

Dennis Frederickson Receives Conservation Award

Dennis Frederickson has been awarded the 2011 Carlson-Minge Award by local conservation organization Friends of the Minnesota Valley. Named in honor of former Governor Arne Carlson and former Minnesota Congressman David Minge, the Carlson-Minge Award is given to a current or former elected official, public figure, or public employee who has demonstrated outstanding leadership on the conservation of natural resources within the Minnesota River Watershed. Friends' board member and former Member of Congress from Minnesota's Second Congressional District, David Minge, presented Frederickson with the award at Friends of the Minnesota Valley's 2011 annual dinner at the Minnesota Valley Country Club.

Frederickson, a long-time Minnesota State Senator from New Ulm, currently holds the post of Southern Regional Director for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. He has been recognized over the years as a leader in conservation and the protection of natural resources. Some notable accomplishments include being the author of state legislation authorizing the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) in the Minnesota River Basin, authoring the state's Clean Water Legacy Act, and serving on the Legislative-Citizens Commission on Minnesota Resources. He also has advocated for re-authorization and continued funding for the Minnesota River Board, one of the Friends' primary partners. Frederickson also previously received a Conservation Award from Friends of the Minnesota Valley in 2001.

"Former Senator Frederickson represents the best characteristics of a true leader in natural resource conservation," said Lori Nelson, Executive Director for Friends of the Minnesota Valley. "His unwavering commitment and support for improving the Minnesota River and enhancing wildlife habitat while acknowledging the agricultural base of southern Minnesota's economy showcase his ability to bring people together to solve problems. His strong commitment to the Minnesota River Basin and his assistance in bringing much-needed funding into the region for effective conservation initiatives adds great value to the work of Friends of the Minnesota Valley and our partners."

Friends of the Minnesota Valley works to protect and enhance the natural resources of the Lower Minnesota River Watershed, including the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Established in 1982, the Friends currently have over 1,800 members. For more information on the Friends, please visit their website at www.friendsofminnvalley.org.

Minnesota Agricultural Water Resource Center (MAWRC) Receives Conservation Award

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Resource Center (MAWRC) has been awarded the 2011 Leadership in Stewardship Award by local conservation organization Friends of the Minnesota Valley. The Leadership in Stewardship Award is presented to an area business that demonstrates a commitment to the conservation of natural resources in the Minnesota River Watershed. Warren Formo, MAWRC's Executive Director, was on-hand at the Friends' 2011 annual dinner at the Minnesota Valley Country Club to accept the award.

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Resource Center is a consortium of 15 producer groups formed to support the continued improvement of all agricultural production systems through research and education.

The MAWRC is dedicated to improving water quality by building greater understanding of the economic and environmental effects of agricultural practices employed on Minnesota farms. One of the Center's key initiatives is its Discovery Farms program, which is a producer-led effort to gather field-scale information on water quality impacts from a variety of farming systems in different settings across Minnesota.

"Much of the early success of the Minnesota Agricultural Water Resource Center can be attributed to Warren personally, resulting from his roll-up-your-sleeves attitude and his ability to build relationships," said Lori Nelson, Executive Director for Friends of the Minnesota Valley. "The Minnesota Agricultural Water Resource Center is making a difference through education, research, evaluation and

implementation of real, on-the-ground demonstration projects. The formation of the MAWRC shows a renewed commitment by Minnesota farmers to seek a more proactive seat at the table on conservation issues within the Minnesota River Watershed”.

Friends of the Minnesota Valley works to protect and enhance the natural resources of the Lower Minnesota River Watershed, including the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Established in 1982, the Friends currently have over 1,800 members. For more information on the Friends, please visit their website at www.friendsofminnvalley.org.

Occupy Mankato presents a Teach-In and Community Forum

The public can learn more about issues behind the Occupy Wall Street movement at a teach-in and community forum 7 pm Friday, December 2 at the Conference Center of South Central College, 1920 Lee Blvd, North Mankato. A panel including MSU professors Richard Schiming (economics) and Bill Wagner (sociology), Sister Alice Zachman of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, and SCC economics instructor Mark Friedman will address the origins and costs of growing inequality and related issues such as the economic crisis and an unresponsive political system dominated by money. People attending will have ample opportunity to ask questions and voice their concerns.

