 cents per metric ton.

But longer term, the team members said they believe that both policy and economics will favor a market-oriented option. It can only be possible if both the market system and the mechanism to assure that credits are meeting the stated objectives exist.

The group believes that eventually an administrative fee on the contracts between buyers and sellers can make the Conservation Marketplace of Minnesota economically self-sufficient. Klang said it will take time to reach the volume necessary for self-sufficiency, however.

S.D. to monitor Minnesota River tributaries

By Tom Cherveney, West Central Tribune tcherveney@wctrib.com

MONTEVIDEO — An extensive, two-year monitoring program will be launched this year to analyze water quality in two South Dakota tributaries to the upper portion of the Minnesota River.

The project will include extensive water quality monitoring at 14 sites in the Whetstone River and Yellow Bank River watersheds, according to Jay Gilbertson, manager of the East Dakota Water Development District in Brookings, S.D. He outlined the project to members of the Minnesota River Board at their meeting Monday in Montevideo.

Gilbertson said that only limited monitoring has been conducted in the two watersheds in previous years. The timing of some water quality tests has not provided the information needed for a thorough understanding of the watersheds, he said.

The state of South Dakota has now committed to a comprehensive testing program that should provide the kind of information needed to determine what types of issues may need addressing.

The majority of both watersheds lie in South Dakota, but monitoring on the Minnesota side of the border has indicated some issues, such as sediment loads in the Whetstone River.

Members of the Minnesota River Board welcomed the news. Lac qui Parle County Commissioner Harold Solem, a member of the Minnesota River Board of directors, said the two South Dakota watersheds are important components of the upper watershed. Both of the tributaries lie largely in the Buffalo Ridge area of South Dakota, or at an elevation well above the Minnesota River. "So it comes quite fast," he said of the water.

Minnesota River Documentary

Check out the three-minute promo for the Minnesota River documentary on youtube at this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B5iKHaf7OaU>. The web site <http://www.mnriver.org> promotes the development of the full "Working Together for the Minnesota River" website. When that site is up and running, natural resource professionals and the public will be able to access and share information about all the public lands and restoration projects in the Minnesota River Basin. Our goal is collaboration through communication.

Survey: Minn. a leader in organic farming

By [Associated Press](#) | *Albert Lea Tribune*

ST. PAUL — A new survey by the U.S. Department of Agriculture shows that Minnesota ranks among the Top 10 states with the largest numbers of certified organic farms.

According to the 2008 Organic Production Survey, Minnesota's organic sector generated \$69 million in sales in 2008. Nationwide, organic sales totaled \$3.16 billion.

Minnesota placed seventh with 550 organic farms, while California was first with over 2,000. Minnesota ranked first nationally in the production of organic soybeans and in the top three in acreage of other crops such as corn, oats and barley. (February 6, 2010)

Round Table Discussion on Soil Health

Sponsored by the [S. Central Chapter of the Sustainable Farming Assoc.](#) at 6:30 p.m. on February 10, 2010 (Wednesday) at the Willows Restaurant, just N. of Hwy 30 on Hwy 13 near New Richland.

This meeting is open to friends and members of the S. Central SFA chapter. It will be a chance to share information on soil improvement and learn about the experiences of members who have devoted many years to increasing soil health.

Extension Educator, Jill Sackett, has agreed to facilitate the meeting. Please note: our chapter's annual meeting is set for Mar. 6, 2010. For more information call 507 210-2286 or 507 256-4876.

MPCA Seeks Comments on Water Quality Standard Proposed for South Metro Mississippi River

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency today announced a public comment period will begin Feb. 8 and continue through March 26 on a water quality standard proposed for the south metro Mississippi River. The public is encouraged to attend meetings on the standard on Feb. 11, from 2 p.m. - 7 p.m., at the University of Minnesota Southern Research and Outreach Center in Waseca, and on Feb. 23, from 2 p.m. - 7 p.m., at the St. James Hotel in Red Wing.

