

Minnesota River Watershed Alliance to meet on January 18th

Come out to Ridgewater College (Room 141) in Hutchinson on January 18th (Tuesday) for the quarterly Minnesota River Watershed Alliance meeting. We will be choosing the 2011 "Clean Up the Minnesota River" focus and need your input. Gather with like-minded river advocates as we welcome students from the Ridgewater Environmental Science Class to what is happening in the Minnesota River Basin.

Social hour begins at 6 p.m. with food, drink and time to network with others working, living and playing in the Minnesota River Basin. The meeting will start at 7 o'clock and we strive to wrap up the formal discussion by 9 p.m.

Agenda Items:

- Choose 2011 "Clean Up the Minnesota River" focus
- 2010 Project Reports: MN River Paddler Program, MN River Film Documentary, Lake Pepin – MN River Friendship Tour, and Minnesota River – Governor's Cup Opener Proposal
- Communication Audit
- Funding for Future Meetings

For more information: <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/january2010meeting.pdf>

Minnesota River Board receives Carlson Minge Award

The Minnesota River Board (MRB) was recently honored with the Carlson Minge Award from the Friends of the Minnesota Valley. Dakota County Commissioner Tom Egan accepted the award on behalf of the MRB at the Friends' annual dinner in Bloomington.

"The Minnesota River Board is very proud of its well known efforts to improve water quality and best management practices along the Minnesota River," stated Tom Egan. "It is very humbling to receive this award from the like-minded people making up the Friends of the Minnesota Valley."

Scott Sparlin, the Friends Watershed Initiative Coordinator presented the Carlson Minge Award by highlighting a few of the MRB accomplishments. "The MRB helped to push and directly lobby for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, provided funds for needed programs and projects throughout the watershed, and provided an on-going forum for people to voice concerns, showcase projects and programs among other things."

According to Sparlin it was the MRB's role in helping Friends launch their Community Clean Ups for Water Quality program that really resonated with them. "Without the Minnesota River Board and their continued support much of what has been accomplished to date in the Minnesota River Watershed would simply not have been possible," offered Sparlin.

The Carlson Minge Award is named in honor of David Minge (former U.S. Representative) and Arne Carlson (former MN Governor), in spirit of bipartisan support of the Minnesota River and advancement of clean-up efforts. This award is given to a current or former elected official, public figure, or public employee who has demonstrated outstanding leadership on the conservation of natural resources within the Minnesota River Watershed.

"The Minnesota River Board has long been one of Friends of the Minnesota Valley's closest allies and strongest supporters in our effort to improve the Minnesota River," said Lori Nelson, Executive Director of the Friends. "The board provided initial seed money during the first year of the Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality which was critical to launch the program. The board took the risk that the program would be successful and we owe a good part of our success to the vision of the Minnesota River Board."

To date the Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality have removed 14,000 pounds of phosphorus and nitrogen pollution from the Minnesota River Watershed involving 4,400 volunteers representing 40 partners. Currently, the program is being expanded across the entire state of Minnesota in partnership with the Freshwater Society.

The mission of the Minnesota River Board is to provide leadership, build partnerships, and support efforts to improve and protect water quality in the Minnesota River Basin. As a joint powers board, it is made up of one county commissioner from each of the counties in the watershed.

Hawk Creek Annual Meeting

The Hawk Creek Watershed Project will hold its Annual Meeting on February 2nd (Wednesday) at the Kandi Entertainment Center (500 19th Ave. SE), Willmar, MN from 8:30 to 12:00 with a free lunch to those that RSVP before Jan. 29th. 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.

Dayton names Paul Aasen as head of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

The governor-elect turned to Aasen to run the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, a pick that was lauded by a number of environmental groups. Dayton said Aasen shares his view that the agency's mission and name should be changed from "Pollution Control" to "Pollution Reduction."

Aasen served as the director of government relations and policy under former Gov. Jesse Ventura. Most recently he was the advocacy director for the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy.

He also has a Master's degree in public health from the University of Minnesota and spent six years as an environmental scientist at the Metropolitan Waste Control Commission.

