

Prime Time for the Minnesota River.

The one-hour documentary *River Revival: Working Together to Save the Minnesota River* will air in prime time on **KARE 11 TV at 6pm on Sunday, June 12**. The documentary, produced by the Water Resources Center at Minnesota State University Mankato, is hosted by well-known outdoors advocate Ron Schara.

River Revival tells the story of the Minnesota River Basin from its geological origins to the present day. It explores the river's many pollution problems and highlights the efforts of people from all walks of life to restore the river.

To coincide with the airing of the documentary, the Water Resources Center will unveil its updated and expanded **Minnesota River Basin Data Center** website. The site will be a clearinghouse of information related to research, public lands and restoration efforts in the Basin, and it will be rich in social media features, allowing users to both view and contribute information in several formats. The centerpiece of the site will be an interactive map enabling natural resource professionals and the public alike to access and contribute information.

Excerpts from the documentary appeared on Ron Schara's Minnesota Bound in late March and April and can be viewed on their website (mnbound.com/watch-mn-bound, episodes 589–592). "Director's Cuts" versions are posted to mnriver.net.

For more information, please contact Water Resources Center Watershed Specialist Scott Kudelka (507-389-2304) or *River Revival* Executive Producer John Hickman (952-884-3348).

Community Invited to Share River Experiences

A Free Workshop with Cottonwood Author Florence Dacey. Teens and adults will have an opportunity to write about their personal stories and reflections about the Minnesota River, its valley and tributaries at writing workshops on Monday, May 16 at the Redwood Falls Library from 6 to 8 p.m. and on Wednesday, May 18 at the Library in Ortonville from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. The workshops, entitled, *Words for Our Great River*, will be led by Cottonwood writer and teacher Florence Dacey who will read some of her own river poems and provide tips and writing prompts for writing about personal experiences and reflections about the Minnesota River, its valley and watershed, including Big Stone Lake in Ortonville.

Participants will get tips on writing about fishing, boating, river floods, animals, birds, plants and trees, favorite moments and fond memories connected to the Minnesota River and any of the rivers and streams that are part of its watershed. This informal writing and sharing session is free, and no previous creative writing experience is needed. Registration for each session is limited to 30. Please pre-register by calling the appropriate library, by contacting CURE by e-mail (dixie@cureriver.org) or by calling the CURE office at 320-269-2984.

This activity is made possible in part by a grant provided by the Southwest Minnesota Arts and Humanities Council (SMAHC) and is funded, in part, by the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund as appropriated by the Minnesota State Legislature with money from the vote of the people of Minnesota on November 4, 2008. The Libraries and CURE are co-sponsoring the event.

Farmer, other Volunteers check health of Minnesota's Lakes and Streams

For the past 10 years, Watonwan County farmer Norman Penner has been making weekly visits to a small bridge over the Watonwan River, about 1,000 feet from his home near Darfur, Minn.

Penner, who grows corn and soybeans and raises beef cattle, is a volunteer for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Citizen Stream Monitoring Program. Penner and 1,700 other volunteers across the state take regular readings of water clarity at assigned lakes or streams. The information the

volunteers collect aids in the MPCA's efforts to improve water quality and ensures a long-term, continuous data record for water scientists.

Water clarity, measured using a transparency tube (for streams) or a Secchi disk (for lakes) is a simple test that helps water resource professionals understand the health of a water body.

"In much the same way that blood pressure can alert a doctor to changes in a patient's health, a robust record of data on water clarity can help scientists track the health of a stream or lake," said Laurie Sovell, who coordinates the Citizen Stream Monitoring Program for the MPCA.

This year marks Penner's 10-year anniversary monitoring water clarity on the Watonwan River. Penner enjoys noticing how clarity patterns change during the seasons.

"In spring, after planting, I notice a lot of sediment in the water after a hard rain," he observed. "Into the summer, as the crops grow, that doesn't happen nearly as much, and there is very little change even after a heavy rain. You notice things like that when you've been monitoring for a while."

Frequently, when Penner is conducting his monitoring work, people will stop to ask what he's doing. "I like that," he commented. "It gives me a chance to strike up a conversation and tell people why this is important to me. People are very curious about how the river is doing."

