

**Field & Stream Invites Southern Minnesota Residents to become Conservation Heroes**

*Magazine joins the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to restore grasslands of Kutz prairie parcel*

On Saturday, May 5, *Field & Stream* magazine will join the MN Department of Natural Resources and local volunteers to help restore the Kutz prairie parcel near Judson, as part of its *Hero for a Day* program.

Now in its second year, *Hero for a Day*, in collaboration with Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc., connects volunteers with hands-on conservation workdays across the country, serving as a unique opportunity for readers to take action in sustaining and protecting fish, wildlife, and habitat in their area. *Field & Stream* will be on site at 10 *Hero for a Day* projects throughout the spring and will report on the work efforts in the magazine and online.

Volunteers will remove invasive brush and exotic species, reversing years of serious degradation and allowing beneficial grasses to flourish. Prairie experts will provide one-hour tours of parcel, pointing out the plants and animals that thrive in prairie habitat. The workday will benefit pheasants, turkeys, ducks, whitetail deer, and other species found here and on nearby public lands. This habitat is rapidly disappearing in southern Minnesota, and currently can only be found in state Wildlife Management Areas, Conservation Reserve acreage, and native prairie remnants.

“Many rare species of plants and animals are found on the Kutz prairie remnant,” said Randy Schindle, private lands specialist, MN Department of Natural Resources. “With less than one percent of the original native prairie remaining in Minnesota, this rare jewel is in need of management. If invading trees and brush are not removed and fire not reintroduced, this site will eventually convert to forest, and the amazing diversity of this habitat will be lost.”

*Hero for a Day* is an extension of *Field & Stream*'s Heroes of Conservation initiative, now in its seventh year, which profiles three exceptional conservation volunteers each month and awards them a \$500 grant from Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. Six Heroes finalists will be awarded \$5,000 grants at the Heroes of Conservation Award Gala in October, and the 2012 Conservation Hero of the Year will win a new Toyota Tundra.

“We are excited to continue our involvement with the *Hero for a Day* program and lend our support to individuals making a difference in their communities through important environmental projects,” said Keith Dahl, national manager of engagement marketing for Toyota.

“The *Hero for a Day* program lets *Field & Stream* readers invest in their passion for hunting and fishing by helping to restore and protect fish and wildlife habitat,” said Mike Toth, Executive Editor. “We couldn't be more proud of our readers and the projects they'll be pitching in on, and we're grateful to have such a fantastic sponsor in Toyota, who has partnered with us on the Heroes of Conservation program from the start.”

**INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS**

DATE: Saturday, May 5, 2012  
TIME: 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
PLACE: Judson, MN

*Volunteers will meet at 9 a.m. and park at the Judson Implement Company, located at 110 Judson Fort Road West. Project leaders will be there to take volunteers ½ mile to the prairie parcel.*

ATTIRE: Bring gloves, sunglasses, water, and sunscreen. Wear work boots.

NOTE: Lunch will be provided. The first volunteers to arrive will receive a *Field & Stream*/Toyota gift bag. Volunteers over the age of 18 are also eligible to enter a drawing for a trip to Washington, D.C. to attend the Heroes of Conservation gala.

For more information on *Field & Stream's Hero for a Day* event, visit [fieldandstream.com/heroforaday](http://fieldandstream.com/heroforaday).

### **Walk-In Access enrollment deadline June 1**

A June 1 deadline is in place for landowners in 21 southwestern Minnesota counties to earn money by allowing public hunting on their private land through the Walk-In Access (WIA) program, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Privately owned parcels of 40 acres or more, which are already enrolled in a conservation program such as Conservation Reserve Program or Reinvest In Minnesota, may qualify for WIA. River bottoms, wetlands and other high quality habitat will also be considered for the program.

WIA pays landowners by the acre to allow hunting access. Bonuses are added if more than 140 contiguous acres are enrolled, if the land is within one-half mile of existing state or federal hunting land, or if a multi-year agreement is signed. Local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) offices are handling program details and enrollments.

This is a voluntary program for landowners. Recreational use laws provide extra liability protection for WIA acres.

WIA land is for public hunting only. No target practice, trapping, dog training, camping, horseback riding or fires are allowed. Enrolled acres are for walk-in traffic only; no vehicles are allowed on conservation land. Parking is along roads or in designated parking areas. DNR conservation officers will address trespass and hunting violations.

Once private land is enrolled in the program, bright yellow-green hexagon signs are placed at the property boundaries.

