

The Dirt on Sediment Pollution: Water Quality in the Mississippi River

A special presentation will be hosted by Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) at the Science Museum of Minnesota, 120 W. Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul, with support from the City of Saint Paul and event partners the National Park Service and Capitol Region Watershed District on Nov. 17th (Thursday), 7-8:30 p.m. Free; Pre-registration with Alyssa Johnson at the Science Museum, 651-221-4511, ajohnson@smm.org, required

How is water quality changing in the Upper Mississippi River? Why is Lake Pepin filling in? And what can we do about it? Join Friends of the Mississippi River and the Science Museum of Minnesota for this special City of Saint Paul-sponsored presentation to learn the answers to these questions.

Like many of the world's great rivers, the Mighty Mississippi has been highly impacted by excess fertilizer and other nutrients, suspended sediments from erosion and runoff and toxic pollutants from human activities. Over the last year, this water-pollution issue has come to the fore — explored in such documentaries as "Troubled Waters" and "Big River" and by the Pioneer Press, MPR and other media.

Working on this issue since the mid-'80s, Dr. Daniel Engstrom is the foremost expert on understanding the magnitude of these changes in the Upper Mississippi River, their timing and likely causes. His research provides much of the scientific underpinning for ongoing efforts to substantially reduce nutrient and sediment runoff and restore ecological health to this impaired waterway.

Following his engaging presentation, host Dr. Julia Frost-Nerbonne will lead a guided conversation with Dr. Engstrom, FMR Watershed Program Director Trevor Russell and Linda Meschke, president and founder of Rural Advantage. Attendees will have the opportunity to contribute questions.

Additionally, registrants may enjoy the Science Museum free of charge beginning at 4 p.m. The current exhibit is "Nature Unleashed: Inside Natural Disasters" exploring the power and historical impact of earthquakes, tornadoes, volcanoes and hurricanes. There will also be a special one-night-only exhibit of works by FMR Artist-in-Residence Peter L. Johnson.

Thanks to the event's sponsor the City of Saint Paul, this watershed quality education event is free. However, capacity is limited and pre-registration with the Science Museum's Alyssa Johnson at 651-221-4511 or ajohnson@smm.org is required. Parking details and additional information is available at www.fmr.org.

Sixth annual Earth Conference at the School Sisters of Notre Dame

The Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry sponsored the 6th annual Earth Conference at the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Mankato on November 5th. Here is a video clip on the conference produced by Fox Channel 12 News of Mankato:

<http://www.keyc.tv/category/201273/video?clipId=6423743&topVideoCatNo=201272&autoStart=true>

Chippewa County, Minn., resident looks to solve mystery of Carlton Lake

By Tom Cherveney, West Central Tribune

MONTEVIDEO — Carlton Lake was his favorite swimming hole as a kid, became his prime duck hunting spot as an adult, and since 1984, it's been his home.

As Vernon Jahns celebrated his 88th birthday last week, it's also become a mystery he wants to solve.

In all these years, he's never before seen the bright white coating visible now on the granite rocks and outcrops that surround much of the 40-acre lake. Like a ring around a bathtub, the white coating is evidence of the rapid drop in lake level following months of flood conditions.

Similar rings can be seen around other water bodies as they evaporate and minerals dissolved in the waters are left behind. But the ring around this lake is much more prominent and distinctive than anything that Vernon and his wife, Audrey, have ever witnessed here.

Is it entirely the result of this year's weather extremes, an as-of-yet-unknown source of contamination, or a combination of pollutants delivered by floodwaters in the spring?

For the rest of the article: <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/carltonlakemystery.pdf>

Minnesota Sounds and Voices: Preserving Chaska's Seminary Fen

By Dan Olson, Minnesota Public Radio

Chaska, Minn. — Seminary Fen, on the edge of the Twin Cities, with its prairie sedge, swamp thistle, goldenrod and marsh marigolds, has had its share of threats. More than a century ago, Shakopee's Mudcura Sanitarium scooped its mud for spa baths. At other times, farmers tried to drain the wetland, to make way for more arable land.

But like the tiny stream that feeds it, the Seminary Fen survives. And one October afternoon, Russell Smith from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources led the way on a bushwhack walk to offer a MPR News reporter a glimpse into the protected, ecological gem near Chaska.

"It's a little tricky getting out here," he says, even though summer's jungle-like maze of reed grass, and blooming native orchids and asters are long gone. "You can't even see where you are walking."

There's no doubt where the fen begins, though. Underfoot, one can feel a patch of springy, mattress-like grass. "Sometimes that's what we do to try figure out if we're in a fen or not: We bounce up and down."