The good news, Penner says, is that water quality is gradually improving in the Watonwan River. When water becomes clearer, a host of changes occurs that ultimately mean a healthier water body. Fish, insects and plants are stronger when there is less sediment in the water, partly because clear water is more easily penetrated by sunlight. Water clarity also tends to improve when levels of phosphorus and other pollutants decrease. These pollutants can lead to the overgrowth of algae, which makes water unsightly and less appealing for swimmers, boaters and anglers.

Penner first heard about the volunteer program through an article in his local newspaper. He was interested in the opportunity because the Watonwan River passes directly through farmland that has been in his family since 1931. "Volunteering gave me a good reason to look at the water, and to watch how it changes across the seasons," he said.

The MPCA is currently recruiting volunteers for the Citizen Stream Monitoring Program and Citizen Lake Monitoring Program. Volunteers are asked to take readings of water clarity at a designated site every week from April through October. The readings are taken using equipment provided by the MPCA. Training is provided, so volunteers do not need special experience or expertise. Lake volunteers must have access to a boat to do their monitoring, but a boat is not necessary for the stream program.

To learn more about becoming a volunteer, call Laurie Sovell (for the streams program) or Johanna Schussler (for the lakes program) at the MPCA at 651-757-2227 or toll-free at 800-657-3864. More information is available at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/cmp>.

Sierra Club Outings in West Central Minnesota

The North Star Chapter of the Sierra Club plans three local summer bicycle outings on the Lake Wobegon and Central Lakes trails. Sierra Club outings welcome everyone.

The connected Lake Wobegon and Central Lakes Trails run past lakes and through prairies, marshes, and woodlands, so participants will see a large variety of seasonal wildflowers. For information about trailheads and times, as well as to receive notification in case of inclement weather, contact Kay Slama at 320-796-5871 or slama@morris.umn.edu.

We will bike the Lake Wobegon Trail from St. Joseph to Albany and back Saturday, May 28. Optionally, bikers can take the 2-mile Collegeville spur to St. John's University. Participants can also

choose to camp overnight on the Mississippi River (advance reservation and deposit required), then bike south to Albany and back on the Holdingford spur on Sunday May 29.

The bicycle trip on Saturday, June 11, will run from Freeport to Sauk Centre and back along the Lake Wobegon Trail. On Saturday, August 13, the outing will follow the Central Lakes Trail from Osakis to Alexandria and back.

The Sierra Club North Star Chapter represents over 15,000 members across Minnesota. Inspired by nature, members work together to protect our communities and the planet. For over 40 years they have worked to preserve and protect Minnesota's environment through educational outings and volunteer activism. Visit the web site at www.northstar.sierraclub.org.

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Local Recycling, Trash Pick-up/Drop-off is better Alternative to Burning Garbage at Home

While cleaning up outside this spring, it is important to remember that backyard garbage burning is unhealthy, contributes to nearly half of all Minnesota wildfires, and is illegal in most cases. Today's garbage has changed; it contains more plastics, synthetics and other harmful substances hidden in materials that seem safe, like paper and cardboard boxes. In many counties it is illegal to use a burning barrel. Check with your local county government office.

Smoke from backyard garbage burning includes heavy metals such as lead, cadmium and chromium. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates one family burn barrel can emit as much dioxin (a known carcinogen) as a 200-ton-a-day municipal waste incinerator. In fact, backyard garbage burning is now the number one source of dioxin in the United States. These pollutants make their way into our air, water and soil, crops and animals and, eventually, into the food we eat.

A recent study by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) shows more than 30,000 rural Minnesota households have stopped burning garbage at home in favor of garbage collection or a drop-off service. Making use of local recycling and reuse options, backyard composting and local drop-off or collection services can significantly reduce harmful pollutants currently emitted by backyard garbage burning.

Dennis Haubenschild, a Princeton farmer, uses a local service for weekly pick-up of recyclables and garbage because of the risks backyard garbage burning can pose to his family and his business. "The biggest benefit is that it keeps everything neater and cleaner," Haubenschild said. "We live here and our cows live here 24/7. That means we do not do things that could or would endanger our health, or the products we sell."

Starting this month, the MPCA will launch a burn barrel reduction radio campaign in central and southern Minnesota through the Linder Farm Network. These public service announcements will talk about the health and environmental dangers associated with backyard garbage burning, and suggest safer disposal and recycling alternatives for rural residents.