A map of the 21 counties involved in the program and more information on WIA can be found at [www.mndnr.gov/walkin](http://www.mndnr.gov/walkin) or by calling Marybeth Block, DNR Walk-in Access coordinator, at 651-259-5223.

Locations of parcels enrolled for 2012 will be on the website in August. WIA is a partnership between the DNR, SWCD, Board of Soil and Water Resources (BWSR) and U.S. Department of Agriculture, which is funding the first two years of the program.

### **MN Air Spectacular Needs Volunteers**

Now is the time to get your application in to volunteer for the airshow! Great fun, great service, and excitement! Now is the time to log on and get registered.

Please pass this to all of your organizations. This is a great opportunity for your groups to participate in an excellent event, have fun, and make a little money to! See the information below and attached!

Volunteer applications are now being taken for the 2012 MN Air Spectacular. The Air Show will be held June 9 & 10, 2012 at the Mankato, MN Regional Airport. Our featured show will be "The Blue Angels"! For more information about the MN Air Spectacular and all the acts go to [www.mnairspectacular.com](http://www.mnairspectacular.com)

Volunteering for the MN Air Spectacular is a fun way to get involved. While you are volunteering you will see, hear and feel the excitement all around you. We are looking for volunteers age 16 and older to volunteer their time to work at the Air Spectacular. Volunteers must be available for a minimum of six hours. A t-shirt & lunch will be provided. \$15 per person per day will be paid to your non-profit organization.

For information on volunteering see the You Tube Video (link below):  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tNqRVhD8FI>

Group Volunteer application link below: <http://www.mnairspectacular.com/groupvolunteer>

Individual Volunteer application link below: <http://www.mnairspectacular.com/Volunteer>

A follow-up packet containing specific information and volunteer waivers will be mailed to your Group Leader no later than April 30, 2012.

**State agency invites comments on study to improve water quality of Blue Earth River system**

Mankato, Minn. – Water clear enough to support fish and other aquatic life is the goal of a study of the Greater Blue Earth River Basin in south central Minnesota. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is accepting comments through May 29 on the study, which includes the Blue Earth, Le Sueur and Watonwan rivers that flow through 11 counties in south-central Minnesota. The Greater Blue Earth River Basin includes the cities of Fairmont, St. James, Blue Earth, part of Waseca and part of Mankato.

This study, conducted by Minnesota State University-Mankato, addresses turbidity, or cloudy water. Turbidity is caused by suspended sediment, which consists of soil and other particles in the water column. Turbidity can harm aquatic life by limiting the growth of plant species needed for food, reducing visibility for fish searching for food, affecting gill function, and damaging spawning habitat. Water quality monitoring on the rivers in this basin has shown that their turbidity levels frequently violate state standards.

The turbidity levels of the rivers vary by season and flow condition. Targeting practices that reduce sediment levels during high flows will be the key to this project's success.

This is a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) project, a term which refers to the maximum amount of a pollutant – in this case, sediment – that the river can accept and still meet state water-quality standards. The TMDL is part of a nationwide effort under the federal Clean Water Act to identify and clean up pollution in streams, rivers and lakes. The TMDL process establishes the allowable amount of pollutants, identifies possible sources, and outlines steps to reduce the pollutants.

The MPCA believes the Greater Blue Earth River Basin study can guide improvement activities and further research, benefiting fish, waterfowl and mussels, and improving the aesthetic appearance of water bodies in the basin.

The draft Greater Blue Earth River TMDL report is available online at [www.pca.state.mn.us/0agx998](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/0agx998) and at the MPCA Mankato office, 12 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 2165. For more information or to submit comments, contact MPCA project manager Paul Davis at 507-344-5246 or [Paul.A.Davis@state.mn.us](mailto:Paul.A.Davis@state.mn.us).

Comments must be received in writing at the MPCA office by 4:30 p.m. May 29, and must include an explanation of the commenter's interest in the TMDL report, a clear statement of any recommended changes (including references to specific sections of the report), and specific reasons for any suggested changes.

The MPCA also invites comments on two related projects, the pollution-reduction reports for the Minnesota River and South Metro Mississippi. Research shows that the Greater Blue Earth River system is a major contributor of sediment to the Minnesota River, which in turn is a major contributor to the Mississippi.

Once the study has been approved, the MPCA will develop a plan to reduce the amount of sediment entering the rivers and upstream waters.