The MPCA is conducting a pollution study of this reach of the Mississippi River. It is called a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) study and includes setting a water quality standard specifically for this stretch of the river. The MPCA is proposing this specific standard because existing standards are not designed to protect the unique aquatic ecosystem of this part of the river.

The proposed standard is an integral part of the pollution study, which will be finalized after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency approves the standard. The pollution study will have a separate comment period.

The standard will apply to the stretch of the Mississippi River running from its confluence with the Minnesota River at Fort Snelling to upper Lake Pepin at Red Wing. The proposed standard addresses water clarity and the growth of rooted vegetation needed for a healthy ecosystem.

The south metro Mississippi has benefited from improved wastewater treatment and the separation of stormwater from sanitary sewer lines during the past two decades, resulting in a significant improvement in several indicators of river health, such as higher dissolved oxygen, lower ammonia toxicity and greater fish abundance.

However, the Mississippi remains severely impaired by suspended solids that prevent the growth of healthy rooted vegetation in shallower areas of the river, especially between the St. Paul barge terminal and Hastings. Total suspended solids (TSS) are tiny particles of soil and other matter that remain dispersed — or suspended — in water, making the water turbid or cloudy. This cloudiness prevents sunlight from penetrating the water and growing rooted aquatic vegetation, thereby reducing fish and wildlife habitat. The particles also carry nutrients that cause algal blooms.

The proposed Mississippi River standard for summer months includes the following components:
-- 32 parts per million of total suspended solids at Lock and Dam No. 2 and No. 3, a decrease from the current seasonal average of 47 ppm. After extensive research, the MPCA believes this standard will allow enough light penetration to grow more submerged aquatic vegetation.

-- 21 percent or greater frequency of occurrence of submerged aquatic vegetation — roughly double the frequency with which this vegetation is currently found in main channel border areas suitable for its growth. For example, if a researcher took 100 river samples, at least 21 of them would need to include the desired vegetation species to meet this part of the standard. Considerably higher frequencies would be expected for backwaters.

The MPCA believes this site-specific standard will lead to an improvement in the aquatic ecosystem of the south metro Mississippi River, with benefits to fish, waterfowl and mussels, along with improved aesthetics and recreation.

The deadline for comments, which must be in writing, is 4:30 p.m. on March 26. Submit comments to Norman Senjem, MPCA, 18 Wood Lake Drive SE, Rochester, MN 55904, by fax at 507-280-5513, or by e-mail at norman.senjem@state.mn.us. Senjem can be reached by phone at 507-206-2655 or toll-free at 1-800-657-3864. Additional details about the proposed standard can be found on the MPCA Web site at www.pca.state.mn.

Clean Water Council vacancies

The Clean Water Council has a vacancy for a member representing an Environmental Organization to complete a four-year term expiring on January 3, 2011. Council members are appointed by the Governor. The application deadline is Tuesday, February 23 and the first date the Governor can make an appointment to the position is Friday, March 5, 2010. Information about the Clean Water Council and this vacancy can be found on the Secretary of State's [Open Commissions and Appointments](#) web site, along with the application forms. Information about the Clean Water Council; its members, publications, and past meeting agendas and minutes can be found on the Council's web site at [Clean Water Council](#).

The Council member representing Tribal Governments is also vacant. That will be posted on the March 2010 list of vacancies at the Secretary of State's [Open Commissions and Appointments](#) web site. Please check this site for more information.

3rd Crops: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner

The second of four 3rd Crop Producer Meetings will be hosted by Rural Advantage on Monday, February 22, 2010. "3rd Crops: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner" will have speakers focused on producing edible 3rd crops as well as presentations on the logistics of selling edible 3rd crops.

10:00am: The day will start out with a presentation from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA). Tamara Gerdes, MDA, will be speaking on the necessary licensing required to sell fruits, vegetables, baked goods, meats, etc. at Farmer's Markets or to grocery stores and restaurants. If you are thinking of getting into selling produce or diversifying your marketing, this presentation will be the one for you.

10:45am: Laura Kieser with University of Minnesota Extension and Four Seasons Farm will be sharing her knowledge of goat production with attendees. Goat production for meat and milk has been increasing in popularity here in Minnesota. Goats also make excellent 4-H projects.

