

**Minnesota River Watershed Alliance plans to continue raising awareness – By Phillip Bock**

In its first meeting of the new year, the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance set priorities that aim to raise awareness of the issues facing the Minnesota River.

The Alliance voted to continue successful programs from the past year, including the paddler patch program and the Lake Pepin Friendship Tours, and started work on four new initiatives to be completed in the coming year.

The Watershed Alliance is an organized network of citizens, public agencies and private organizations dedicated to communicating the benefits of an ecologically healthy Minnesota River watershed to others and actively work together toward improving the Minnesota River. The group holds quarterly meetings for members to discuss issues in the watershed and to determine key goals to focus on.

For the entire article from the Marshall Independent: [Minnesota River Watershed alliance plans to continue raising awareness](#)

**Tile Drainage Directly Related to Nitrate Loss**

Tile drainage in the Mississippi River Basin (MRB) is one of the great advances of the 19th and 20th centuries, allowing highly productive agriculture in what was once land too wet to farm. In fact, installation of new tile systems continues every year because it leads to increased crop yields. But a recent study shows that the most heavily tile-drained areas of North America are also the largest contributing source of nitrate to the Gulf of Mexico, leading to seasonal hypoxia. In the summer of 2010 the hypoxic zone in the Gulf spanned over 7,000 square miles.

Scientists from the University of Illinois and Cornell University compiled information on each county in the Mississippi River Basin. This included crop acreage and yields, atmospheric deposition, number of people and livestock and fertilizer inputs for each county in the MRB from 1997 to 2006.

For the entire article: <http://ctic.org/Partners%20Magazine/2010/December/27/>

**Natural Resource and Woodland Workshops**

If you are interested in learning more about natural resources and woodlands, the University of Minnesota Extension offers classes for the public and landowners in many topical areas. For a complete listing of woodland classes visit [www.woodlandadvisor.org](http://www.woodlandadvisor.org)

This winter and spring there will be several classes offered in Southwestern and Central Minnesota. They include:

- Windbreak Benefits and Energy Saving Landscapes Redwood Falls, January 27, 6-9PM
- Invasive Species Fairmont, February 24, 6-9PM
- Non-Timber Forest Products Hutchinson, March 17, 6-9PM
- Nuts and Bolts of Timber Sales St. Peter, March 31, 6-9PM
- Recreational Trails Henderson, April 14, 1-4PM
- Tree and Shrub Identification St. Peter, May 19, 1-4PM

Registration is \$ 20 per person. Pre-registration is requested. Workshops are sponsored by the University of Minnesota Extension and the Minnesota Forestry Association. The public is invited to attend. Woodland Advisor and Master Gardener credits are available upon request. Useful handout material will also be available.

To register for any of these workshops, contact Kathy Eckwright, 507-389-6972 or 888-241-3214, [eckwr001@umn.edu](mailto:eckwr001@umn.edu).

### **MPCA Marshall Office is moving to New Location**

The Marshall office of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is moving to a new location on the second floor of the Lyon County Public Works Building, 504 Fairgrounds Road.

The MPCA first opened an office in Marshall in 1976. Since 1999, the office has been in the Market Street Mall at 1420 E. College Drive. The MPCA office at the new location is expected to be open Jan. 26.

The Marshall and Willmar MPCA offices serve 18 counties in southwestern Minnesota. Regional staff provide citizens and businesses with information to help them protect the environment, and help ensure that permit requirements are met.

Primary programs with regional office staff include municipal wastewater, feedlots and solid waste. Other programs with regional or St. Paul-based staff assigned to the region include stormwater, tanks, emergency response, hazardous waste, public information, and impaired waters. More information about the MPCA is on the Web at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us>.

"With the focus of environmental protection shifting to non-point sources of pollution, the regional offices play a very important role," said Randy Hukriede, MPCA Southwest Region manager. "This is especially true in the area of water quality. We've done a fairly good job of trying to protect and improve water quality, but with continued pressure from development and other land uses, our regional offices keep very busy with a multitude of programs to make sure that we continue to have a healthy natural environment."

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency was created by the state legislature in 1967 to clean up and protect the state's land, air and water resources. The Marshall office is one of seven regional offices of the MPCA outside the Twin Cities metro area.

Counties served by the Marshall-Willmar MPCA offices include Big Stone, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, Meeker, McLeod, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Renville, Rock, Swift and Yellow Medicine.

The address for the new MPCA Marshall Office is: MPCA Marshall Office, 504 Fairgrounds Rd., Suite 200, Marshall, MN 56258. Phone (507) 537-7146, fax (507) 537-6001.

