

President's 2012 Budget: No Love for Clean Water Includes Deep Budget Cuts for EPA (Clean Water Network)

The proposed 2012 budget released on Monday – February 14th – includes [dramatic cuts to programs at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#). In total, EPA will be receiving \$9 billion in funding. This number represents a \$1.3 billion loss for EPA programs from the 2010 budget (2010 year referenced in report because no official budget was passed for FY 2011). The Great Lakes restoration Initiative and Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds were the hardest hit.

Valentine Day Cuts include:

- Great Lakes Restoration initiative - \$250 million requested form FY 2012. Represents loss of \$125 million from FY 2010 (\$450 million)
- Clean Water and Drinking State Revolving Funds - \$2.54 billion requested for FY 2012. Represents loss of \$947 million from FY 2010 (\$3.847)
- EPA Homeland Security Activities - \$104 million requested for FY 2012. Represents loss of \$50 million from FY 2010 (\$154 million)
- Nonpoint source grants - \$165 million requested for 2012. Represents loss of \$36 million from FY 2010 (\$201 million)

The programs listed above were the lucky ones at EPA. In addition to those funding reductions, some programs at EPA were outright eliminated in the President's 2012 budget.

- Targeted Airshed Grants Program- all \$20 million of funding received in FY 2010 was eliminated in FY 2012 budget.
- Targeted Water Infrastructure Grants Program- all \$157 million of funding received in FY 2010 was eliminated in FY 2012 budget.
- Local Government Climate Change Grants Program- all \$10 million of funding received in FY 2010 was eliminated in FY 2012 budget.
- Diesel Emissions Reduction Grants Program- all \$60 million of funding received in FY 2010 was eliminated in FY 2012 budget.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Funding Reductions

- Resources Conservation and Development Program- all \$51 million of funding received in FY 2010 was eliminated in FY 2012 budget.
- Watershed and Flood Prevention Program- all \$30 million of funding received in FY 2010 was eliminated in FY 2012 budget.
- Watershed Rehabilitation Program- all \$40 million of funding received in FY 2010 was eliminated in FY 2012 budget.

For more information on the overall budget proposed by the President, visit [the budget section](#) of the White House's website. For more information on EPA's proposed FY 2012 Budget click [HERE](#). Stay tuned for a more comprehensive analysis of the budget cuts in the President's budget later this week.

Sphagnum Moss Pool Treatment by Leigh Pomperoy

Some good news: Minnesota State University Mankato has recently adopted the [PoolNaturally](#) system of using sphagnum moss to treat the water in its pool, thus reducing the use of chlorine in the pool. They are following the lead of, and got the word from, the Mankato YMCA, which switched to the sphagnum moss-based system last year.

The system is being adopted by more and more pools in Minnesota. Lowering the use of chlorine (and other harmful chemicals) in pool water means a healthier swimming environment and fewer chemicals being released into the environment. Many people who are especially sensitive to chlorine are now able to swim in public pools treated with the moss-based system.

Minnesota State University Mankato Biology Department emeritus Don Gordon wrote about the cleaning properties of sphagnum moss as early as 2008: <http://voxverax.blogspot.com/2010/04/moss-based-filter-system-means-less.html>

The New York Times made mention of the system in 2009:
<http://greeninc.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/08/28/clean-pools-less-chlorine-with-moss/>

Minnesota Public Radio followed up: <http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2009/08/17/moss-pool-filter/>

As did MSNBC: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/33523558/ns/technology_and_science-science/

After the Mankato YMCA installed its new moss-based filtration system, the Free Press covered the story: <http://mankatofreepress.com/local/x1174312602/Moss-in-the-pool-can-be-a-good-thing>

And followed up with another a few months later:
<http://mankatofreepress.com/local/x104130415/Mankato-YMCA-shows-off-its-changes>

Thanks to the Mankato YMCA and Minnesota State University Mankato for being leaders in the state in adopting this healthy, environmentally friendly technology.