Aasen said three of his top issues include addressing air quality in the metro area, continuing the clean-up of lakes and rivers and making sure "the agency moves at the speed of commerce as it does its work."

Conservation Minnesota and the Freshwater Society were among the groups that touted Aasen's appointment in a statement, saying he has a strong record of fighting for environmental issues.

For the entire story: <http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2010/12/31/dayton-names-heads-for-education-2-other-depts/>

SSND Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry Awarded 2nd Pepsi Refresh Grant

December 24, 2010, MANKATO, Minn.—The School Sisters of Notre Dame's Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry (CESRM) has been awarded a 2nd Pepsi Refresh Grant to purchase canning supplies for a new tool lending program. The program to be launched in 2011 will teach individuals how to preserve the fresh fruits and vegetables that they grow and provide the tools needed to do so.

The applicants for this final round made their case for why their organization should be awarded additional funding and the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry stood out as “providing a valuable service to their local community” and would help “move our communities forward.” The selected project “Give a man a can; he’ll eat for a day. Teach a man to can; he’ll eat for a year” was awarded \$2,250.

This 2nd Pepsi Refresh grant dovetails nicely with the grant received in the fall to repair and replace the Good Counsel community garden’s tools. The CESRM, founded by the School Sisters of Notre Dame in 1996, will celebrate 15 years of service to the Mankato area in 2011.

The local Pepsi Refresh Grant Project sponsored by Gillette Pepsi-Cola Companies has awarded \$100,000 in grants to organizations within their franchise service areas of Rochester and Mankato, MN, La Crosse WI and Decorah, IA.

Save the Date! 2011 Third Crop Producer Meetings

Save the Date! Do you want to know more about local food production and entrepreneurship?

Renewable energy from perennial crops? Ecological Services? How about learning more about what can be done to reduce nutrient loss from our agricultural fields? If you answered yes to any of those questions, mark your calendar for Rural Advantage’s 2011 Third Crop Producer Meetings.

Rural Advantage’s Third Crop Producer Meetings

- Monday, February 14, 2011 Local Foods
- Monday, February 28, 2011 Renewable Energy Today
- Monday, March 14, 2011 Importance of Ecological Services
- Monday, March 28, 2011 Practices for Reducing Nutrient Loss

All Third Crop Producer Meetings will be held at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Fairmont, Minnesota. Registration and coffee will start at 9:30am with presentations beginning 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.

The Greening of the Lawn Care Industry Series

Natural Lawn and Turf Management Training for Lawn Care Professionals presented by Chip Osborne of Marblehead, Massachusetts. How to transition properties from conventional programs using synthetic and chemical products to a natural organic system.

- Date: Friday, January 7, 2011
- Place: Gustavus Adolphus College, Linnaeus Arboretum Interpretive Center
- Time: 8:30 a.m. registration; 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. training
- Cost: \$50, includes lunch, snacks, and a continental breakfast (course fee refundable in case of severe weather)
- Contact: Mara Natrakul: mara@hickorytech.net. 651-269-4005; or Shirley Mellema: shirley@gustavus.edu
- Online Registration: <http://gustavus.edu/arboretum/LawnTurfWorkshop.php>

Program Overview:

- History of conventional management
- What is a systems approach to turfgrass care?
- Understanding soil biology
- Choosing the right turfgrass
- Managing soil fertility
- Horticultural techniques
- Understanding insects, weeds, disease, and control methods

- Preparing budgets for natural turfgrass management
- Practical strategies for growing turfgrass that meets user expectations

Sponsored by: Gustavus Physical Plant, Johnson Center for Environmental Innovation, the Linnaeus Arboretum, and the Mankato Healthy Lawns Team

Environmental Assessment Completed for Proposed Granite Falls Ethanol Plant Expansion

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has completed an Environmental Assessment Worksheet for a proposed expansion of the Granite Falls Energy ethanol facility at Granite Falls, Minn. The EAW will be available for the public to comment December 27th through January 26th, 2011.