For more information, including links to local waste-hauling services, drop sites, and recycling options, go to <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/burnbarrel>.

MPCA Commends Outstanding Wastewater-Treatment Operators

St. Paul, Minn. -- The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) recently commended the work of 182 wastewater-treatment operators at the 74th annual Wastewater Operations Conference. For the 34th consecutive year, the MPCA recognized operators of facilities that were fully compliant with all discharge permit requirements during the previous calendar year.

MPCA Commissioner Paul Aasen had high praise for the 2010 award recipients: "The wastewater professionals honored today are true stewards of Minnesota's water. Their hard work protects our rivers, lakes and streams each and every day."

To be eligible for the award, facility operators had to submit all monitoring reports to the MPCA correctly and on time, demonstrate consistent compliance through monitoring or surveys, and employ MPCA-certified operators.

The annual Wastewater Operations Conference brings together Minnesota wastewater operators for training and professional education. There are about 1,700 wastewater-treatment facilities in Minnesota, including municipal, industrial and some privately operated institutional facilities. The size of the community, institution or treatment plant is not a factor in awarding the certificates of excellence.

Comments Invited on Proposed Production Increase of Ethanol Plant in Martin County

Mankato, Minn. — The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) invites comments on an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) prepared for a proposed increase in production by Valero Renewable Fuels, an ethanol plant near Welcome in Martin County. Comments must be in writing and accepted by 4:30 p.m. on June 1, 2011.

Valero proposes to increase its maximum annual ethanol production from 118 million to 136 million gallons; its distiller's dried grains production from 320,000 to 450,000 tons; and its corn processing from 39 million to 50.4 million bushels.

This increase will occur without adding equipment, modifying the facility footprint, or changing its permit for appropriating water. The plant can accommodate this increase because it operates more efficiently than expected and because its water use is significantly below its current appropriation.

The EAW provides information about how the proposed project could affect the environment and helps determine whether an Environmental Impact Statement, a more comprehensive environmental review, is needed. Interested parties may comment on the EAW until June 1, 2011.

Copies of the Valero EAW are available at: MPCA St. Paul office, 520 Lafayette Road N.; and on the MPCA website at www.pca.state.mn.us.

Send questions and comments on the Valero EAW to Nancy Drach, Planner Principal, Environmental Review and Feedlot Section, MPCA, 520 Lafayette Road N., St. Paul MN 55155. Drach can also be reached by e-mail at nancy.drach@state.mn.us.

In addition to the environmental worksheet, this project requires an Air Permissions Permit and National Pollution Discharge Elimination System/State Disposal System Permit. These permits will be available shortly after the EAW public notice.

Job Announcements:

Resource Technician Heron Lake Watershed District

The Heron Lake Watershed District (HLWD) has a full-time opening for a Resource Technician in the HLWD office, located in Heron Lake, MN. The main responsibilities for this position will be drafting monthly newsletters and press releases, implementing an environmental education program, and seeking outside funding for HLWD programs.

This position will require excellent written and verbal communication skills for daily activities, as well as for seeking outside funding. The tasks related to the education program would include designing and hosting presentations, workshops, and other educational materials. Additionally, applicants would be responsible for HLWD media and promotional management, including monthly newsletters, press releases, and website development and maintenance. For seeking outside funding sources, the applicant must have strong technical and grant writing skills. This position would provide information to HLWD residents

interested in installing Best Management Practices related to soil and water conservation. This position requires assisting with a wide variety of programs administered by the HLWD and its partners.

Minimum requirements for this position include an Bachelor's Degree or equivalent from a four-year college or technical school in Communication, Agriculture, Natural Resources, Soils or similar field; or a minimum of five years previous experience and/or training; or equivalent combination of education and experience.

Starting salary is dependent upon qualifications. This is a full-time position working 40 hours per week.

A full job description can be obtained from Jan Voit at the HLWD office, PO Box 345, Heron Lake, MN 56137, telephone 507-793-2462. Interested parties must submit an application form, cover letter, resume, references, and a writing sample written within the last five years.

Applications must be delivered to the HLWD office in person or postmarked by 4:30 pm on Thursday, May 19.