3rd Crop Producer Meeting on 'Renewable Energy Today' To Be Held

Rural Advantage and University of Minnesota Extension will be hosting the second of four Third Crop Producer Meetings on Monday, February 28, 2011 at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Fairmont, Minnesota. The workshop's topic will be 'Renewable Energy Today'. Attendees will receive information on the following: a cost-share program for growing renewable energy crops, fertility and yield for dedicated renewable energy crops, economics, how the Minneapolis Biomass Exchange can help you sell and buy biomass, research looking into how harvesting grasslands effects wildlife, and an update on the renewable energy project slated for the Madelia area.

9:30am	Registration and Coffee
10:00am	Biomass Crop Assistance Program - Gary Wyatt, UMN Extension
10:30am	Biomass Fertility and Yield Trials at UMN - Dr. Craig Sheaffer, University of Minnesota
11:15am	Biomass Production Economics - Dr. Bill Lazarus, University of Minnesota
12:00pm	Lunch (on your own)
1:00pm	Economics of Torrefaction: Costs of Production and Value to Power Utilities - Doug Tiffany, UMN Extension
1:50pm	Minneapolis Biomass Exchange Update - Kevin Triemstra, Minneapolis Biomass Exchange
2:30pm	Prairie Biomass Harvest Project - Jake Jungers, UMN Grad Student and Researcher
3:00pm	Madelia Model Update - Linda Meschke, Rural Advantage
3:30pm	Further Discussion and Question/Answer

There is no cost to attend Rural Advantage's 2011 Third Crop Producer Meetings. Pre-registration is not necessary. For those interested in attending from the metro area, carpooling is available from the University of Minnesota St. Paul Campus. If interested, contact Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA) – misamail@umn.edu 800-909-6472 or 612-625-8235.

The next 3rd Crop Producer Meeting will be held March 14, 2011 and will focus on the 'Importance of Ecological Services'.

Directions: Knights of Columbus Hall – 920 East 10th Street – Fairmont, MN 56031

- From the South – State Hwy. 15 - After the railroad tracks, take the first left at Militello Motors (East 10th Street). The Knights of Columbus Hall is one block west and is on the south side of the street.

- From the North – State Hwy. 15 - Starting at the Interstate 90 overpass, travel south through two stoplights. Take the next right at Militello Motors (East 10th Street). The Knights of Columbus Hall is one block west and is on the south side of the street.

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

Candlelight Ski/Snowshoe/Walk at Minneopa State Park

The Friends of Minneopa State Park is hosting a Candlelight Ski & Snowshoe Event starting at 5:00 p.m. this Saturday (February 19th) at the state park located off of Highway 68. Strap on your cross country skis or snowshoes and join in all the fun at Minneopa State park. Trails will be lit by candlelight for all to enjoy. All skiers need a Minnesota Ski Pass. The trail begins on the campground side of the park at the east side of the parking lot. For more information <http://www.greatermankatoevents.com/event-details.php?id=10628>

South Central MN Corn and Soybean Day on March 7th in Fairmont by Lizabeth Stahl, Extension Educator in Crops

Hear the latest research and information regarding corn and soybean production, management, and marketing at the “South Central MN Corn and Soybean Day” on March 7th at the Knights of Columbus in Fairmont. Registration will start at 9:30 and the program will run from 10:00 to 3:00. There is no charge to attend the program, which is sponsored by Rural Advantage and U of MN Extension. CEUs have been applied for (2.5 CEUs) and will be processed for those paying a \$15 fee at the door.

Bruce Potter, IPM Specialist at the Southwest Research and Outreach Center, will discuss new options in insect management. Jeff Vetsch, Soil Scientist at the Southern Research and Outreach Center, will discuss benefits of N, P, S, and Zn starter fertilizer in corn. Jeremy Singer, Research Agronomist at the National Laboratory for Agriculture and the Environment, will discuss cover crops. Dave Bau, Extension Educator in Farm Business Management, will discuss economics for 2011, and Liz Stahl Stahl, Extension Educator in Crops, will take a closer look at weed management options and present University twin row research results to date. Larry Bremer - County Executive Director for the Martin County FSA, Kathy Smith – District Manager for the Martin County SWCD, and Carssia Spencer – District Conservationist for the Martin County NRCS, will also discuss program updates.

For further details about the program, check out the program flyer at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/county/Martin/news/SCMNC&BDayFlyer-2011.pdf>.