11:15am: The last speaker of the morning session is Joel Girardin. Girardin is an avid garlic producer and will be sharing his knowledge and experiences in garlic production. Joel has spoken to numerous groups on garlic production and will have handouts available.

1:00pm: Regi Haslett-Marroquin with the Rural Enterprise Center of Northfield, Minnesota, will start out the afternoon session. Haslett-Marroquin will be giving his presentation entitled, "Free Range Poultry and Perennial 3rd Crops." Haslett-Marroquin also runs Finca Mirasol with his family where they raise heritage poultry and Cornish meat broilers as well as black turtle beans.

1:30pm: Stephanie Heim with University of Minnesota Extension will be speaking on the Farm to School Program. The Farm to School Program educates students on the path our food takes from grower to plate as well as teaching students healthy eating skills. The program is also a direct market for local farmers near the facilities taking part in Farm to School.

2:00pm: Grass-fed beef is becoming increasingly popular around the nation. Dr. Ryan Cox, Meat Specialist, with University of Minnesota Extension will explain the differences and benefits of grass-fed beef.

2:30pm: The last speaker of the afternoon session will be Rex Oberhelman of Earth Works and the Blue Ribbon Foundation. Oberhelman will be sharing his thoughts on local produce disbursement and marketing.

3:00pm: The speakers will be able to answer any audience questions during their presentations, but if further time for questions and discussion is needed, Rural Advantage has scheduled time at the end of the day for those speakers and attendees that would like to continue networking.

All 2010 Third Crop Producer Meetings will be held at the Knights of Columbus Hall (920 East 10th Street) in Fairmont, Minnesota. Pre-registration is not necessary and there is no cost. Registration opens at 9:30am with the first speaker at 10:00am. There will be an hour break for lunch on your own. If you are interested in carpooling from the metro area, Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA) will have a van available.

Contact MISA at 1-800-909-6472 or misamail@umn.edu. For further information regarding the 3rd Crop Producer Meetings contact Jill Sackett, Extension Educator – Conservation Agronomist, at the Rural Advantage office: 507-238-5449 sacke032@umn.edu.

Can Iowans help reduce flooding with the Million Gallon Challenge?

The Indian Creek Nature Center in Cedar Rapids is selling 65-gallon rain barrels as part of its Million Gallon Challenge to help reduce stormwater runoff. For the entire story, <http://gazetteonline.com/blogs/homegrown/2010/01/27/can-iowans-help-reduce-flooding-with-the-million-gallon-challenge>

Disappearing Ducks? North America's Prairie Potholes Vulnerable to Warming Climates

The loss of wetlands in the prairie pothole region of central North America due to a warmer and drier climate will negatively affect millions of waterfowl that depend on the region for food, shelter and raising young, according to research published today in the journal *BioScience*.

The new research shows that the region appears to be much more sensitive to climate warming and drying than previously thought.

"The impact to the millions of wetlands that attract countless ducks to these breeding grounds in spring makes it difficult to imagine how to maintain today's level of waterfowl populations in altered climate conditions," said Dr. Glenn Guntenspergen, a U.S. Geological Survey researcher and one of the report authors. "Parents may not have time to raise their young to where they can fly because of wetlands drying up too quickly in the warming climate of the future," he added.

A new wetland model developed by the authors to understand the impacts of climate change on wetlands in the prairie pothole region projected major reductions in water volume, shortening of the time water remains in wetlands and changes to wetland vegetation dynamics in this 800,000-square kilometer region in the United States (North and South Dakota, Montana, Minnesota and Iowa) and Canada.

Many wetland species -- such as waterfowl and amphibians -- require a minimum time in water to complete their life cycles. For example, most dabbling ducks -- such as mallards and teal-- require at least 80 to 110 days of surface water for their young to grow to where they can fly and for breeding adults to complete molting, the time when birds are flightless while growing new feathers. In addition, an abundance of wetlands are needed because breeding waterfowl typically isolate themselves from others of the same species.

