

Rejuvenate the river

Minnesota Daily Editorial Board - Development of the Minnesota River can help make it usable for more people.

In Minneapolis and the surrounding areas, one doesn't often hear how dirty and polluted the Minnesota River is. In cities south of Minneapolis, not much is done to acknowledge that it even exists, much less make use of it.

But finally, many of those cities are making plans to invest billions of dollars into make the Minnesota riverfront a beautiful, accessible place residents can enjoy and be proud of.

The plan in Burnsville, Bloomington and Scott and Dakota counties is to develop urban villages along the riverfront and increase access points where there are currently few.

Trails for both pedestrians and bicyclists are in the works as well. The idea to add a badly needed bike path over the Cedar Avenue Bridge (a structure which already requires much attention in itself) is also being considered.

While a plan that brings the river closer to everyone in the community is a commendable one, planners do need to take in the concerns of skeptics. Kicking out owners of private property along the river front without fair treatment is the wrong way to go about development.

City planners and officials must find a way to work together with land owners to develop the riverfront into a space that everyone involved can be proud of. Cleaning the Minnesota River and developing its riverfront in a sustainable way can help many more Minnesotans enjoy this important natural resource.

Agreement could improve duck habitat in Kandiyohi Co., Minn

By Carolyn Lange, West Central Tribune

A plan to drain a small wetland could help improve habitat for ducks in the northern part of Kandiyohi County. Water in the 35-acre wetland basin in the Henjum Waterfowl Production Area, located in Arctander Township, has become too high, green and scummy, according to Steve Erickson with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Fathead minnows have invaded the lake, which has affected vegetation and reduced its appeal to waterfowl. The Kandiyohi County Board of Commissioners approved a conveyance easement agreement Tuesday between the county, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and landowners Donald and Carmen VanZee, that could make the lake more appealing to migratory waterfowl.

Under the plan, designed by the Ducks Unlimited office in Bismarck, N.D, a drain tile and water control structure will be installed this summer on the small lake southeast of Sunburg. The water level will be significantly lowered, possibly even drained, for at least one growing cycle to kill the fish and to allow vegetation to regrow. The process will replicate a drought condition, Erickson said. The wetland will eventually be restored to normal water levels.

Josh Kavanagh, from Ducks Unlimited, said the primary goal of the program is to enhance shallow lakes to improve habitat for migratory waterfowl. Improving breeding habitat is the secondary goal. Similar efforts around Minnesota and Iowa have been successful and have generated good reports from duck hunters, said Kavanagh.

For the entire article, [Agreement could improve duck habitat in Kandiyohi Co., Minn.](#)

Chippewa Co. first to pay bounty for coyotes in Minnesota since 1965

By Tom Cherveney, West Central Tribune

Chippewa County will be the first to pay a bounty for coyotes in Minnesota since the state ended its program in 1965. The Chippewa County Board of Commissioners approved a resolution Tuesday to implement a coyote bounty effective Dec. 1.

The county will pay \$10 per coyote brought to the Sheriff's Office from Dec. 1 through April 1 each year. Chippewa County had been the first to push for the legislation enacted in the last session that enables counties to administer their own bounty programs for coyotes. Two previous attempts to obtain the legislation had failed.

A coyote brought to the Sheriff's Office in Montevideo will have a hole punched in its ear to indicate that it had been presented for the bounty. Only coyotes trapped or shot in the county may be presented for the bounty.

Those accepting the bounty will be required to indicate the section and township where each animal was taken. The bounty recipient will retain the animal and is free to sell its pelt, which is currently worth about \$15, according to the commissioners.

For the entire article, [Chippewa Co. first to pay bounty for coyotes in Minnesota since 1965](#)

Restoring Native Prairie to Increase Pollinator Habitat

By: Scott Seigfreid

At one time native prairies dotted the landscape of the Minnesota River Basin providing ideal habitat for bees, butterflies, hummingbirds and other pollinators. The Many Rivers Chapter of The Prairie Enthusiast (MRC), MN DNR Division of Wildlife with coordinating support from Conservation Marketplace of Minnesota (CMM) and Unimin Corporation (UC) have teamed up to replace 8.5 acres of highly diverse native wildflowers and grasses to create quality habitat and forage for local pollinators.

Why Pollinators: Bees, Butterflies and other animals pollinate more than 2/3rds of the world's crop species. The Xerces Society reports that over 1/3rd of managed honey bee colonies have died in the last three years and some native bumblebee species are on the brink of extinction. The cause may be from a combination of pesticides, parasites, viruses, land use alterations and / or climate change. Providing good quality habitat is a good straightforward way to attract and increase native populations as well as benefit managed honeybees. Highly diverse native plantings with blooming wildflowers during the entire growing season, in addition to insecticide free buffers, are vital to enhance pollinator habitat.