For the entire article: <http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2011/11/02/seminary-fen-minnesota-sounds-voices/>

Minnesota, Wisconsin adding to kill zone in Gulf of Mexico

MN Grain and Feed Assoc. - Aug. 11, 2011

Minnesota and Wisconsin are contributing an increasing share of the Mississippi River pollution that is killing a wide swath of the Gulf of Mexico.

According to a new federal study, nitrogen flowing into the river from the two states has increased 75 percent over the past two decades and is a major reason why nitrogen levels at the mouth of the river in Louisiana have increased 10 percent over the same period.

The gulf's dead zone is one of the largest such polluted areas in the world, according to researchers from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) who published the study this week.

More importantly, they said, it proves that despite decades of efforts to slow agricultural runoff and clean up wastewater, pollution in the river has not gotten better.

"It's disappointing," said Deborah Swackhamer, head of the Water Resources Center at the University of Minnesota, who was not involved with the research. "But this is hard-core science that backs up what a lot of people have thought."

Overall, the USGS found that between 1980 and 2008, the levels of nitrates - nitrogen dissolved in water - held steady at six of the eight spots along the length of the river they studied. But they increased between 60 and 75 percent at two sites - one in Missouri and the other in Clinton, Iowa, the most northern study site. The water at the Iowa site comes primarily from the major tributaries in Wisconsin and Minnesota, including the Minnesota and St. Croix rivers.

For the entire article: <http://www.mgfa.org/html/news.cfm?ID=712>

Chippewa County to reconsider Minnesota Falls stance

West Central Tribune - Oct. 19, 2011

Oct 19, 2011 (West Central Tribune - McClatchy-Tribune Information Services via COMTEX) -- Chippewa County has agreed to reconsider its recent decision to decline an invitation to create a joint powers board that would explore the possible public ownership of the Minnesota Falls dam.

Representatives of Granite Falls Energy Company, the city of Granite Falls and Yellow Medicine County on Tuesday urged the board in Chippewa County to reconsider its position, arguing that saving the dam is an important economic issue for the company and the area. They also say that the costs for the dam's preservation are not as prohibitive as earlier thought.

Dick Wambeke, chairman of the Yellow Medicine County Board, said numbers recently obtained from the dam's owner, Xcel Energy, indicate that the 105-year-old structure could possibly be repaired and brought up to code for roughly \$1.5 million.

That compares to the \$1.5 million to \$2 million that Xcel Energy is estimating to remove it, he noted.

Earlier estimates by Xcel for repairing the dam were much higher, but they also included ongoing, annual maintenance costs of \$60,000 for the structure.

For the entire article: <http://www.tmcnet.com/usubmit/2011/10/19/5866594.htm>

Green Fire Film Screening at the Treaty Center History Center in St. Peter

Join us at the Treaty Site History Center on Thursday, November 17th at 7:00 pm for a screening of *Green Fire!*

See the first full-length, high-definition documentary film ever made about legendary conservationist Aldo Leopold and his environmental legacy! *Green Fire* shares highlights from his extraordinary career, explaining how he shaped conservation and the modern environmental movement. It also illustrates how Leopold's vision of a community that cares about both people and land continues to inform and inspire people across the country and around the world, highlighting modern projects that put Leopold's land ethic in action in a multitude of ways.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: <http://www.greenfiremovie.com/> or www.nchsmn.org

Thank you to our co-sponsors: Nicollet County Historical Society, Many Rivers Chapter of The Prairie Enthusiast, and The Minnesota Water Resource Center at MSU-Mankato.

Admission to this program is free, but you can make a free will donation. The Treaty Site History Center is located one mile north of downtown Saint Peter at Highways 169 and 22, across from the Mankato Clinic. The Center features a national award-winning exhibit on the Traverse des Sioux Treaty of 1851 and its consequences, as well as local history, and a full-service research archive. Please contact Jessica at 507-934-2160 or museum@nchsmn.org for more details.

Friends of Renville County Parks Meeting.

This is a new organization for people who enjoy the Renville County parks in the Minnesota River Valley and are willing to show some support. The group is recently organized, seeking members for the Board of Directors and members at large. Their next meeting is Tuesday evening, Nov. 15th, 7:00PM, at the Public Library in Olivia, MN. Anyone interested is welcome to attend. Brochures and sign-up sheets are available. For more information call 320-329-8164.

The mission statement for FORCP states: *Friends of Renville County Parks is dedicated to supporting*

and
promoting the county parks of Renville County, MN. Through education, advocacy and public awareness
we
will work to protect, preserve and improve the legacy of these great natural resources."