Looking for signs of an improving economy? Check your trash bin.

Disposal of trash is up in Minnesota, and that's a small, but good, sign that the state's economy is growing. Tons of trash brought to landfills and waste-to-energy facilities dropped considerably during the recent economic downturn in Minnesota, but increased 4 percent this year.

Historical trends show that the amount of materials brought to landfills tend to increase as the economy grows and decrease when the economy contracts. Although waste generation is on the rise again, Minnesota's recycling rates have remained relatively flat for the past 10 years.

“The bad news is, a lot of recyclable materials are being tossed in the garbage,” said Minnesota Pollution Control Agency supervisor Mark Rust. “Not recycling costs money: last year, 1.2 million tons of recyclable material were thrown away, but could easily have been recycled for an estimated value of \$285 million. Instead, it cost Minnesotans more than \$200 million to throw it away.”

“Recycling is not only good for the environment, it has significant economic benefits as well,” Rust said. Recycling in Minnesota supports more than 37,000 jobs across the state, pays an estimated \$1.96 billion in wages, and adds nearly \$8.5 billion to Minnesota's economy.

From Thanksgiving through New Year's Day, household waste increases by 25 percent. “The good news is there is a lot of potential to reduce waste and capture recyclables during the holiday season,” Rust said.

Some things you can do to reduce and recycle waste during the holiday season are:

- Bring a reusable shopping bag. In the United States, consumers use 100 billion plastic bags annually, but only 5 percent of those bags get recycled. If you don't have a reusable bag, take used plastic shopping bags to your grocer for recycling.
- Consider buying gifts made from recyclable materials or gifts that can be used over and over, such as reusable coffee mugs, rechargeable batteries, or more durable goods.
- Shop Small Business Saturday this weekend. A massage at a local spa or an oil change at a local auto shop are great gifts that generate virtually no waste.
- Recycle old holiday lights. The Recycling Association of Minnesota is sponsoring a holiday light collection now through the end of January. Visit www.recycleminnesota.org for more information. And for new lights, consider LEDs, which use 80 percent less energy than standard lights.
- Help your guests recycle. Place clearly labeled recycling containers near trash containers at your holiday gatherings.
- Use reusable plates, napkins, cups and flatware. Inexpensive items can be found at local thrift stores. If you don't want to store them, you can donate them back to the thrift store.

- Consider donating gently used items you no longer want or need. Your trash may be someone else's treasure.
- Buy more environmentally friendly electronics. Look for Energy-Star-labeled products and use services like Epeat.net to find computers with the best environmental attributes. When you're done with your electronic devices, make sure to recycle them. Best Buy accepts many electronic items for recycling at no charge.
- Reuse bows, ribbons and leftover wrapping paper that's still in good condition. Better yet, wrap gifts in reusable bags or cloth and give loved ones the gift of reusable packaging.
- Compost food scraps. Leftover vegetable and fruit scraps can be composted in your backyard. Check whether your local hauler offers curbside composting.

Corn Plus ethanol facility in Winnebago will pay \$310,000 environmental penalty

St. Paul, Minn. — The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has announced that Corn Plus will pay a \$310,000 civil penalty to resolve violations of the air-quality permit issued to the company's ethanol-production facility in Winnebago.

The violations, occurring from 2008 to 2010, were discovered through on-site inspections by MPCA enforcement staff and through analysis of monitoring data the company is required to submit under its air quality permit.

A staff inspection in August 2009 found violations of Minnesota laws and rules as well as permit conditions. The inspection confirmed that some of the violations were not previously reported to the MPCA as required by the facility's permit. MPCA staff requested more monitoring records and discovered many repeated data patterns that indicated Corn Plus had falsified up to a year's worth of monitoring data, primarily relating to operations of the facility's air-emissions-control equipment.

