

Legacy Money Starts to Flow to Local Water Quality Project

Funding from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment is starting to flow to local water quality projects. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) uses a portion of the Clean Water Fund for grants to cities, counties, watershed groups and others to work on water quality problems.

By also tapping into the Clean Water Partnership funding, as provided by the Minnesota Legislature, and State Revolving Loan funds, the MPCA recently announced \$3.5 million in loans and \$1.7 million in grants for water quality projects throughout the state.

“Minnesotans can be assured that their Clean Water Legacy funding is going to projects at the local level, where people have the best understanding of their water quality problems and how to address them. These projects show the diversity of challenges facing Minnesota’s water resources, from protecting drinking water sources to fixing septic systems,” said Rebecca Flood, MPCA assistant commissioner. “Please join me in congratulating these partners on receiving funding to make a difference at the local level to ensure clean water for future generations.”

The following local partners will receive grants and/or loans:

- Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), \$249,986 in grant funds for a Diagnostic Study of Deer and Pokegama Lakes.
- Southeast Minnesota Water Resources Board, \$143,600 in grant funds for continuing the Southeast Minnesota Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network.
- Cass County Administration (Pine River Watershed Alliance), \$105,712 in grant funds for establishing the Pine River Watershed Stream Baseline Water Quality.
- City of Fergus Falls, \$98,500 in grant funds for a Lake Alice Resource Investigation Project.
- Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District, \$58,000 in grant funds for Square Lake Implementation Plan Refinement and \$39,000 in grant funds for Sand and Long Lake Diagnostic Studies.
- Capitol Region Watershed District, \$50,000 in grant funds for the Crosby Lake Management Plan, and \$430,000 in loan funds for Enhanced Total Phosphorus Removal in an Urban Wetland System.
- Pelican River Watershed District, \$47,188 in grant funds for the Pearl Lake Diagnostic Study.
- Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District, \$33,000 in grant funds for the Green Lake Eurasian Watermilfoil/Stormwater Study.
- Rice Creek Watershed District, \$20,100 in grant funds for the Clear Lake Water Quality Diagnostic Study and \$110,200 in grant funds for Lake Johanna/Oasis Pond Water Quality Treatment.
- Vadnais Lake Area Watershed Management Organization, \$15,000 in grant funds for the Lambert Creek Retrofit Identification and Design Project.
- Watonwan County, \$1.2 million in loan funds for Greater Blue Earth and Des Moines River Sub-surface Sewer Treatment System (SSTS) loans.
- North Fork Crow River Watershed District, \$750,000 in loan funds for North Fork Crow Septic System/ Feedlot Upgrades.
- Rock County SWCD/Land Management, \$650,000 in loan funds for the Rock River Replacement SSTS Loan Program.
- Faribault County, \$250,000 in grant funding and \$200,000 in loan funds for the East Branch Blue Earth River Watershed Approach.
- Sibley SWCD, \$9,770 in grant funds and \$273,000 in loan funds for the Bevens/Silver Creek SSTS Project.
- Meeker County/ Crow River Organization of Water, \$250,000 in grant funds for Reducing Sediment in the Crow River Basin
- Greater Blue Earth River Basin, \$227,600 in grant funds for Blue Earth River Basin Restoration Positions.

The grants and loans were based on recommendations of MPCA staff and the Intergovernmental Project Coordination Team, an interagency group established by state law, consisting of representatives from about 20 local, state and federal agencies.

For more information about these projects, contact Pete Fastner of the MPCA at 651-757-2349 or toll-free at 1-800-657-3864. For a complete list of projects, go to <http://www.pca.state.mn.us>.

2010 Living Green Expo

Next year's Living Green Expo, which was canceled due to state budget cuts, has gotten a new lease on life.

The Minnesota Environmental Partnership, a non-profit composed of more than 80 environmental and conservation organizations, has taken over support of the expo from the cash-strapped Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the partnership said today.