Wilderness Inquiry Trail Staff and Intern Positions for 2011

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

www.wildernessinquiry.org

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

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

Events:

May 4th (Wednesday) is a **Lake Elysian Lake Association Forum** at 7:00 p.m. at the Elysian Tourism Center (Hwy. 60 across from Casey's). Speakers are Craig Soupir, Aquatic Plant Manager DNR who will talk about the Aquatic Plant Management Program, balancing the recreational access needs of landowners with the essential habitat value that aquatic plants provide. Bruce Pittman, Fisheries Specialist DNR will talk about Fisheries Management practices on Local Area Lakes: Elysian, Frances, Reeds, Rays and Lily. For more information call Claudia at 507-267-4073.

May 7th (Saturday) is the **Central Minnesota's Paddle Fest Mississippi Meltdown** from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. organized by Clear Waters Outfitting. For more details <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/mississippimeltdown.pdf>

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

May 12th (Thursday) is a **Meeting on Biogas Digesters** from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the New Ulm Public Library (17 N. Broadway). The agenda includes the following speakers: Amanda Bilek, Great Plains institute; Jake Fischer, The Minnesota Project; Kevin Hennessy, Agricultural Utilization Research Institute; Bill Lazarus, University of Minnesota, Department of Applied Economics; Bob Peplin, Agri-Waste Energies, Inc.; and David Schmidt, University of Minnesota, Department of Bioproducts and Biosystems Engineering. Learn about what is the current state of development of Biogas digesters in SW Minnesota,

Who is doing this kind of work, Who is using biogas digesters in their farms or businesses, How do the economics shake out, and What are the economic incentives. To register and RSVP - <http://sw051211.eventbrite.com/>

May 17th (Tuesday) is a **Tallgrass Prairie Walk** from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Linnaeus Arboretum at Gustavus Adolphus College. Join Blue Earth County Master Gardener Dolly Rye for a prairie walk in the Linnaeus Arboretum's three-year-old Coneflower Prairie. Learn about the various plants that can be found in the restored prairie, reminiscent of the vast expanses of tallgrass prairie that once covered two-thirds of the state of Minnesota. Meet at the Interpretive Center. For more information 507-933-8000.

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.

June 16th (Thursday) is an **Open House** for Uruguayan Photographer Federico Estol's book of local people and local photos: "Hello Montevideo from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Montevideo Public Library.

June 18th (Saturday) is the **Trifesta Celebration** in Montevideo starting at 8:30 at Lagoon Park with a 5k Run, Bike Race, Kayak Race, Canoe Race, Rubber Duck Race, music, food and much more.

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

Environmental/Conservational Articles:

Earth day Challenge(KARE 11). This Earth Day (Friday, April 22), the Living Green Expo is challenging Minnesotans to make at least one simple change that, when taken as a whole, add up to a big impact in making our community healthier and more sustainable.

The great northern pike debate (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The House and Senate look to cap the number of lakes where the DNR can put special northern pike restrictions. But department officials say they are guided by science and a goal to boost fish size

Mud balls fly at River Bend Nature Center (Faribault Daily News). On a rainy day, you expect the ground to turn to mud. But you don't expect to see it flying through the air.

Pawlenty on ethanol subsidies: Changes OK, but can't 'pull the rug out' from under industry (MinnPost). Tim Pawlenty said that he's open to changes in ethanol subsidies, but cautioned any change must be undertaken carefully.

A spring surprise? The heavy snow didn't mean more killed fish (Minnesota Public Radio). It was a tough winter for fish in Minnesota lakes. But officials with the state Department of Natural Resources say they are relieved to find no more than the usual number of fish killed from lack of oxygen under the ice and snow.

Minn. hits the bottle hard (MN Daily). The state needs to stop buying bottled water and switch to tap.

Living Green Expo (KARE 11). The Living Green Expo has something for everyone, including more than 300 exhibitors, hourly workshops, and experts in the field.

Greening your life (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Back when green was just a color, not yet a lifestyle, the first Living Green Expo was held in the Twin Cities.

[Tests show state's largest walleye lakes show very little PFCs](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). State health officials say fish tested from nine of Minnesota's 10 largest walleye lakes show those lakes have very little or no contamination from perfluorochemicals, or PFCs.

[Regulators give state's drinking water high marks](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Isolated problems surfaced in 2010, including 15 systems that exceeded the arsenic standard.

To forget how to dig the earth and to tend the soil is to forget ourselves. – Mohandas K. Gandhi

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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