### **Contaminants and Natural Resource Management Workshop**

The Minnesota Association of Conservation Professionals announces its 4th annual meeting and workshop entitled "Contaminants and Natural Resource Management." on Friday February 25th, 2011 beginning at 9am at the Camp Ripley Military Training Center in Little Falls MN.

The workshop fee is \$25, which includes lunch and a one-year membership to the MNACP. Register for the workshop online at: <http://www.mnacp.org/annual-meeting>.

Please join us for an informative day focusing on current and emerging issues of contaminants affecting resource management in Minnesota. Director of University of Minnesota's Water Resource Center, Dr. Deborah Swackhamer will deliver the keynote address and lunch presentation. Several other experts will

be speaking about various contaminant issues, including: Contaminants of emerging concern, hardrock mining, endocrine disruptors, pharmaceuticals in waterways, transport of Mercury through systems, tracing origins of sediment and lead in wildlife and hunting.

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

### **MPCA Solicits Comments on NPDES/SDS General Pesticide Permit**

Public comments are now being accepted for a proposed National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)/State Disposal System (SDS) Pesticide General Permit. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) will accept comments through Feb. 17, 2011.

In 2009, the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that NPDES permits were required for all biological and chemical pesticide applications that leave a residue in water when such applications are made in or over, including near, waters of the United States.

In accordance with that federal ruling, the MPCA drafted a NPDES/SDS Pesticide General Permit covering anyone who discharges a pesticide to a water of the state under one of the following pesticide use patterns:

- Mosquito and Other Flying Insect Pest Control,
- Forest Canopy Pest Control,
- Aquatic Nuisance Animal Pest Control, and
- Vegetative Pests and Algae Control.

Only entities that exceed a threshold are required to submit an application for permit coverage, or Notice of Intent (NOI), and an application fee. Those that do not exceed the threshold will need to comply with the basic permit components, but are not required to submit a NOI or an application fee.

The MPCA collaborated with other state agencies on permit development and participated in several industry meetings to educate those affected by the permit on the new requirements. This permit will supply MPCA with data on the type of pesticides used and the frequency of application in Minnesota waters, allowing the agency to make decisions concerning discharges, pollutants, synergistic effects, and other such water-management issues.

A draft permit is available for review at the MPCA's St. Paul office at 520 Lafayette Road N., or on line at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/news/data/index.cfm?PN=1>. Additional information can be found on the Pesticide NPDES Permit Program website at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/water/water-permits-and-rules/water-permits-and-forms/pesticide-npdes-permit-program.html>.

During the public notice period, written comments should be sent to Elise Doucette, MPCA, 520 Lafayette Road N., Saint Paul, MN 55155-4194. Written comments must be received by 4 p.m. on Feb. 17, 2011 and include (1) a statement of your interest in the permit application or the draft permit; (2) a statement of the action you wish the MPCA to take, including specific references to sections of the draft permit that you believe should be changed; and (3) the reasons supporting your position, stated with sufficient specificity to allow the commissioner to investigate the merits of your position.

### **Land Stewardship Project's 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Farm Breakfast & Day at the Capitol**

The best breakfast in town straight off the farm! The food for this breakfast is sustainably grown on the farms of LSP members. Last year our breakfast featured milk and cream from Cedar Summit Farm of New Prague and Organic Valley Midwest; bacon and sausage from Pastures A' Plenty of Kerkhoven, Farm on Wheels of Kenyon, Hidden Stream Farm of Elgin, Kalliroe Farm of Montevideo, Lucky Pig of Minneapolis and Niman Ranch; eggs from Earth Be Glad Farm of Lewiston and Earth Rise Farm of Madison; honey from Honey and Herbs of Benson; oatmeal from Dry Weather Creek Farm of Milan; and apple cider from Whitewater Valley Orchards of St. Charles and Pinetree Apple Orchards of White Bear Lake.

- February 15<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday) from 7 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.
- Christ Lutheran Church, 105 University Ave. W. – across from the State Capitol in St Paul
- The cost is \$10
- **RSVP** to the Land Stewardship Project by replying to this e-mail: [bking@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:bking@landstewardshipproject.org) or calling 612-722-6377.

Minnesota's new Commissioner of Agriculture, Dave Frederickson, will join us for the Family Farm Breakfast! One of Gov. Mark Dayton's earliest appointments was Dave Frederickson as Commissioner of Agriculture. LSP knows Dave as someone who understands agriculture as both a farmer and a policymaker. He is a strong supporter of family farms and the stewardship of the land. He can work across the full breadth of agriculture, while emphasizing the positive, growing aspects within it — like expanding markets in local and regional food systems, beginning farmers getting started in Minnesota, increasing growth in organics, and growing interest in sustainable family farm livestock production.