The annual event will be held May 1 and 2 in the Grandstand at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds in Falcon Heights. The expo last year reported an attendance of about 20,000 with a sold-out crowd of 270 exhibitors. (Minnesota Public Radio)

Winter Series – Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry

Happy New Year to each of you! We at the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry are excited to unveil a new series designed to prompt conversation and action in our lives as we move toward a new sustainable future together. Building on the theme of "Crisis as Opportunity: Redesigning the Good Life" from our last Earth Conference (November 2009), we are ready to launch a new winter series.

This new series is based on the hope for a better, more sustainable future. Maybe you want to save money. Maybe you want to lessen your carbon footprint or you simply want to learn new skills. Maybe you want to use a fair share of the world's resources and build community at the same time. Maybe you're just curious what all the fuss is about. All good reasons to join us as we redesign, rebuild and reskill our lives.

Here's the schedule of events for January

- Wed., January 6th, at 6 pm - Screening of **FOOD, Inc.**, SSND Conference Center, 170 Good Counsel Dr. We have bigger-breasted chickens, the perfect pork chop, herbicide-resistant soybean seeds, even tomatoes that won't go bad, but we also have new strains of E. coli-the harmful bacteria that causes illness for an estimated 73,000 Americans annually. We are riddled with widespread obesity, particularly among children, and an epidemic level of diabetes among adults. What do we really know about the food we buy? See this film to find out. Freewill donations accepted.
- Wed., Jan. 13th - "**Healthy Homes, Healthy People, Healthy World**" workshop. 6 pm, SSND Conference Center. We'll focus on replacing toxic cleaning products with simple, effective, inexpensive made-at-home cleaning products. We'll have recipes and sample products on-hand for you to see. Bring your own re-usable bottle and take some all-purpose cleaner home with you. Suggested donation \$5-\$10. (No one turned away for lack of ability to pay.)
- Wed. Jan. 27th, 6 pm - **Book Club!** We will discuss Sharon Astyk's book, **Abundance and Depletion: Life on the New Home Front**. This book has plenty of food for thought as we work to redefine abundance in our lives to include more than material wealth. It's eye-opening, inspiring and action-packed! (in terms of actions we can take for a more sustainable future together.) Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry, 170 Good Counsel Drive. There is a limit of 10 people for this, please call to sign up.

Don't miss these opportunities! Peace in the coming year to you - Lisa A. Coons; **Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry**; 170 Good Counsel Dr.; Mankato, MN 56001; (507)389-4272; lcoons@ssndmankato.org; <http://www.ssndmankato.org/earth/>

Bees: Honey of a Crop Alternative By Dave Smith

There's a buzz going 'round that Harris Tinklenberg has himself a honey of a deal going in Madelia. And truth be known, he does.

Tinklenberg keeps about 450 hives full of busy little honey bees - from 9 to 36 million depending on the season - producing a crop that provides a living.

He joined the ancient fraternity of beekeepers – the practice is recorded thousands of years before Christ – nearly 30 years ago after spending time with a neighbor who had bees. “When my wife couldn't find me she knew where to look,” Tinklenberg chuckled.

His interest grew, and after moving to southern Minnesota he began a few hives. That interest grew to 940 hives, leading him to leave his job selling insurance and go into raising bees full-time. “Is it sustainable? Yeah, depending on the number of hives, yeah you can do it for sure,” Tinklenberg said. “It takes some time. You're not going to pop in 100 hives and make it with no experience.”

The average hive in Minnesota produces about 85 pounds of honey annually – up to 120 in a good year. He sells surplus honey to a number of sources including area grocery stores like Hy-Vee, some smaller vendors and packers who further process and sell it. Most of his honey is liquid, or extracted, but Tinklenberg does sell some comb honey too.

Beeswax is another profitable product of the hives. Tinklenberg's wife uses some of it to make candles and figurines she sells and some is sold to a company that makes hive foundations. Wax-making leftovers, called “slum,” are taken to a company that literally squeezes every last drop of wax out then either purchases or sends it back to the beekeepers.

Another revenue source is the bees themselves. For example queen bees sell for around \$18 and three pounds of bees and a queen go for about \$70.