In March 2011, staff from the MPCA and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) interviewed the facility's environmental manager and requested more monitoring records. The facility was issued a grand jury subpoena at that time by the EPA. After reviewing the records, EPA and MPCA staff identified more potentially false data from 2010.

Last month Corn Plus was charged by the EPA with a felony for falsifying information about its pollution-control equipment. These actions follow an \$891,000 settlement with the MPCA in January 2010, and another criminal charge from the EPA in late 2009 for water-quality violations.

MPCA Commissioner Paul Aasen said the company's unusual record of persistent violations of state and federal laws indicates a pattern of willful disregard for its environmental responsibilities.

"While the company operated outside the law for awhile, their choices and violations eventually caught up with them. I'm proud of our staff for their hard work and commitment in this case. In the end the state and federal regulatory systems worked the way they're supposed to," Aasen said.

"An untold part of cases like this is Corn Plus gained an unfair business advantage by ignoring its obligations as compared to other ethanol producers who played by the rules. \$1.5 million in penalties and severe criminal charges send a clear message that Minnesotans will not tolerate this kind of performance from businesses who don't meet the terms of their environmental permits," he added.

In Corn Plus's favor, Aasen noted, the company's current management has accepted responsibility for the company's misdeeds, fired those responsible, and pledged to operate responsibly moving forward.

The many violations cited in the agreement can be characterized generally as failure on the part of Corn Plus to (1) submit monitoring data as required by its permit, (2) ensure that submitted data are accurate, and (3) operate its pollution-control equipment in a manner that will ensure compliance with the facility's permit.

Conducting timely monitoring and submitting accurate data to the MPCA are important responsibilities for any facility operating under an environmental permit. The monitoring and data provide the only verification that pollution-control equipment is operating as intended to protect human health and the environment. People exposed to excessive levels of air pollutants can experience a variety of health effects, including irritation of the eyes, nose and throat. People with heart or lung disease also can react more severely to air pollutants.

In addition to the civil penalty, the company agreed to a compliance schedule for completing corrective actions, including specific plans on how it will ensure compliance with the facility's environmental permit limits and prevent reoccurrence of the violations in the future.

When calculating penalties, the MPCA takes into account how seriously the violations affected the environment, whether they were first-time or repeat violations, and how promptly they were reported to appropriate authorities. Penalties also attempt to recover the calculated economic benefit gained by failure to comply with environmental laws in a timely manner. For a comprehensive list of enforcement actions by the MPCA, go to the agency's [Quarterly Summary of Enforcement Actions](#) webpage.

Request for Papers/Abstracts/Workshop Sessions 2012 Tri-State Conservation Grazing Workshop August 2012 (dates pending)

Dakota Magic Casino, Hankinson, ND

The *2012 Tri-State Conservation Grazing Workshop* will bring together natural resource professionals and livestock producers from ND, SD and MN to learn more about the application of livestock grazing as a grassland management tool. Participants will learn about the current opportunities and challenges of managing grassland habitats with grazing when striving for a variety of conservation objectives. The workshop will be immediately followed by a bus tour of demonstration sites.

The planning committee requesting that grazing and/or other resource professionals and livestock producers submit brief abstracts/descriptions of topics that you would be willing to present at the 2012 workshop. Feel free to submit more than one topic for presentation. Please reasonably confirm that the speaker would be available/willing to present.

Submissions will be reviewed and selected based on the results of a recent survey that assessed the interests and concerns of natural resource professionals across the three participating states.

All submissions should be return to Pete Bauman at pbauman@tnc.org and cc'd to DJ Hagberg dhagberg@tnc.org by **Friday, Feb 10, 2012**.

For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/conservationgrazingworkshop.pdf>
Request for Field Demonstration Sites, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/fielddemonstrationsites.pdf>

SAVE THE DATES: Third Crop Producer Meetings

The dates and topics have been set for the 2012 Third Crop Producer Meetings. Look for further information on presentation topics and speakers coming soon!