"Unfortunately, the model simulations show that under forecasted climate-change scenarios for this region (an increase of 4-degrees Celsius), the western prairie potholes will be too dry and the eastern ones will have too few functional wetlands and nesting habitat to support historical levels of waterfowl and other wetland-dependent species," said Dr. W. Carter Johnson, another study author and a researcher at South Dakota State University.

The authors noted that their model allowed a more comprehensive analysis of climate change impacts across the northern prairies because it simultaneously examined the hydrology and vegetation dynamics of the wetland complex, which are both important for the wildlife that depend on the prairie potholes for part or all of their life cycles.

“Our results indicate that the prairie wetlands are highly vulnerable to climate warming, and are less resilient than we previously believed,” said Guntenspergen. “All but the very wettest of the historic boom years for waterfowl production in the more arid parts of the prairie pothole region may be bust years in a 4-degrees Celsius warmer climate.”

These findings may serve as a foundation for managers and policy makers to develop management plans to prepare for and adapt to climate change in the prairie pothole region.

The article, *Prairie wetland complexes as landscape functional units in a changing climate*, was published in *BioScience* (60[2]:128-140) and authored by researchers with South Dakota State University, the U.S. Geological Survey, University of Montana, St. Olaf College, The Desert Research Institute-University of Nevada, and the University of Idaho. (USGS newsrelease)

Minnesota Schools Cutting Carbon awards \$200,000 in grants to 23 schools across the state for student-led energy projects

The Minnesota Schools Cutting Carbon (MnSCC) Project has announced the award of over \$200,000 in 19 grants to 23 public high schools, colleges and universities across Minnesota. Projects range from making energy improvements such as energy efficient lighting and motion sensors; installing renewable energy projects including solar photovoltaic and solar thermal systems; increasing recycling and composting; reducing paper use and food waste; supporting community greenhouse production of local foods; and increasing sustainable transportation options by encouraging walking, biking, carpooling and bus riding to school.

“The hard work the teams have put into implementing their carbon reduction strategies at their schools has been amazing. Across Minnesota—rural and urban, college and high school—we are seeing young people take on leadership roles in reducing energy usage and implementing clean energy projects. It is unfortunate we only have limited funds, because we saw so many creative projects submitted and could only afford to fund a small percentage,” said Patrick Santelli, Schools Cutting Carbon Project Coordinator. Patrick is working closely with the participating schools to help them plan and implement projects at their schools. Sponsors and mentors from across the state are also welcome to provide support and guidance to teams.

Funding for these 19 grants and for the MnSCC Project is provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR). The Trust Fund is a permanent fund constitutionally established by the citizens of Minnesota to assist in the protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state’s air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources.

One hundred public high schools, colleges and universities are joined together in the Minnesota Schools Cutting Carbon program to reduce their carbon emissions and save on energy costs. Student teams, led by a faculty coach and supported by school administrators and building operators, are exploring no-cost and low-cost behavior changes as well as larger projects to increase energy efficiency and create clean energy on campus. To view the schools participating across the state and find out how you can get involved, please visit www.SchoolsCuttingCarbon.org.

Grant Recipients and Project Descriptions: *Gobblers Go Green - Aitkin High School; Beavers Cut More than Trees - Bemidji State University; We Only Have One Earth: Reducing Our Carbon Footprint and Emissions - Crosby-Ironton High School; LED Retrofit of Exterior Lighting - Dakota County Technical College; Triple Purpose Solar Training and Demonstration Project - Eden Valley-Watkins High School; Northeast Higher Education District Sustainability Collaborative - Hibbing, Itasca, Mesabi Range, Rainy River, and Vermillion Community Colleges; Mix, Match, Recycle - Higher Ground Academy, St. Paul;*