Tinklenberg said beekeeping is a labor-intensive undertaking. It is very hands-on, he said, and it's often difficult finding people to help do the work. “It's hard to find people who are not scared silly,” he explained. “Most of it is in their head. They learn to tolerate it; you don't get stung often. The first time they think their arm is going to fall off... it doesn't.”

Tinklenberg points out that honeybees can only sting once due to having a barbed, split stinger. Other bees like yellow jackets and bumblebees have smooth stingers and may sting more frequently.

Minnesota bees, like Minnesota people, have to deal with frigid winters and doing so can be a challenge. Bees lie dormant during the winter bunching together in their hives and shivering to stay warm. This process allows the temperature inside the colony to stay at about 85 degrees no matter the conditions outside. Then in mid-January when the days begin to lengthen, queens start laying eggs again and the hive population increases dramatically over the next several weeks.

Bees need to have plenty of flowers to get pollen, a fact that can be made difficult by weather or location of a hive. For example if an area is short on rain honey production will be lower. Or if there are not enough flowering plants in an area the beekeeper might contract to winter his bees elsewhere – Mississippi or California possibly – where they abound, though that option can be risky and expensive.

Aspiring beekeepers should first watch and work with experienced people, Tinklenberg advised. He also suggests starting small and building up gradually and exercising caution when purchasing equipment. Most beekeepers are willing to take someone under their wing leading them to the time when they go it on their own.

Job Announcements:

Education and Communications Specialist

Minnehaha Creek Watershed District is hiring an Education and Communications Specialist. This is a new position that was created to assist the Education and Communications Manager with planning, management, and execution of MCWD education and communications functions. The purpose of the Education and Communications Program is to promote awareness and knowledge building that leads to an informed and engaged citizenry which takes actions for clean water and natural resource stewardship. Starting salary range is \$33,600 to \$37,600 a year. Applications are being accepted from December 22, 2009 to January 8, 2010. For more information contact Julie Westerlund at 952-471-0590 ext. 209 or go to the web site address: http://www.minnehahacreek.org/Education_Communications_Specialist.php

Resource Conservation Technician

Faribault County SWCD is hiring a Resource Conservation Technician to assist the county with implementation of the Drainage Maintenance Program which includes ditch inspections, inventories, and providing assistance to the County Drainage Authorities. This combined position is also responsible for assisting with the County Septic program, the Noxious Weed program, the County tile camera program, and other duties as assigned. Send cover letter, resume and application by 4:30 p.m. on January 22, 2010 to: Michele Stindtman; 415 South Grove Street #8; Blue Earth, MN 56018. For more information and application form: <http://www.faribaultcountyswcd.com/>

Events:

January 19th (Tuesday) is the **Minnesota River Watershed Alliance quarterly meeting** starting at 6 p.m. with a social hour and the formal meeting at 7 p.m. at the Hutchinson Event Center (1005 15 South Plaza 15). This meeting will focus on choosing a 2010 "Clean Up the Minnesota River" issue.

January 20, 2010 (Wednesday) is **Perspectives on Water in our Changing World: From Climate to Culture** from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Breck School (123 Ottawa Avenue North) in Golden Valley. This event promotes World Savvy's free online global affairs publication, the World Savvy Monitor (monitor.worldsavvy.org), *Perspectives on Water in our Changing World* will feature diverse viewpoints on water issues locally, nationally and globally from:

- Mark Seeley; Climatologist, University of Minnesota
- Deborah L. Swackhamer; Director, Water Resources Center
- Joan Nephew; Executive Director, Freshwater Society

For more information <http://www.worldsavvy.org/minneapolis>

February 3rd (Wednesday) is the **Hawk Creek Watershed Project Annual Meeting** starting at 8:30 a.m. with registration and going to 12:30 with a meal for those who send a RSVP email to hawkcreeksteph@redred.com before January 29th. The annual meeting will be held at the Kandi Entertainment Center (500 19th Avenue) in Willmar. For more information <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/hawkcreekannualmeeting.pdf>

February 18th (Thursday) is **Nutrients in Our Environment: Past, Present and Beyond** conference starting at 8:00 a.m. at the Verizon Wireless Center (1 Civic Center Plaza) in Mankato. This event sponsored by the S MN Nutrient Efficiency Coalition and partially funded by agreement number MX964472 between the US Environmental Protection Agency and the Conservation Technology Information Center. Visit www.upstreamheroes.org/nutmgmtconf.php or contact brian.c.williams@state.mn.us for more information.