Please contact Liz Stahl at 507-372-3900/ stah0012@umn.edu or Jill Sackett (507-238-5449/ sacke032@umn.edu) if you have any questions about the program. In case of inclement weather, please check with the Farm Information Line (1-800-232-9077) for weather related updates.

Job Announcements:

Watershed Technician – Benton Soil and Water Conservation District

The primary purpose of this position is to provide technical assistance and promote best management practices to land users in the Little Rock Lake and Creek watersheds in Benton and Morrison Counties. Emphasis will initially be placed on irrigation water management, manure management and fertilizer management. As these BMP's are being promoted and installed, additional BMP's are expected to be adopted by participants as well. Other duties will be assigned by the District Manager. A detailed list of duties and qualifications can be found on the position description. Typical duties may include:

- Provides irrigation water management, nutrient management and fertigation technical assistance to cooperators
- Promotes, designs and supervises the installation of other conservation practices that may include, but are not limited to: filter strips, wetland restorations/creations, water and sediment control basins, diversions, grassed waterways, animal waste control facilities, pasture

management, tree and grass planting plans, erosion control plans, shore land buffers, urban and residential best management practices and other conservation practices.

- Provides conservation planning and project management assistance to residents near Little Rock Lake. Potential project management activities may include shoreline buffers, impervious surface mitigation practices, lawn care management, voluntary septic system inspections and related activities.
- Inform land users of Benton and Morrison SWCD's in the Little Rock Creek and Lake Watersheds of conservation programs and activities through news articles, radio tapes, and newsletters.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS - Applicants must possess:

- Bachelor's degree in natural resources, resource conservation, agronomy, physical/earth science or related field of study. Applicable experience in soil and water resource management or irrigation water management may be substituted for minimum educational requirements.
- A comprehensive understanding of irrigation water management best management practices.
- A vehicle and a valid Minnesota Drivers' License as personal vehicle may be used to complete job duties.
- Experience or knowledge of Best Management Practices.
- A detailed list of qualifications can be found on the position description

APPLICATION PROCEDURES: - Supply an employment application and resume to the above address **by 4:30 p.m., Thursday, March 3, 2011**. Candidates invited for an interview will be asked to supply a copy of their college transcripts. A position description is available on our website at www.soilandwater.org or may be obtained by calling (320) 968-5300 ext.3.

Senior Accountant/Supervisor – Pheasants Forever

Pheasants Forever is the nation's leading upland wildlife habitat conservation organization. Pheasants Forever (PF), with its Quail Forever (QF) division, has over 700 chapters, 128,000 members and a \$50 million annual budget. This is a newly created position which will serve as the accountant and supervisor for the chapter accounting group. This position is based out of the National Office in White Bear Lake, MN. The position is open, exact start date is negotiable.

Responsibilities:

- Supervise and coordinate workflow of the chapter accounting group.
- Review current processes and controls and implement improvements.
- Take the lead in creating a formal chapter review process that will help to ensure compliance with GAAP, Pheasant Forever's mission and policies.
- Perform general accounting duties.
- Responsible for audit preparation related to chapter activities.
- Reconcile ACH transfers on a monthly basis.
- Monitor chapter cash account balances. Work with specialist to resolve unusual items.
- Assist chapters with questions and concerns regarding their accounts.
- Other duties and projects as assigned.

Visit our Recruitment website at: <https://home.eease.adp.com/recruit/?id=558683>

Wilderness Inquiry Trail Staff and Intern Positions for 2011

Wilderness Inquiry is currently hiring trail staff and interns for 2011. We are looking for people with outstanding leadership and decision-making skills, high energy, and a desire to work hard for the mission of WI. To learn more, see job descriptions and to apply see Wilderness Inquiry's website: www.wildernessinquiry.org

Each year, Wilderness inquiry operates hundreds of Canoeing, Kayaking and Hiking trips to destinations in Minnesota, across the United States, and around the world for people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. Trail staff leads inclusive outdoor adventures, leads single-day events and multi-day expeditions, navigates, cooks, tells stories and teaches outdoor skills along with other responsibilities.