Background: Conservation professionals from CMM, a grant funded-project of the Minnesota River Board, have been working with local partners, such as the (MRC) of TPE, to identify and partner with landowners who are willing to establish and maintain new high quality pollinator habitat on their land. Once priority, shovel ready projects have been identified, CMM networks corporations or foundations in Minnesota who might be interested in voluntarily sponsoring the project and/ or paying for the ecological uplift generated as a result of project implementation. Guidance from Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Xerces Society is used to develop native habitat for pollinators. The sites must be at least a half- acre in size and be maintained for a minimum of five years.

Proposed Project Details: The site which is owned by (MRC) members Jim & Kathryn Vonderharr is located just north of Mankato Minnesota in what is known as the Kasota Prairie area. The site was selected for the fact that the entire area was once Tallgrass prairie, of which remnants remain on the Vonderharr site which made it an optimal location to establish pollinator habitat. The Vonderharrs maintain two beehives on their rural property, located on a bluff above the Minnesota River Valley on the northern border of Blue Earth County. An inventory of the site was taken last fall and the area with the largest concentrations of native plants was flagged. A spring burn was conducted and two applications of Glyphosate were applied through the summer. A fall burn was conducted to remove trash from the site in prep for a fall dormant seeding. The MRC collected local ecotype seed from the surrounding area to

enhance the purchased seed package. A total of thirty seven species of forbs and ten species of grasses were seeded by the MN. DNR on November 2nd. This will make for a very diverse prairie and ideal pollinator habitat.

Contributors to the project (Unimin Corp, MN. DNR , MRC of TPE) will be recognized in a brief documentary to be produced by two film production interns from Minnesota State University, in 2012. The mini documentary to be created as a larger effort to explain and promote CMM. Also the project story and photo's from the site will be distributed to the local press. On the day of the MN DNR seeding , Unimin Corporation Area Manager Grey Lusty, and Unimin Environmental Affairs Manager Doug Losee were on hand to view the site prep and seeding process. The MRC hopes to have more cooperative projects in the future with Unimin Corporation and also the CMM. The MRC will assist the Vonderharrs with maintenance and follow up spot spraying on their new planting. Great project!! , and the pollinators will be the winners.

Comments invited on expansion of egg farm in Sibley County

Mankato, Minn. — The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) invites comments on an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) prepared for a proposed expansion by Asmus Eggs Farms, near Winthrop in Sibley County. Comments must be submitted in writing and are due by 4:30 p.m. on Dec. 14, 2011.

Owner Brian Asmus proposes to almost double the number of laying hens, from about 192,000 to 360,000. The expansion would include two additional barns, two manure-storage buildings, two water wells, and related infrastructure at 28242 505th Ave., Winthrop, Minn., which is in Section 2 of Alfsborg Township. The farm is surrounded by feedlots, cropland and several homes. The two closest homes are 100 feet from the site and are occupied by relatives of Asmus.

The existing farm has two barns, one manure-storage building, and one egg-packaging-and-storage area. Hens in the existing barns generate almost 9,000 tons of manure a year. Their manure is removed from the barns three times a week and stored until it is sold to area farmers for land application, except when cropland is in production.

Hens in the new barns will generate almost 6,600 tons of manure a year. The manure will be removed from the barns three to four days a week and stored in a separate building until it is sold to area farmers for land application in the spring or fall. An air drying system will dry the manure, reducing the number of flies and odors during storage. Drying and storing the manure will reduce the need to apply it to land during the winter.

Based on a computer-modeling study, the MPCA expects the expanded farm to comply with state air-quality standards, with odors below levels usually considered unpleasant.

Because the expansion will result in the farm using more than 5 million gallons of well water per year, Asmus is seeking the required water appropriation permit from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The egg farm is located 12 miles upstream from a section of the North Branch Rush River whose bacteria levels violate the state water-quality standard. Because Asmus sells his farm's manure to area farmers, it is spread across much more land than a typical feedlot, minimizing the impact to rivers and lakes.

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 through Dec. 14.

Copies of the Asmus 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 Asmus Eggs Farm EAW to Charles Peterson, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, 520 Lafayette Road N., Saint Paul MN 55155-4194. Peterson can also be reached by phone at 651-757-2856 or by email at charles.peterson@state.mn.us.

In addition to the environmental worksheet, this project requires a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System/State Disposal System Permit. These permits are also open for public comment.