Walking Softer: Lightening John Marshall High School's Carbon Footprint - John Marshall High School, Rochester; Reducing Electricity Use in Our School and Community - Ortonville School District; The Green Take-Over - Proctor High School, Proctor; Cooling Our Heels - Rosemount High School; Reducing Our Carbon Footprint through Alternate Energy - St. Michael-Albertville High School; Southwest Community Education Green Team Solar Lighting Project - Southwest High School, Minneapolis; EcoCity Works! Cuts Carbon - The City, Inc., Minneapolis; UMD Cutting Carbon: Conservation, Education and Investigation - University of Minnesota – Duluth; Students Using Natural Energy (SUN-E): Solar Thermal Installation and Education Project - University of Minnesota – Morris; Willmar Community Greenhouse Expansion - Willmar Public School; Winona Senior High School Farm to School, Bike to School, and Water to School - Winona Senior High School; A Million Miles per Gallon: Transitioning to a Bicycle-Based Community - Winona State University

About the program: Minnesota Schools Cutting Carbon is a joint program of the Clean Energy Resource Teams, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and Minnesota Office of Energy Security. Funding for this project was provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources.

ASIAN CARP REGIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE TO HOLD FEB. 12 PUBLIC MEETING IN CHICAGO

Chicago (Feb. 3, 2010) – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, on behalf of the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee, will hold a meeting in Chicago on Feb. 12 to discuss plans and get recommendations on Asian carp control efforts. The committee will answer questions and listen to comments from the public. A second meeting will be scheduled in the near future elsewhere in the Great Lakes basin.

Who: Senior representatives from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; U.S. Coast Guard; State of Illinois and other Great Lakes states; City of Chicago; Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago; White House Council on Environmental Quality; and Scientific experts

When: 3:00 – 6:00 p.m., Friday, Feb. 12; Where: Room 331; Metcalfe Federal Building; 77 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Ill.

The meeting also will be available via live web stream at: <http://www.epa.gov/greatlakes/live> Those who cannot attend the meeting in person can submit questions on the Web site.

When available, the framework and a transcript of the meeting will be posted on <http://www.asiancarp.org/regionalcoordination>. Comments on the framework may also be submitted online at the above Web site.

NOMINATIONS AND REGISTRATION OPEN FOR 2010 ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVE AWARDS

On May 27, 2010, the Environmental Initiative Awards will celebrate innovative, collaborative projects that have harnessed the power of partnership to produce tangible, positive environmental outcomes in Minnesota. Fifteen finalist projects will be honored, five winners will be announced and one finalist will be selected by the audience to receive the highly sought-after Partnership of the Year award.

For more information, <http://www.mn-ei.org/awards/finalistswinners.html> Join the celebration by nominating your favorite partnership-based environmental project or by reserving your seat for the Awards event.

At the Capitol / Bill targets bottled water use by state

Here's a proposal that will cause some chatter at the water cooler. A Minnesota state lawmaker wants government employees to switch from bottled water to the tap.

A bill introduced in the House on Thursday aims to discourage state agencies from providing bottled water for visitors and employees. The legislation would require them to use drinking fountains or tap water instead.

DFL state Rep. Paul Gardner, of Shoreview, said he doesn't want the bill to become law but hopes to catch the attention of lawmakers about state spending on bottled water.

Gardner estimated it costs the state \$1 a gallon for bottled water when tap water is available. He said the state should cut unnecessary costs in tough economic times. (St. Paul Pioneer Press, 02/04/2010)

James No-Bonding 007

The organization "Minnesota Sportsmen for Change" is sponsoring a letter/email writing campaign to the state legislature about no funds in the bonding bill for the purchase of state wildlife management areas. For more information, <http://www.sportsmenforchange.org/>

Job Announcements:

Landscape Restoration Specialist

The Anoka Conservation District has the following employment opportunity: Landscape Restoration Specialist

Specifics about the position can be found by accessing the following link:

http://www.anokanaturalresources.com/acd/info/employ_opp.htm

Assistant Professor of Crop Science. University of Wisconsin-River Falls

A member of the University of Wisconsin System, located within the 30-mile radius of the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metro region, in scenic western Wisconsin. Primary instructional responsibilities associated with this full-time, nine month, tenure-track faculty position involve teaching undergraduate lecture and laboratory courses, including Weed Control, Integrated Pest Mgmt, Sustainable Ag, and Organic Production Systems. Review of applications begins March 15, 2010 and continues until the position is filled. On line applications are required at <https://jobs.uwrf.edu/applicants/jsp/shared/>