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

Events:

February 16th (Wednesday) is Make Your Own Non-toxic Cleaning Products from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at 170 Good Counsel Drive in Mankato sponsored by the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry. For more information 507-389-4272 or lcoons@ssndmankato.org

February 17th (Thursday) is the **Life on the River presentation** by Ron Bolduan, photographer and lecturer starting at 6:30 p.m. at the Watonwan County Library in St. James. For more information <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/lifeontherivernew.pdf>.

February 23rd (Wednesday) is the **Green Book Club** from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at 170 Good Counsel Drive in Mankato sponsored by the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry. For more information 507-389-4272 or lcoons@ssndmankato.org

February 24th (Thursday) is the **Taking the Pollution out of Agricultural Production presentation** by Craig A. Cox of the Environmental Working Group from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the University of Minnesota St. Paul Student Center Theater. For more information <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/craigcoxpresentation.pdf>

February 24th, March 3rd and 17th (Thursdays) is a **Make your own Snowshoes class** starting at 6:30 p.m. at the Ney Nature Center. Lace a pair of Ojibwa style snowshoes from a kit with guidance from a experienced instructor and step-by-step instructions. Kits includes frame, lacings and your choice of bindings. Varnish not includes. Class is limited to 12 participants and a 4th class date may be added if needed. Cost for members is \$145 and nonmembers at \$150. To Register: Contact Becky at 248-3474.

February 28th (Monday) is a **Third Crop Producer meeting on Renewable Energy Today** starting at 9:30 a.m. with registration and coffee at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Fairmont, Minnesota. The presentations begin at 10:00am and continuing until 3:00pm. There will be a one hour break for lunch on your own during the 12 o'clock hour. Following the conclusion of the presentations, there will be further time for discussion and questions. Please look for information regarding speakers and presentation topics to be coming soon.

March 2nd (Wednesday) is the **AIS Plant Management Meeting** sponsored by Minnesota Waters and MN DNR from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Firestation #2 Community Room (1825 Howard Drive), North Mankato. The meeting is to discuss aquatic invasive plant species management.

March 10th (Thursday) is **Turf Maintenance for Reduced Environmental Impacts**. This workshop is for professional turf maintenance contractors, public works and parks departments, school district grounds staff and property managers. Learn new techniques on how to protect our water resources while saving money and time spent on the job! Other topics covered will be: equipment calibration, how turfgrass management effects our lakes and rivers and associated best practices for managing turfgrass. An optional test will be given at the end of the workshop for those professionals interested in becoming **certified** in "Turf Maintenance Best Practices" from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Cost for attending the workshop is \$25 which includes a light breakfast, lunch and a workshop manual. The workshop starts at 8 am and runs until 2:30 pm at the McColl Pond Environmental Learning Center in Savage. The address for the McColl Pond ELC is: 13550 Dakota Ave South Savage MN 55372. To register contact: Theresa Sowards, University of Minnesota Extension Service, 651-480-7715 or sowar006@umn.edu.

March 10th (Thursday) is the **Hidden History of the Minnesota River Valley presentation** at the Montevideo Chippewa County Public Library. Contact the CURE office at 1-877-269-2873 for time. Wabasso native Beth Johanneck has written a book of stories about the characters who have lived in the

Minnesota River Valley from Fort Snelling to Mankato, New Ulm, Redwood and Granite Falls and all points in between. Come and meet the author, hear a few stories and compare notes with fellow history lovers of the region.

March 14th (Monday) is a **Third Crop Producer meeting on Importance of Ecological Services** starting at 9:30 a.m. with registration and coffee at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Fairmont, Minnesota. The presentations begin at 10:00am and continuing until 3:00pm. There will be a one hour break for lunch on your own during the 12 o'clock hour. Following the conclusion of the presentations, there will be further time for discussion and questions. Please look for information regarding speakers and presentation topics to be coming soon.

courtneyk@minnesotawaters.org

March 21st (Monday) is the **Minnesota River Board Meeting** at the Chippewa County Courthouse in Montevideo starting at 9 a.m. For more information <http://www.minnesotariver.org/>

March 28th (Monday) is a **Third Crop Producer meeting on Practices for Reducing Nutrient Loss** starting at 9:30 a.m. with registration and coffee at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Fairmont, Minnesota. The presentations begin at 10:00am and continuing until 3:00pm. There will be a one hour break for lunch on your own during the 12 o'clock hour. Following the conclusion of the presentations, there will be further time for discussion and questions. Please look for information regarding speakers and presentation topics to be coming soon.