### **DNR extends deer population public input period**

The public comment period for revised deer population goals in southwestern and a portion of northern Minnesota has been extended to Thursday, May 10, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

"A number of people have already provided us input using the online survey since April 16," said Steve Merchant, DNR Wildlife Population Program manager. "Extending the date from May 1 to May 10 assures we have provided adequate time for public comment."

The survey is available online at [mndnr.gov/deergoals](http://mndnr.gov/deergoals).

Earlier this year, DNR worked with three stakeholder teams to help re-determine deer population goals in 12 permit areas in the southwest and 10 permit areas in north-central Minnesota.

The teams represented such interests as deer hunters, landowners, businesses, counties and conservation/environmental groups, and met to recommend if deer populations should be increased, decreased or stabilized for each of the selected permit areas.

The online survey allows the public to react to team recommendations and inform the DNR on their point of view regarding deer populations.

This information, along with the stakeholder team recommendations, will be used to set the 2012 deer season. Deer population goals for the remainder of the state will be reevaluated in the next year or two. Once public input is complete and results are analyzed, a decision on deer populations will be made for each permit area and the 2012 deer season harvest strategies will be adjusted accordingly.

Written comments may be mailed to: Steve Merchant, DNR, Box 20, 500 Lafayette Road, Saint Paul, MN 55155.

### **Minnesota River Board Awards Presented at Regional Science Fairs**

The Minnesota River Board is pleased to announce the recipients of their 2012 awards at the South Central/Southwest Minnesota Regional Science & Engineering Fair. The Junior/Senior Fair was held on Saturday, February 18 and the Elementary Fair was held on Saturday, April 28. Both fairs took place at Minnesota State University Mankato.

The Minnesota River Board Award is presented to students whose projects exhibit excellence in water research. These projects may span diverse disciplines such as biology, chemistry, environmental science, health, or human behavior. For each student, the MRB offered a check for \$50 and a certificate of accomplishment.

#### MRB Award Recipients: Junior/Senior Science Fair

Sean Bartz, Mayer Luther High School, Mayer

Project: An A-peel-ing Water Filter: Using Banana Peels in the Removal of Copper from Water

Owen Lutz, Saint Hubert School, Chanhassen

Project: Impact of pH on Survival Rate of *Amoeba proteus*

Andrew Steffl, Saint Mary's School, Sleepy Eye

Project: The Influence of Chemical Reactants on Eutrophication

Tyler Wendland, Waseca Junior High School, Waseca

Project: Could a Heat-Powered Water Filter be the Key to Better Water Quality for Third-World Countries?

#### MRB Award Recipients: Elementary Science Fair

Erik Anderson, Grade 5, Blue Earth Area Elementary School, Blue Earth

Title: Is Water Quality Affected by Distance?

Ty Below, Grade 3, Sacred Heart School, Waseca  
Title: Erosion

Samantha Maul, Grade 6, Madelia Elementary School, Madelia  
Title: Does Temperature Affect Oxygen Levels in Liquids?

William Tauer, Grade 5, Loyola Catholic School, Mankato  
Title: What Type of Soil Makes the Best Filter to Get Rid of Contaminated Water?

A special thanks to all of this years' MRB Awards judges:

- Joel Carlin, Associate Professor , Gustavus Adolphus College, Department of Biology
- Susan Carlin, Program Director, Minnesota River Board
- Shannon Fisher, Executive Director, Minnesota River Board
- Zachrie Gutnecht, Graduate Student, MSU Mankato, Department of Environmental Science
- Kimberly Musser, Assistant Director, MSU Mankato, Water Resources Center
- Brett Nelson, Graduate Student, MSU Mankato, Department of Biology
- Adam Nickel, Graduate Student, MSU Mankato, Department of Biology
- Lina Wang, Undergraduate Intern, MSU Mankato, Water Resources Center

### **Landowner investigated for burning asbestos-containing materials**

A Sibley County landowner has been investigated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) for the burning of a house and other structures that contained materials such as painted wood, painted metal, vinyl siding, and appliances in October 2011.

The MPCA conducted a follow-up inspection a month after the initial incident, after receiving a report that the landowner, Reed Burgstahler, had burned additional buildings at the site. Agency staff found three additional burn areas that included ash, wood, shingles, painted wood, paint cans, asphalt roofing, and garbage. Some of the materials later tested positive for asbestos.