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>

March 11-12, 2010 (Thursday and Friday) is the **22nd Annual Erosion Control & Stormwater Management Conference & Trade Show** in St. Cloud, Minnesota sponsored by the Minnesota Erosion Control Association. For more information: <http://www.mnerosion.org/>

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

Water Quality Articles:

[L-S Heritage Council delivers preliminary funding requests](#) (Minnesota Outdoor News). The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council has pared down the nearly \$200 million worth of requests for funding it received.

[Doug Smith: War of words over constitutional amendment for conservation](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Now that a steady source of money to support natural resources has been secured, another battle is brewing: how those dollars should be spent.

[Energy Credits A Big Help To Homeowners](#) (WCCO TV). If you'd like to save both energy and cash, a combination of federal and state tax credits can help your family do just that.

[N.D. eyes suit against Minn. over carbon pricing](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). A requirement by Minnesota regulators for electric utilities to factor costs for emitting carbon dioxide into their power generating plans affects utilities that export electricity to the state, and at least one of Minnesota's neighbors is ready to fight the requirement in court.

[Foxes cause flight delay at MSP airport](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). A brief flight delay at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport Wednesday morning had nothing to do with snowstorms or terrorism. Blame the foxes.

[Report raises concerns over carbon monoxide poisoning](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Sixty-one Minnesotans died from accidental carbon monoxide poisoning from 2003 to 2007, with the number of fatalities peaking in the fall and winter months, according to a new report by the state's Department of Health.

[New restrictions on plastic bags coming in Minn.](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Under a new law that takes effect the first of the year, homeowners in the metro area will need to put their yard waste in compostable bags.

[New 'guide' generates concern](#) (Minnesota Outdoor News). Lawmakers from the state House say a new set of "legislative guidelines" is meant to guide spending of dedicated funds and establish oversight and accountability for those expenditures. Some conservation advocates, though, worry something more sinister is afoot.

[Mixed success in bid for conservation project cash](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). One big victory would be \$2.1 million targeted to protect habitat around the Vermillion River.

[Deteriorating conditions for pheasants](#) (Minnesota Outdoor News). The 2009-10 pheasant-hunting season is yet to draw to end, and already, state wildlife officials are concerned about next year's crop of birds.

[GarbageMan takes new approach to trash: Smaller, more energy efficient trucks and plans to bill by refuse weight](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). GarbageMan takes a new approach to trash: Smaller, more energy efficient trucks and plans to bill by refuse weight.

[Ethanol plant lost \\$21.5 million in 2009](#) (Fergus Falls Daily Journal). Operating losses increased nearly 150 percent in 2009 for Otter Tail Ag Enterprises, the operator of a Fergus Falls-based ethanol plant.

[Fight Against Asian Carp Threatens Fragile Great Lakes Unity](#) (New York Times). Asian carp, the voracious, nonnative fish whose arrival near Lake Michigan is threatening to cause havoc in the Great Lakes, are now setting off strife on land as well.

[Klobuchar, Oberstar, Walz receive top marks from environmental group](#) (Minnesota Independent). Sen. Amy Klobuchar, and Reps. Tim Walz and Jim Oberstar each earned a 100-percent rating from the Environment Minnesota in a year-end congressional scorecard published last week.

[Dakota County center recycling e-waste at no charge](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). Broken cell phone? Fax machine gathering dust? Dakota County residents can toss that junk for free again.

[State's roads aim for low-salt diet](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Amid concern over harmful effects of salt, plow drivers get creative -- and get results.

Those who dwell among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life. –
Rachel Carson

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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