Invite your legislator to meet you for breakfast. You can get the contact information for your state Senator at 651-296-0504 or 888-234-1112, and for your Representative at 651-296-2146 or 800-657-3550. If you plan to stay and lobby afterwards, you can also make an appointment for later in the day with your legislators. We will finish the lobbying training by 10:45 a.m., so make appointments for 11 a.m. or later.

Immediately following the breakfast, there will be a brief training on lobbying for LSP's legislative priorities. We will then head over to the Capitol to meet with your legislators. When you RSVP, let us know if you plan to stay and lobby.

Volunteers needed. To make this event as successful as possible, we need help with serving food, working the registration table, greeting people as they come in, cleaning up and more. If you can volunteer, call LSP's Jane Booth-Tobin at 612-722-6377.

**DIRECTIONS:** Christ Lutheran Church is located across from the state Capitol in St. Paul at the northwest corner of University and Park Avenues. Enter through the sanctuary doors facing University Ave. PLEASE, DO NOT PARK IN THE CHURCH PARKING LOT. Parking: There is on-street parking adjacent to the church. There is also a parking lot on the southwest corner of University and Rice Streets, just a block west of the church. Entrance to the lot is on Aurora Ave., which is off Rice Street, just south of University Ave.

## **Job Announcements:**

### **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](http://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:**

January 27<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) is the **Blanding's Turtle Presentation** at the New Ulm Library starting at 6:30 p.m. Lisa Gelvin-Innvaer (Nongame Wildlife Specialist-DNR) will provide a fun look at Blanding's turtles at the River Ranger program. She will explain what they are, how we study them, why they are imperiled, and why they are so special. Learn how to help them and why conserving Blanding's turtles is good for other wildlife and for people, too! There will be a PowerPoint presentation followed by time for questions and an opportunity to see some of the equipment used in DNR turtle research.

For more information about the program: <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/blandingturtle.pdf>, or contact Ron Bolduan at [boldriv@newulmtel.net](mailto:boldriv@newulmtel.net) or 507-354-8367.

January 27<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) is **Electrofishing in the MN River** starting at 7pm at the Chippewa County Courthouse in Montevideo, MN. Brad Koenen, MN DNR Fisheries Biologist from the Hutchinson Area Office will tell us about what the MN DNR is finding with their electro fishing surveys of the Minnesota River. Prepare to be surprised and to see awesome footage of hibernating catfish!

January 27<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) is the **Windbreak Benefits and Energy Saving Landscape Workshop** from 6:00 pm. To 8:00 p.m. at the Redwood High School in Redwood Falls. Registration is \$ 20. Pre-registration is requested. This workshop is sponsored by the University of Minnesota Extension and the Minnesota Forestry Association. The public is invited to attend. Woodland Advisor and Master Gardener credits are available upon request. Useful handout material will also be available. To register for this workshop, contact Kathy Eckwright, 507-389-6972 or 888-241-3214, [eckwr001@umn.edu](mailto:eckwr001@umn.edu). To review other workshops visit: <http://cfc.cfans.umn.edu/wa/>.

February 2<sup>nd</sup> (Wednesday) is the **Hawk Creek Watershed Project Annual Meeting** at the Kandi Entertainment Center (500 19<sup>th</sup> Ave. SE), Willmar, MN from 8:30 to 12:00 with a free lunch to those that RSVP before Jan. 29<sup>th</sup>. Topics will be: 2010 HCWP Progress-Achieving Significant Water Quality Improvements in Farm Country by Cory Netland (HCWP Coordinator), Public Drainage Benefits & Damages "Past, Present, and Future" by Loren Engelby (Kandiyohi County Drainage Inspector), Ron Ringquist (Drainage Viewers Assoc.), Kurt Deter (Rinke-Noonan Environmental Lawyer), and Harlan Madsen (Kandiyohi County Commissioner), and The History of Environmental Expectations in Minnesota by Stephen Lee from MPCA. Soil and Water Continuing Education Credits are pending! For more information and RSVP call 320-523-3666.