Granite Falls Energy, LLC proposes to expand its existing fuel-ethanol production facility by increasing its permitted capacity to produce un-denatured ethanol from 49.9 million gallons per year (MMGY) to 70 MMGY. The expansion would be achieved by adding additional equipment to support ethanol production. The additional equipment will be located within the facility's current property boundary. The primary fuel for the facility will be natural gas.

The expansion requires modification of the facility's wastewater permit (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System/State Disposal System) and air emission permit. The draft modified permits will be placed on public notice on or shortly after the start of the public comment period for the EAW, and will remain open for comment for 30 days.

A public information meeting will be held January 10, 2011, at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium of the Minnesota West Technical and Community College in Granite Falls. MPCA staff will also be available for one hour before the meeting to answer questions in an open-house format. The purpose of the open house and public information meeting is to answer questions and accept written comments related to the EAW as well as the draft NPDES/SDS and air permits.

The EAW is a review of how a proposed project could potentially affect the environment. The EAW also helps the MPCA determine if an Environmental Impact Statement, a more in-depth environmental review, is needed. The EAW must be completed before the MPCA can issue final permits for the project. The MPCA may make changes to the draft permits based on input received during the EAW public comment period and/or on new information gathered as part of the agency's own review of the project.

Written comments on the GFE expansion project EAW must be received by 4:30 p.m. January 26th, 2011. Comments should be sent to Steve Sommer, MPCA, 520 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155-4194.

Copies of the EAW are available for review on the MPCA's website at www.pca.state.mn.us/news/eaw/index.html, as well as the following locations: MPCA Marshall regional office, 1420 E. College Drive, # 900 MPCA St. Paul office, 520 Lafayette Road North

To request a copy of the EAW, contact Steve Sommer at the MPCA, 651-757-2746 or steve.sommer@state.mn.us. Additional information on the environmental review process is available on the web at www.pca.state.mn.us/news/eaw/index.html.

Heron Lake Bioenergy to pay \$66,000 Environmental Penalty

Saint Paul, Minn. -- The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) announced that Heron Lake BioEnergy, LLC has agreed to pay a \$66,000 penalty to resolve alleged violations of the company's state-issued environmental permits at its ethanol production facility in Heron Lake in southwest Minnesota.

The agreement covers violations that date back to when the company began construction of the facility in October, 2005. During subsequent operations beginning in September, 2007, the facility violated the conditions of both its air quality and water quality permits on a number of occasions.

The air quality violations covered in the agreement include exceedances of permitted emissions limits, failure to conduct monitoring as required by the permit, failure to maintain emissions-control equipment as required, and failure to report or certify data to the MPCA as required.

Water quality violations covered in the agreement include failure to obtain prior MPCA approval to use chemical additives in wastewater processing, failure to provide specified holding times for samples, failure to monitor for specified pollutants at the frequency required, exceedances of permitted effluent limits, and failure to install or maintain required flow-monitoring equipment prior to discharging.

To resolve the violations, Heron Lake BioEnergy, LLC will pay a civil penalty of \$66,000. The agreement allows up to \$12,000 of the penalty amount to be satisfied through completion of a supplemental environmental project. SEPs are often used as part of enforcement agreements in which the payee agrees to undertake one or more projects that will benefit the environment. Projects must be approved by the MPCA. Heron Lake BioEnergy has proposed and the MPCA agreed that this SEP will consist of a study on how to improve capture of fugitive dust emissions at the facility.

In addition, the company agreed to a schedule of corrective actions to achieve compliance, including submitting to the MPCA specific plans on how it will comply with the facility's environmental permit limits and prevent reoccurrence of violations in the future. Failure to comply with the schedule in the agreement will result in further specified penalties.

When calculating penalties, the MPCA takes into account how seriously the violations affected the environment, whether they were first-time or repeat violations, and how promptly they were reported to appropriate authorities. Penalties also attempt 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 the agency's Web site at www.pca.state.mn.us/newscenter/enforcement.html.