Fund Raiser for Renville County Parks

Friends of the Renville County parks is sponsoring a fund raiser on Monday evening, Nov. 21, at Jackpot Junction Casino near Morton, MN. From 4:30PM to 7:30 PM, group members will be selling coupon cards. The cards cost \$15, but have coupons providing buffet, \$5 cash, and \$5 be-back. Look for a table with card sellers and title: Friends of Renville County Parks. For advance tickets or cards, call 507-430-4292. Join us for good food and good cause.

Job Announcements:

Senior Environmental Scientist

The Metropolitan Council Environmental Services in St. Paul, MN is hiring a Senior Environmental Scientist for its Water Quality Monitoring in the Stream Monitoring Program.

Stream Monitoring - Conduct stream monitoring at seven fully-automated stream monitoring stations including year-round collection of both grab and composite samples and stream flow data. Procure, install, operate and troubleshoot a variety of rather complex stream monitoring equipment to ensure year-round monitoring functionality and acquisition of high-quality flow and water chemistry data. Continuously evaluate stream monitoring stations for equipment and maintenance needs. Maintain rating curves at each stream monitoring site for accurate determination of stream flows under dynamic and ever-changing stream conditions.

- Conduct biological monitoring at MCES stream monitoring network sites.

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Data Management, Interpretation and Reporting - Apply data-checking and quality assurance protocols to ensure the quality and accuracy of all field, laboratory, continuous and biological data generated by the seven stream monitoring stations. Collaborate with other EMA stream monitoring staff and Water Resources Assessment staff to produce MCES stream monitoring reports. Respond to requests for stream monitoring data and information from multiple sources (both internal and external) and integrate stream monitoring data and information into other program areas.

Program Administration and Interagency Coordination - Work closely with MCES laboratory services staff to ensure that all water chemistry analyses are successfully conducted and the results are accurately transferred to the Water Quality Database.

- Provide support and guidance for other elements of the MCES Stream Monitoring Program. Participate in interagency water quality monitoring efforts and water resource studies; coordinate with other agencies and groups conducting stream monitoring work; promote interdisciplinary uses of MCES stream monitoring data through public education and interaction with outside agencies; and serve on various interagency advisory, liaison and technical committees.

Support for other EMA Water Quality Monitoring Programs - Provide support for other EMA Water Quality monitoring programs including NPDES permit-required effluent toxicity-testing and toxics monitoring as well as river, lake and groundwater monitoring.

To apply: <http://agency.governmentjobs.com/metrocouncil/default.cfm> - deadline for applications is 11/10/11.

Events:

November 17th (Thursday) is the **Showing of the documentary: *Green Fire*** at the Treaty Center in St. Peter 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 and the Nicollet County Historical Society. For more information contact 507-934-2160 or jessica@nchsmn.org.

November 21, 2011 (Monday) is the **Minnesota River Board meeting** at Camp Sacajawea Lodge (5121 McAndrews Road) in Apple Valley. The Executive Committee meeting starts at 8:00 a.m. and the Full Board meeting at 9:00 a.m. Agenda items include Asian Carp Planning Process (Tim Schlagenhaft, DNR), Turbidity Reduction Discussion (Paul Nelson, Scott WMO), and Vermillion River Watershed (Mark Zabel, WRWJPO). Full agenda is found at <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/mnriverboardagendanov.pdf> and board packet at <http://www.minnesotariver.org/>

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.

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

Environmental/Conservation Articles:

[Cereal Crimes: Report says "natural" might not be](#) (TC Daily Planet). A report released earlier this month by the Wisconsin-based Cornucopia Institute warns that health-minded cereal eaters may not be getting their money's worth, and some Minnesota brands may be to blame.

[Editorial: State must shine light on Legacy spending](#) (Mankato Free Press). Amid the wrong-headed consideration of using Legacy funds to build a private sports stadium, Minnesota Public Radio reported that the actual use of the funds is less than transparent.

[Dayton rejects stadium sales tax](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The decision shifts burden to the state or the Vikings. Dayton also said he was warming to expanded gambling.

[Strength in numbers: 1,000-group push for conservation](#) (Minnesota Outdoor News). With Congress's fledgling "super committee" currently considering major federal deficit reduction, a new coalition of some

1,000 groups and businesses have joined "in urging Congress to consider the economic impacts of the great outdoors and historic preservation as it makes critical decisions concerning America's fiscal health."

[State meets pollution standards, but faces problems with unregulated contaminants](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Minnesota's air quality currently meets national standards, but other significant pollution problems face the state.

Some people say a man's best friend is a dog. Mine is nature. – Ward Elliot Hour

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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