Job Announcements:

MN DNR Invasive Species Specialist positions

Class/Option: NR SPECIALIST SR-ECO SVCS

Position: 01098419 Location: Hutchinson

Bargaining Unit: MAPE

Employment Condition: Unlimited Full-time - 100%

FLSA Status: exemptpro Temporary Position End Date:

Days of Work: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday Hours of work: 08:00 AM-04:30 PM

Work Area: Previous Incumbent: N/A

View at: https://statejobs.doer.state.mn.us/JobPosting/View?_posting=11DNR000601

Class/Option: NR SPECIALIST SR-ECO SVCS

Position: 01014821 Location: St. Cloud

Bargaining Unit: MAPE

Employment Condition: Unlimited Full-time - 100%

FLSA Status: exemptpro Temporary Position End Date:

Days of Work: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday Hours of work: 08:00 AM-04:30 PM

Work Area: Sauk Rapids Previous Incumbent: N/A

View at: https://statejobs.doer.state.mn.us/JobPosting/View?_posting=11DNR000603

Class/Option: NR SPECIALIST SR-ECO SVCS

Position: 00977490 Location: St. Paul

Bargaining Unit: MAPE

Employment Condition: Unlimited Full-time - 100%

FLSA Status: exemptpro Temporary Position End Date:

Days of Work: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday Hours of work: 08:00 AM-04:30 PM

Work Area: Previous Incumbent: N/A

View at: https://statejobs.doer.state.mn.us/JobPosting/View?_posting=11DNR000604

Grant Opportunities:

Clean Water Partnership grants due December 30th

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) is accepting proposals for Clean Water Partnership (CWP) grant and loan funding. Proposals will be accepted from local government units interested in leading a nonpoint source pollution control project to protect or improve water bodies.

Priority funding will be given to projects preventing degradation of unimpaired waters. For a project to be considered a protection/prevention project, proposers will need to document that the water body(ies) being addressed:

- Is currently meeting state water quality standards for a particular pollutant of concern; or
- Has not been assessed but is known to be supporting beneficial uses.

The MPCA expects to grant about \$1.2 million for grants and about \$5 million for loans this year.

Eligible applicants for CWP grants and loans include watershed districts, tribal authorities, cities and counties, joint powers organizations and watershed management organizations. Due to CWP statute

changes in the last legislative session, **soil and water conservation districts are now eligible** to directly sponsor a CWP proposal.

The MPCA will accept two types of proposals:

- Resource investigation projects that monitor, assess and develop a diagnostic study on the status of a water body(ies), and also develop an implementation plan to address the needs of the water body(ies). Resource investigation projects are only eligible for grant funding.
- Implementation projects that implement activities identified by a comprehensive assessment and planning process in the watershed or around the water body of concern. Such assessment must consist of an MPCA-approved CWP diagnostic study/ implementation plan, an EPA-approved Total Maximum Daily Load study/ implementation plan or an equivalent diagnostic study and implementation plan. Implementation projects are eligible for both grant and/or loan funding.

There is a \$300,000 limit on each grant funding request. There is no limit for a loan request.

The due date for proposals is 4:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 30. Proposals and questions must be sent electronically to the CWP Proposal Mailbox: CWP.Grant.PCA@state.mn.us.

CWP Grants will be administered via a standard three-year grant agreement. Proposers who are awarded funds will be able to begin project work as early as the spring of 2012. For more information, see the CWP Resource Investigation and Implementation Projects information on the [MPCA website](#).

Events:

December 1st (Thursday) is the **Showing of the documentary: *Reel Injun*** at the Treaty Site History Center in St. Peter. Hollywood has made over 4000 films about Native people; over 100 years of movies defining how Indians are seen by the world. *Reel Injun* takes an entertaining and insightful look at the Hollywood Indian, exploring the portrayal of North American Natives through the history of cinema. Admission is free. Sponsored by St. Peter Public Schools, Nicollet County Historical Society, River Rock Coffee and St. Peter Food Co-op. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/documentaryfilmseries.pdf>. Please contact 507-934-2160 or jessica@nchsmn.org for details.

December 7th (Wednesday) is the **Showing of the documentary: *Green Fire*** at the School Sisters of Notre Dame (170 Good Counsel Drive) in Mankato at 7:00 p.m. *Green Fire* is the first full-length, high definition documentary film ever made about legendary conservationist Aldo Leopold. The film explores Aldo Leopold's life in the early part of the twentieth century and the many ways his land ethic idea continues to be applied all over the world today. Admission is free. Sponsored by the Many Rivers Chapter of The Prairie Enthusiast, Center for Rural Ministry and Earth Spirituality, and the Water Resources Center at Minnesota State University Mankato. For more information contact Scott Kudelka at 507-389-2304.

January 5th (Thursday) is the **Showing of the documentary: *Okie Noodling*** at the Treaty Site History Center in St. Peter. For centuries, a unique breed of fishermen has been catching monster catfish with their bare hands in the rivers and lakes of Oklahoma. Today, the tradition of "noodling" still has Okie anglers hooked. Admission is free. Sponsored by St. Peter Public Schools, Nicollet County Historical Society, River Rock Coffee and St. Peter Food Co-op. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/documentaryfilmseries.pdf>. Please contact 507-934-2160 or jessica@nchsmn.org for details.