Job Announcements:

Executive Director

The National Immigrant Farming Initiative, based in Washington DC, is looking for a Project Associate to work with the Executive Director. Persons with skills in office and project organization and administration are encouraged to apply. Very good computer skills are necessary. Fluency in Hmong, Spanish, Somali or other language is an advantage. This is a growing national movement to support immigrant farmers in their existing and burgeoning operations

To apply please read the attached announcement and send resume and cover letter to Amy Carrington (NIFI Board member)

New American Sustainable Agriculture Project (NASAP); Cultivating Community; P.O. Box 3792;

Portland, ME 04104

Tel: 207.761.GROW - www.cultivatingcommunity.org

Attached announcement: <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/nifiexecutivedirector.pdf>

2011 DNR Job Opportunities

The Minnesota DNR anticipates the following temporary employment opportunities will exist in 2011. However, all positions are subject to funding availability. The application process may vary for different positions, but generally hiring supervisors want a cover letter, resume and college transcripts, at a minimum. Contact the hiring supervisor listed for more details.

Fisheries Intern – These positions begin in mid-late May or June and run through mid-late August, or occasionally longer. The intern does a variety of fisheries survey work as part of a crew, and also may be involved in any aspect of fisheries management or research at the local level. Interns usually work with more experienced employees, but positions can be tailored to capitalize on students' strengths, while still allowing development in new areas. Interns should typically have at least 2-3 years of college coursework, and should have completed some coursework in fisheries and aquatic sciences. Interns

fulfill college requirements through the internship. Pay rate \$12/hr. The application deadline for all of these positions is **February 28, 2011**.

Mussel Research Internship - The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources may be filling up to 9 student intern positions to assist with mussel surveys, monitoring, host identification, and propagation of endangered species. Positions will be based in St. Paul or Lake City, Minnesota, but will travel statewide. Start date is somewhat flexible, but is expected to begin by May 16, or soon thereafter, and continue to at least August 26 (POSSIBLY extending through mid October).

Invasive Species Program Intern - These positions begin in mid-late May and run through late August, or occasionally longer. Interns assist aquatic biologists with fieldwork in lakes and wetlands around Minnesota. Work involves surveys for Eurasian water milfoil, curly-leaf pondweed, aquatic plant surveys, wetland surveys and release of insects for the biological control of purple loosestrife, and data entry of collected field data. We would prefer to hire someone who is majoring in aquatic biology, or a related field, and who has experience towing and launching a trailered boat and operating a boat with an outboard motor. Interns fulfill college requirements through the internship. Positions are located in the St. Paul, Brainerd, Fergus Falls, Grand Rapids, New Ulm, and Itasca State Park areas. Pay rate \$11/hr.

Aquatic Resources Education Interns - MinnAqua **Fishing: Get in the Habitat!** Program: this DNR program focuses on teaching youth how to fish and teaches the importance of fish habitat and a healthy natural environment. Interns in this program will spend most of their time working with youth. The position located in Brainerd will also provide specialized programming for the Becoming an Outdoors Woman program. Training is provided and is required on May 20-23. \$11/hr + mileage.

For more information on these internships and others: <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/dnrinternships.pdf>

Events:

January 12th (Wednesday) is the **Launch Party for This Perennial Land** starting at 5:30 p.m. with a reception and 6:00 p.m. for a program and a book signing and photo exhibition at the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy Stevens Ave Building, Conference Room (2104 Stevens Ave. South) in Minneapolis. Lansing Shepard and Paula Westmoreland spent three years traveling the length and breadth of one iconic Midwest watershed – the greater Blue Earth River basin in south-central Minnesota and north-central Iowa to discover who was driving that change and what impact they were having. Along with professional photographers Meg Ojala and Chris Faust, among others, they documented the work of farmers, scientists, recreationists, conservationists, policymakers, and field level state and federal agency staff.

January 24th (Monday) is the **Minnesota River Board Meeting** at the Sibley County Service Center (111 8th Street) in Gaylord starting at 9 a.m. Paula Westmoreland and Lansing Shepard will be doing a presentation on their new book *This Perennial Land*, showcasing the innovations of citizens, farmers, scientists, conservation agencies, and others working to build a different future in the greater Blue Earth River watershed. For more information <http://www.minnesotariver.org/>

January 27th (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!