Asbestos refers to a group of minerals with long, thin fibers that do not burn and were once used in building materials. The fibers are too small to be seen by human eyes. If people inhale asbestos, the fibers can become lodged in their lungs, affecting breathing and leading to diseases such as cancer.

The burning of buildings violated state laws that require permits for waste disposal, prohibit open burning unless meeting certain conditions, require removal of asbestos-containing materials before demolition, and require submission of a notice to perform a demolition to the MPCA. These laws are designed to prevent contamination of land and water resources as well as protect air quality.

Burgstahler has agreed to pay a \$14,500 penalty for the incidents, which occurred in an abandoned farm grove near Gibbon in Sibley County, located north of New Ulm in south-central Minnesota.

In addition to the financial penalty, Burgstahler must clean up the site and dispose of the waste at a facility with the appropriate permits. He is also being required to submit a letter to the editor of *The Land*, a statewide farm publication, informing readers that it is illegal to burn old farm buildings and improperly dispose of the debris.

The settlement, known as a stipulation agreement, is one of the tools used to achieve compliance with environmental laws. Under a stipulation agreement, the regulated party agrees to perform certain actions to correct the problem and prevent it from occurring again. Monetary penalties are also sometimes assessed. When calculating penalties, the MPCA takes into account how seriously the violation affected the environment, whether it was a first-time or repeat violation, and how promptly the violation was reported to appropriate authorities. The agency also attempts to recover the calculated economic benefit gained by the regulated party by failing to comply with environmental laws in a timely manner.

## Job Announcements:

### **CURE Associate Director**

Clean Up the River Environment (CURE,) a nonprofit organization dedicated to restoring and protecting the Minnesota River Watershed, is seeking applicants for an Associate Director. The Associate Director will support the Executive Director by managing all operational aspects of the organization, including financial management (payroll, accounts payable, grant reporting, financial reports, budgeting) human resources, property management, and office systems. The Associate Director will also help write and distribute communications for the organization. Applicants should have strong skills and experience in bookkeeping, financial management, office management, written and interpersonal communication. The preferred candidate will have a personal commitment to natural resource protection and community engagement. To apply, please send resume and cover letter to [marian@emrose.org](mailto:marian@emrose.org) prior to May 28, 2012. Details and full job description at [www.cureriver.org](http://www.cureriver.org).

### **Seven Mile Creek Watershed Technician**

We have posted a new position for Seven Mile Creek Watershed Technician with Great River Greening and are looking for some strong, qualified candidates. The 2-year position will be based out of the Nicollet SWCD office in St. Peter, Minnesota, with the possibility of extension. The individual hired for the position will work with and alongside SWCD staff on the implementation of conservation practices in partnership with landowners (largely farmers) within the Seven Mile Creek watershed in Nicollet County. Please help us find an ideal fit for this important work!

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

## Events:

April 28<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) is the **Ney Nature Center Spring Fling – Benefit Dinner & Silent Auction** starting at 5:30 at the Montgomery American Legion Post 79 (102 Elm Avenue SW0 in Montgomery. Featured guest speaker is Don Shelby, an environmental journalist, nature lover, one of the most decorated and honored local television journalists in the country, and recently WCCO-TV News Anchor. For more information call or email Becky at the Ney Nature Center – 507-248-3474 or [info@neycenter.org](mailto:info@neycenter.org)

May 16<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday) is **Chris Domeier: “Ask an Expert” presentation** at 7:00 p.m. at the Montevideo Public Library. Come and hear Chris Domeier, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Biologist talk about the health of the fish in the Minnesota River on May 16<sup>th</sup> at the Montevideo Library at 7 pm. Chris is one of many citizen and professional experts profiled in the online “**Ask an Expert About the Minnesota River**” project. Staff from the Water Resources Center at Minnesota State University Mankato will highlight a few of the other experts chronicled in this online tour focusing on the health of the Minnesota River. Learn more about the health of the Minnesota River Basin at [www.mrbdc.mnsu.edu](http://www.mrbdc.mnsu.edu)

May 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> is the **21<sup>st</sup> Annual River & History Weekend at the Chippewa County Park** in Wegdahl along the Minnesota River. This will be an International camp out and fireside sing along on Friday May 18<sup>th</sup> and Saturday May 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the park. Rain or shine, bring a tent to pitch and some food to share along with your musical instruments and join exchange students from Sweden, Germany, Norway, Italy, Denmark, Thailand, Switzerland, Taiwan and more as they prepare to paddle the Minnesota river on Saturday as part of their year-long exchange experience facilitated by the [EF \(Education First\)](#) and CURE River Keeper John White of Clara City. Note that the Wegdahl park does not have electricity or water -- so plan for that. For more information, call CURE at 1-877-269-2873. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/historyweekend.pdf>