March 31st (Thursday) is the **Life on the River presentation** by Ron Bolduan, photographer and lecturer starting at 6:30 p.m. at the Watonwan County Library in St. James. For more information <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/lifeontherivernew.pdf>.

April 16th (Saturday) is the presentation **"Waterfalls and the River Warren"** by Professor Bob Douglas starting at 9:30 a.m. at the Linnaeus Arboretum at Gustavus Adolphus College. Professor Bob Douglas will talk about waterfalls in the Minnesota River including many discovered by him. A tour of the waterfalls will follow the presentation.

April 30th (Saturday) is the Annual Spring Fling – Benefit Dinner & Silent Auction for the Ney Nature Center to be held at Traxler's Hunting Preserve, Le Center. For more information <http://neycenter.org/>

May 7th (Saturday) is **Twin Valley Council 4th Annual Fun Shoot**. Featuring Sharp Shooter Tom Knapp. The fun shoot will be held at River Ridge Gun Club in Courtland MN starting at 8:00am, lunch is included after the fun shoot, followed by the world famous "Tom Knapp" show starting at 2:00pm. For more information go to Twin Valley Council Web-site at www.twinvalleybsa.org or call River Ridge Gun Club at 507-359-5770. See attachments: <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/funshootindividualteam.pdf> and <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/funshootposter.pdf>

May 21st (Saturday) is the **"Caring for God's Creation"** with Jim Gilbert, Minnesota's most well-known naturalist and former director of the Linnaeus Arboretum starting at 9:30 a.m. at the Arboretum at Gustavus Adolphus College. Bring your walking shoes.

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

Environmental/Conservational Articles:

[Land Stewardship Project play focuses on moral dilemma](#) (AgriNews). Land Stewardship Project wants to get people talking about how to help new farmers get started.

[Students go off the grid, into the cold](#) (MN Daily). The idea was a way to promote Conservation Madness and its efforts to reduce electrical and material waste.

[Minnesota lawmakers urging DNR to craft new invasive-species rules soon](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). State lawmakers are urging the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to move faster in crafting new laws to stop the spread of zebra mussels and other aquatic invasive species.

[DNR names former legislators to key posts in restructuring](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Both Bob Lessard and Dennis Frederickson are named to key DNR positions.

[Maplewood pond project made famous in McCain tweet is on hold](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Sen. John McCain called out the Maplewood project in a tweet against federal spending earmarks.

[Bill would repeal limits on new coal plant construction](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Environmental groups are calling attention to mercury pollution coming from coal-fired power plants in an effort to stop deregulation bills at the State Capitol.

[Regional park concepts unveiled this month](#) (Shakopee News). At least two long trails are envisioned to someday wind through Scott County, connecting parks and crossing the Minnesota River to take bikers as far away as Minneapolis.

[Report: says 1,664 pounds of mercury emitted by Minnesota power plants in 2009](#) (MinnPost). A report from Environment Minnesota says that power plants in Minnesota emitted 1,664 pounds of mercury in 2009, causing health and environmental problems.

[Memo to the whiners: Cut it out](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The Legacy Amendment is a useful tool for preserving our resources, but we need more. Getting rid of a pervasive negative attitude about everything would be a good start.

[New DNR commissioner puts his leaders in place](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). New Department of Natural Resources Commissioner Tom Landwehr debuted his top managers last week.

[DNR eyes tax proceeds to buy new park, trail lands](#) (Associated Press). The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources plans to use an estimated \$1.3 billion in sales tax proceeds over the next 25 years to buy land for new parks and trails, spend more on existing parks and trails, and get more people to use the state's natural resources.

[U of M aims to boost agriculture, protect environment](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). The University of Minnesota is teaming up with agribusiness and conservation groups to use a massive data base to boost food production while reducing harm to the environment.

[Senate panel passes bill targeting state's coyotes](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Coyotes beware: The Legislature is taking aim at you.

[Bamboo is a bust as a green product](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Five years later, the "it" eco-material is hard to find in stores. What changed?

Nature is an infinite sphere of which the center is everywhere and the circumference nowhere. - Blaise Pascal

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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