January 5th (Thursday) is the **Showing of the documentary; *Green Fire*** at the New Ulm Library (17 North Broadway Street) at 7:00 p.m. *Green Fire* is the first full-length, high definition documentary film ever made about legendary conservationist Aldo Leopold. The film explores Aldo Leopold's life in the early part of the twentieth century and the many ways his land ethic idea continues to be applied all over the world today. Admission is free. Sponsored by the Many Rivers Chapter of The Prairie Enthusiast, Center for Rural Ministry and Earth Spirituality, and the Water Resources Center at Minnesota State

University Mankato. For more information contact Kris Wiley, Assistant Director New Ulm Public Library, 507-359-8334 or kwiley@tds.lib.mn.us

February 2nd (Thursday) is a **Showing of the documentary: *River Revival – Working Together to Save the Minnesota River*** at 7:00 p.m. at the New Ulm Public Library (17 North Broadway Street). “River Revival” tells the story of the Minnesota River Basin from its geological origins to the present day. Through the seasons and throughout the basin, the documentary examines the river’s many pollution problems and highlights the efforts of people from all walks of life – academics, farmers, natural resource professionals, anglers, homeowners, students, paddlers, politicians and citizen activists – to restore the river. John Hickman, Executive Producer of River Revival will be on hand to share his insights of making the documentary and answer questions. For more information contact Kris Wiley at 507-359-8334 or kwiley@tds.lib.mn.us

February 11th (Saturday) is the **Clean Up the River Environment (CURE) Annual Meeting** at the Hollywood Theater (Main Street) in Montevideo from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. (meal served at 6:30 p.m.). Speakers include Scott Sparlin, founder of the clean up the Minnesota River movement; Dennis Frederickson, DNR Region 4 Commissioner; and Jon Olson, Board of the directors of the Mississippi Market Food Co-Op in St. Paul. Malena Handeen will be joined by artists and musicians from throughout the state to put on a special show. Cost of the meeting is \$25 per person if you register by February 7th (includes local foods banquet, door prizes and entertainment). Cost of registration after February 7th will be \$30. To reserve a spot, mail in your reservations (117 South 1st Street; Montevideo, MN 56265), call Dixie Tilden at 1-877-269-2873 or email cure@cureriver.org. For more information, http://www.curemriver.org/events.html#annual_meeting

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

Environmental/Conservation Articles:

[Walz, Harkin introduce legislation to help beginning farmers](#) (AgriNews). Mr. Average Minnesota Farmer is 52.9 years old, according to the Census of Agriculture. And while the number of farmers older than 65 keeps rising, the number of farmers age 34 and younger is in decline.

[Gov. Dayton wants faster environmental reviews](#) (MinnPost). Gov. Mark Dayton says the state has greatly streamlined the permitting process for business – while preserving environmental protections.

[3M: Improved health of Mississippi River means state should drop advisories](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). 3M is asking the state to change fish consumption advisories and remove the designation of "impaired" for the Mississippi River.

[Army Corps finishing the hole job](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). 4,000 tons of rock are being dropped into a gorge in the Mississippi River bottom in downtown Minneapolis.

[New report shows BPA could be in your Thanksgiving meal](#) (KARE 11). Bisphenol A (BPA) is banned from baby bottles and sippy cups sold in Minnesota, however the chemical could still be found in your home. A new report shows BPA could be in the food on your Thanksgiving table.

[Small arts groups say programs would suffer if Legacy funds directed to stadium](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). At hands-on art classes, a new group called Veterans in the Arts is trying to give struggling military veterans a chance to express themselves as they overcome the lingering stresses of their battlefield experiences.

[One way to reduce winter heating bill – plant trees, shrubs](#) (Alexandria Echo Press). Everyone knows that summer temperatures are cooler in the shade, but trees can help cut winter energy costs, too.

[For Asian carp battle, panel suggests closing locks at Ford dam, St. Anthony Falls](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). More than a dozen conservation and environmental groups urged a state-federal panel Friday to endorse closing two navigation locks in the Twin Cities to keep Asian carp from moving farther up the Mississippi River.

3M to start cleaning PFC from groundwater in Cottage Grove - <http://www.startribune.com/local/east/134009638.html> - (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The company and state agreed to move forward on Cottage Grove cleanup, though other issues regarding PFC removal remain unsolved.

I AM ANGRY. I AM OUTRAGED. And I am in love with this beautiful, blue we call home. – Terry Tempest Williams

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.

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>

Thanks,

Scott

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