February 12th (Saturday) is the **Cure 19th 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>

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.

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.

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

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:

[US bison ranchers struggle to meet consumer demand](#) (Associated Press). Minneapolis (AP) — The deep snow blanketing the Midwest prairie didn't bother the bison on Ed Eichten's ranch one bit. The hardy animals evolved to survive - even thrive - year-round on the open range, and with their big heads, they can plow right through drifts 5-feet tall or more.

[Minnehaha Creek to get more curves](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). It will be restored to its original path. Some apartments and homes will be razed.

[Fickle turbine winds](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). As a wind-turbine factory in Pipestone, Minn., lays off most of its workers, competitors in South Dakota and Iowa are booming.

[Fens and development: A delicate balance](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Are fens a beautiful attraction for Scott County? A hindrance to its development? Or both?

[Pondweed treatments will continue at Lake Benton](#) (Marshall Independent). At Lake Benton, an invasive species of plant known as curly-leaf pondweed continues to plague sections of the lake despite repeated attempts to eradicate the weed.

[Chanhassen soaks biggest water users](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). A 25 percent price hike awaits residences that fall into a new fifth pricing tier.

[Editorial: Seize momentum on water quality](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Sediment standard is a critical step for Mississippi, Lake Pepin.

[SCSU scientist eyes chemicals' impact on state lakes](#) (St. Cloud Times). Four years ago, Heiko Schoenfuss' study of pollutants in the Mississippi River attracted national media attention and raised alarm.

[Act now to save conservation delivery system](#) (Agri News). Minnesota's state conservationist said the state is at a pivotal point in conservation.

[Frederickson honored as outstanding conservationist](#) (New Ulm Journal). Senator Dennis Frederickson (R-New Ulm) was recently honored as outstanding conservationist at the annual meeting of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Dec. 5-7, in St. Paul.

[Dakota County seeks protection for undeveloped lands](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The Farmland and Natural Areas Program has protected nearly 9,000 acres, but with limited resources going forward, Dakota County searches for a strategy that will make the biggest impact.

[Deer hunters group wants to catch cougars on trail cameras](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). The Minnesota Deer Hunters Association is asking people with trail cameras to leave them up this winter so that they might catch a picture of a predator -- especially a cougar.

[Tony Cornish sets sights on regulators](#) (Mankato Free Press). It was a campaign theme almost as common as no-new-taxes for Republican candidates from Tom Emmer on down: Minnesota environmental regulators are paralyzing Minnesota farmers and business owners with needlessly complicated and time-consuming regulations.

[Sides jousting over DNR's next commissioner](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Pressure from mining and forestry interests is said to be a reason for the delay in announcing Gov.-elect Mark Dayton's choice.

[State files lawsuit against 3M over pollution](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). The state of Minnesota is taking Twin Cities industrial giant 3M to court.

[Minn. DNR unveils Legacy Amendment logo](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has unveiled a new logo for projects funded by the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment.

[Heavy December snows put fish in peril](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Lake aeration systems are popping up early in the season to try to prevent mass dieoffs of fish.

[Corn mash tank collapses at Claremont ethanol plant](#) (Rochester Post Bulletin). A 270,000-gallon corn mash fermentation tank at the AI-Corn Clean Fuels in Claremont collapsed inside a building about 1:30 a.m. New Years Day, draining nearly all the mash from the tank and another connected to it.

[Cloth diapers making a comeback](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Reusable diaper services are growing by attracting customers as interested in the overall lower cost as they are in being green.

While the farmer holds the title to the land, actually, it belongs to all the people because civilization itself rests upon the soil. – Thomas Jefferson

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

Scott Kudelka
Watershed Assessment Specialist
Water Resources Center
184 Trafton Science Center S
Mankato, MN 56001
507-389-2304
scott.kudelka@mnsu.edu
<http://watershedalliance.blogspot.com>