May 21<sup>st</sup> (Monday) is the **Minnesota River Board Meeting** from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon. Place and location to be announced. For information: 507-389-5491 or [karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu](mailto:karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu)

June 8th (Friday) is the **2012 Agricultural Drainage Workshop** at Wiecking Center on the Minnesota State University Mankato campus from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with a field trip. The wide variety of topics and networking opportunities of this conference will benefit anyone associated with agricultural drainage. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/drainageseminar.pdf>

July 16<sup>th</sup> (Monday) is the **Minnesota River Board Meeting** from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon at the St. Peter Community Center, Room 219 (600 South 5<sup>th</sup> Street). For information: 507-389-5491 or [karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu](mailto:karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu)

September 17<sup>th</sup> (Monday) is the **Minnesota River Board Meeting** from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon at the Health & Human Services Building Multipurpose Room (2200 23<sup>rd</sup> Street NE) in Willmar. For information: 507-389-5491 or [karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu](mailto:karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu)

November 19<sup>th</sup> (Monday) is the **Minnesota River Board Meeting** from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon. Place and location to be announced. For information: 507-389-5491 or [karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu](mailto:karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu)

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

### **Environmental/Conservation Articles:**

[Rethinking the Farm Bill: Subsidies and Family Farms](#) (Minnesota 2020). The increasing presence of ethanol at the pump has drastically increased the demand and cost of corn.

[After slow start, beekeeping permits jump in Minneapolis](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). The number of requests for beekeeping permits is spiking in Minneapolis, nearly two years after it was legalized.

[Dennis Anderson: Outdoors enthusiast Don McMillan was an ethical shepherd](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Don McMillan influenced a wide range of people with his dedication to conservation.

[Rain gardens blossom in Minneapolis](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). A tornado in August 2009 knocked down trees and caused flooding at Phelps Park in the Bryant neighborhood of Minneapolis.

[DNR issues statement on 30-pound bighead carp caught in the St. Croix](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). A commercial fisherman caught a 30-pound bighead carp at the mouth of the St. Croix River near Prescott, Wis.

[Minnesota Senate passes Legacy spending overwhelmingly](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). A bill that uses Legacy Amendment dollars to pay for a raft of outdoors habitat projects and boosts spending to fight aquatic invasive species such as Asian carp is on its way to Gov. Mark Dayton.

[North Dakota Sues Minnesota Over NGEA](#) (Minnesota 2020). In 2007, the Next Generation Energy Act (NGEA) created a framework for achieving significant energy conservation efforts and implementing renewable energy sources throughout Minnesota.

[Ethanol plant lists first-quarter loss as subsidy ends](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Low ethanol prices and high production costs contributed to a big first-quarter loss for the owner of an ethanol plant in northwest Minnesota, which could be a bellwether for the industry.

[Senate approves increase in hunting and fishing fees](#) (MinnPost). The Minnesota Senate approved legislation Monday to raise most hunting and fishing license fees – an increase the state's hunters and anglers support, according to Sen. Bill Ingebretsen.

[Invasive species bill targets Minnesota boaters](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Minnesota's 800,000 boaters would be subject to mandatory boat inspections for invasive species before launching their craft, under a bill approved Thursday by a House-Senate conference committee.

[Urban farming: or, Old MacRybak had a farm](#) (TC Daily Planet). Minneapolis likes to be ahead of the curve, especially when it comes to [sustainability programs](#).

[Bill raising hunting, fishing fees passed](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The measure, which also sets the state's first wolf season, now goes to Gov. Mark Dayton, where it is expected to get his approval. Bill targeting boaters is less certain.

This is my last Minnesota River Weekly Update. I want to thank everyone who I have worked with these last five and half years at the Water Resources Center. It has been a blast and I plan to continue being involved in the effort to restore and protect the Minnesota River.

*Enjoy yourselves, keep your brain in your head and your head firmly attached to your body, the body active and alive, and I promise you this much; I promise you this one sweet victory over our enemies, over those desk-bound men and women with their hearts in a safe deposit box, and their eyes hypnotized by desk calculators. I promise you this; You will outlive the bastards. – Edward Abbey*

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 Basin.

Thanks,

Scott

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