February 3<sup>rd</sup> (Thursday) is the 10<sup>th</sup> **Year Celebration of Water Quality Work in the Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Watershed** with a dinner and program from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Dawson VFW. A dinner will be served at 6:00 p.m. followed by a recognition program. The guest speaker for the evening will be Ashley Shelby, author of Red River Rising: The Anatomy of a Flood and the Survival of an American City. Please RSVP by Thursday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> by calling Mary Homan at 320-598-3319 or email [mary.homan@lqpc.com](mailto:mary.homan@lqpc.com)

February 12<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) is the **Cure 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting** from 6-10pm at the Hollywood on Main Street Montevideo. **Invited Guest Speakers: John Hickman & Jon Carlson** will tell us about their past year making a documentary about the growing movement to clean up the Minnesota River. Come hear the stories of all the fantastic people they met along the way and get a sneak preview of portions of the documentary! For more information visit <http://www.cureriver.org/events.html>

February 14<sup>th</sup> (Monday) is a **Third Crop Producer meeting on Local Foods** 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.

February 15<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday) is the **Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District's Kick-off event** to initiate a New Year of water protection and improvement starting at 6:30 p.m. at the Prior Lake City Hall, Council Chambers Room (4646 Dakota Street SE) in Prior Lake. The District is looking to get the word out about recent developments in lake health and clean water as well as fill positions on its Citizens Advisory Committee. The event, open to the public and free of charge, will provide an opportunity for concerned citizens to:

- Hear about what they can do to preserve and protect their lakes.
- Voice ideas and concerns about the state of lakes in the area.
- Learn more about the recent classification of Spring and Upper Prior Lakes as "impaired".
- Become familiar with the Watershed District's duties and goals for water resource management.

February 28<sup>th</sup> (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 10<sup>th</sup> (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](mailto:sowar006@umn.edu).

March 10<sup>th</sup> (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 14<sup>th</sup> (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.

March 28<sup>th</sup> (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.

April 16<sup>th</sup> (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.

May 7<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) is **Twin Valley Council 4<sup>th</sup> annual fun shoot** at the River Ridge Gun Club in Courtland, MN starting at 8am. For more information call (507) 359-5770.

May 21<sup>st</sup> (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://mrfdc.mnsu.edu/calendar/index.html>

### **Environmental/Conservational Articles:**

[Talk is cheap, but oral histories are priceless](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). In the giant pie of hundreds of millions of Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment tax dollars, a few crumbs — thousands of dollars — are being used to record the memories of cartoonists, bluegrass musicians, psychiatrists, women police and Liberian immigrants.

[All the trappings](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Maybe Andy Shoemaker was born a century late, but he still applies age-old skills to track and trap the "soft gold" of the forest.

[MPCA says permits now issued more quickly](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has cut the time it takes to issue environmental permits by two-thirds since 2005, an agency spokesman told legislators Tuesday.

[Biofuel plans discharge pipeline](#) (Fairmont Sentinel). Faribault County commissioners want to get to the truth about a proposed pipeline that would discharge water from the Buffalo Lake Energy ethanol plant in Fairmont into the Blue Earth River.

[Experts urge Legislature to clean up MN waters](#) (Minnesota Daily). Lawmakers hope to provide a long-term solution for sustainable water.

[DNR misses deadline on Mississippi corridor rules](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Agency could now lose future authority to regulate development along 72 miles of river.

[Report: Legacy fund gets passing grade](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). Money raised through Minnesota's Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment has been put to work quickly and generally has been spent well, according to a report released Thursday.

[Are Legacy funds being spent well?](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). One environmental watchdog group says money for clean-water projects needs more rigorous monitoring.

[Report fuels land funding debate](#) (Outdoor News). Public land has been a hot topic in recent years, and the conversation often has centered around management of land the DNR already owns, and acquisition of more.

[In a dark recession, green jobs grow strong in greater Minnesota](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Manufacturing has been hit hard by the recession. But some Minnesota manufacturing companies are thriving and creating new jobs. They're part of a small sector in the emerging "green economy."

[Fish fry? Try Asian carp, feds suggest](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Marketing the invader as food is one of several strategies being discussed to stymie the fish's advance northward.

[Can Legacy dollars allay state budget woes?](#) (Politics in Minnesota). Legislators see Legacy Amendment proceeds as partial cure for general fund.

[American Crystal Sugar has outsized influence in DC](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). If you made a list of the Minnesota-based companies that spend the most money lobbying the federal government, you'd see some familiar names, with Medtronic and Target at the top. But there is one relatively small Minnesota company that has become a big political player.

[A rush to cut red tape in state](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Dayton issues executive order to speed the approval of environmental permits.

[Water worries spark debate](#) (Fairmont Sentinel). Surface water versus groundwater is a debate that's cropped up repeatedly as Fairmont has worked toward building a new water plant.

*Nobody sees a flower really; it is so small. We haven't time, and to see takes time – like to have a friend takes time. – Georgia O'Keeffe*

**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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