- Monday, February 6, 2012 ~ Cover Crops
- Monday, February 27, 2012 ~ 3rd Crops and Local Foods
- Monday, March 12, 2012 ~ Marketing 3rd Crops
- Monday, April 2, 2012 ~ Perennial Bioenergy

Grant Announcements:

EPA Requests Proposals for Urban Small Grants

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency expects to award between \$1.8 to \$3.8 million in funding for projects across the country to help restore urban water by improving water quality and supporting community revitalization. The funding is part of EPA's Urban Waters program, which supports

communities in their efforts to access, improve, and benefit from their urban waters and the surrounding land. Healthy and accessible urban waters can help grow local businesses and enhance educational, recreational and employment opportunities in nearby communities.

The goal of the Urban Waters Small Grants program is to fund research, studies, training, and demonstration projects that will advance the restoration of urban waters by improving water quality through activities that also support community revitalization and other local priorities such as public health, social and economic opportunities, general livability and environmental justice for residents.

Examples of projects eligible for funding include:

- Education and training for water quality improvement or green infrastructure jobs
- Public education about ways to reduce water pollution
- Local water quality monitoring programs
- Engaging diverse stakeholders to develop local watershed plans
- Innovative projects that promote local water quality and community revitalization goals

Information about Urban Waters Small Grants including the Request for Proposal (RFP) and registration links for the webinars is available at <http://www.epa.gov/urbanwaters/funding/>

Not to Applicants: In accordance with EPA's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A!), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants to discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their proposals. However, consistent with the provisions in the announcement, EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement. Questions must be submitted in writing via email to urbanwaters@epa.gov and must be received by the Agency Contact, Ji-Sun Yi, by January 16, 2012 and written responses will be posted on EPA's website at <http://www.epa.gov/urbanwaters/funding/>

Dates to Remember:

- Deadline for submitting proposals: January 23, 2012
- Two webinars about this funding opportunity: December 14, 2011 and January 5, 2012
- Deadline for submitting questions: January 6, 2012

Related Links: For more information on EPA's Urban Waters program visit <http://www.epa.gov/urbanwaters/>

EPA's Urban Waters program supports the goals and principles of the Urban Waters Federal Partnership, a partnership of 11 federal agencies working to reconnect urban communities with their waterways. For more information on the Urban Waters Federal Partnership, visit <http://urbanwaters.gov/>

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.curemnriver.org/events.html#annual_meeting

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

Environmental/Conservation Articles:

[Becoming an outdoor family](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). One family journeys from surviving winter to embracing it, thanks to a program organized through the Department of Natural Resources.

[High crop prices a threat to nature?](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Grain prices are tempting farmers to plow up protected land, even as conservation subsidies shrink.

[Christmas tree growers push 'green' message](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Tree growers have long touted their product as the environmentally friendly way to enjoy the Christmas tradition.

[How will the media handle Climategate Version 2.0?](#) (MinnPost). Don Shelby writes about how the original Climategate was handled and what will happen this time around with additional emails from climate scientists.

[Why you may want to avoid canned food this Thanksgiving](#) (MinnPost). Two new studies suggest that if you're cooking with canned foods, you'll be ingesting something you hadn't counted on.

[Winnebago ethanol producer fined \\$760K for Clean Air Act violations](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). Ethanol producer Corn Plus pleaded guilty in federal court Wednesday to violating the Clean Air Act and was quickly slapped with a big fine.

['Recycle Your Holidays'](#) (New Ulm Journal). With Christmas on the way, the New Ulm Public Utilities (NUPU) is offering an easy way to save money and dispose of old holiday lights.

[Full steam ahead at waste facility](#) (Alexandria Echo Press). Douglas County commissioners were briefed on the current progress at Pope Douglas Solid Waste Management (PDSWM) at Tuesday's meeting. All three combustors are up and running.

The sun, with all those planets revolving around it and dependent on it, can still ripen a bunch of grapes as if it had nothing else in the universe to do. – Galileo

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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