Events:

February 18th (Thursday) is **Nutrients in Our Environment: Past, Present, and Beyond Conference** from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Verizon Civic Center in downtown Mankato. To register please call 651-201-6141. A \$10 registration fee includes lunch and refreshments. For additional information go to <http://www.upstreamheroes.org/nutmgmtconf.php>

February 20th (Saturday) is the **Clean Up the River Environment (CURE) Annual Meeting** starting at 6:00 p.m. at the Hollywood Theater in Montevideo. For more information <http://www.cureriver.org/events.html>

February 22nd (Monday) is the presentation **Unquenchable: America's Water Crisis and What to Do About it** by Robert Glennon, Professor of Law and Public Policy in the Rogers College of Law at the University of Arizona. Professor Glennon will share his insights on sustainability of our current water use. The evening will also feature a Minnesota panel of water resource experts. The event goes from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the University of Minnesota St. Paul Student Center Theater.

March 11th and 12th (Thursday and Friday) is the **Minnesota Erosion Control Association's Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Conference & Trade Show** at the Holiday Inn & Suites in St. Cloud. Network with stormwater and erosion control professionals from around the Midwest and learn about cutting edge projects, innovative designs and products. For more information: <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/mecaannuaconf.pdf>

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

Water Quality Articles:

[Organic producers discuss their ventures at state's organic conference](#) (AgriNews). Nett Hart is an experienced organic gardener who admits she's made mistakes along the way — and has learned from them.

[Research determines pork industry's carbon footprint](#) (AgriNews). The Pork Checkoff is funding research to determine the pork industry's carbon footprint.

[Once-in-lifetime find: battle-locked dead moose](#) (Minnesota Outdoor News). A moose shed is a rare, treasured find among shed antler hunters. But a pair of antlers? How about two pairs, still attached to the bodies of deceased bulls, and locked together?

[Legislative auditor looking at state lands, easements](#) (Minnesota Outdoor News). The state legislative auditor is evaluating land holdings and easements DNR has, easements the Board of Water and Soil Resources holds, as well as payments in lieu of taxes.

[Maple Grove couple thought they had the OK to tap park trees for maple syrup; Park District says they don't.](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Each March for the past 30 years, Don and Elaine O'Brien trekked into the woods that were once part of their farm in Maple Grove. Bearing taps and bags, they set about collecting sap from dozens of maple trees to boil into maple syrup.

[New 3M plan: little pollution, much resistance](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Residents in Cottage Grove are once again fighting with 3M over waste chemical concerns--even though the company's new enterprise would produce little change in pollution levels.

[Groups asking for review of outdoors amendment language](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Outdoors and conservation groups will ask the legislature to re-define the key concepts in the constitutional amendment dedicating sales tax money to the environment.

[Dennis Anderson: The puzzle of politics never quite clears up](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Actions by Rep. Phyllis Kahn that probably weren't meant to be public raise the usual question: Why?

[DNR to fishermen: Clean up or pay up](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The DNR is using GPS technology and hands-on sleuthing to crack down on ice fishermen who leave litter. Fines are as high as \$2,000.

[Recycling programs expand through partnerships](#) (Owatonna People's Express). Entrepreneurs are constantly developing new uses for recycled plastics, manufacturers are researching better methods to either separate different types of plastics or use mixed plastic resins together and more facilities are accepting various plastics for recycling.

[What's killing Minnesota's moose?](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The population of the iconic animal in northeastern Minnesota has declined again, based on the latest aerial survey this winter by the Department of Natural Resources.

[Mississippi River water quality meetings set](#) (Mankato Free Press). The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is holding public meetings on a water quality standard proposed for the south metro Mississippi River.

There's too much greed, too much consumption. We have to focus on saving some portion of nature for the next millennium. – George Schaller

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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