

Youth improve Skalbekken Park on the Minnesota River

In July, a Summer Youth Corps crew worked to beautify and improve public access to Renville County's Skalbekken Park on the Minnesota River. The pioneering project, designed by the U of M [Center for Changing Landscapes](#), is part of a larger plan to connect trails and other natural resources into a regional system along the Upper Minnesota River Valley. Youth constructed parking lots and trails, assembled and installed benches and signage, and landscaped the area with daylilies, dogwood, hydrangeas and irises.

The youth, mentored by natural resource professionals, community leaders and Blandin Leadership Program graduates, participated in civic activities on evenings and weekends. They met with the mayor of Morton to learn about the area's history, went on an outing with a Dakota Sioux youth group and on tours with local farmers.

Project partners included Conservation Corps Minnesota, Center for Changing Landscapes, [Tatanka Bluffs Corridor](#), Renville County Parks and the Division of Environment and Community Development, Redwood Area Development Commission and Green Corridor Inc. For a detailed project description, see the [full report](#).

Claim the Commons – We're in it Together!

On November 5th (Saturday), the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry is sponsoring the workshop: "Claim the Commons We're in it Together" at the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Mankato (170 Good Counsel Drive). The Commons is the vast wealth of natural and human achievements that we inherit together and have the privilege to pass on to future generations. It is all those resources that belong to everyone. However, a great question in contemporary life is "who will control or claim these commons?" Are they being privatized and by whom? Will such privatization enhance the community or divide it even further into those who have more power and those who don't? Do we have a role in protecting the commons?

In this conference you will learn more about the commons, explore the dangers it is facing, understand our part in protecting it, and find ways to claim and protect it for all. Claiming the commons can instill us with a new vision of politics, culture and community. A new vision of the power we have together. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/commonsworkshop.pdf>

Reduce exposure if you smell smoke or see haze, MPCA advises

St. Paul, Minn. — The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has received a number of reports of heavy smoke and the deposition of ash in northeastern Minnesota. The smoke and ash are from the Pagami Creek fire which started due to a lightning strike on Aug. 18, and has expanded significantly in the last week.

Hourly pollution measurements in Duluth, Ely and Grand Portage do not suggest that smoke concentrations have reached a level of health concern near those monitors. However, satellite images, reports from the ground, and air pollution monitors in Wisconsin and Illinois indicate that smoke from the Pagami Creek fire has the potential to exceed levels of health concern.

As a result, the MPCA recommends that persons in areas where the smell of smoke or visible haze is present take precautions to reduce exposure. When smoke is present, individuals are encouraged to remain indoors and reduce activity levels. Those with pre-existing cardiovascular or respiratory problems, such as asthma, are particularly susceptible to increases in air pollution as are the elderly and children.

The MPCA is unable to identify exact locations where smoke may reach levels of health concern, and therefore encourages citizens to take precautions if they detect smoke in the area. The MPCA will continue to monitor hourly pollution concentrations at the existing sites in Duluth, Ely and Grand Portage,

and will be deploying additional temporary monitors along the North Shore with assistance from the U.S. Forest Service office in Duluth.

Predicted pathways for smoke from the Pagami Creek and other forest fires are available on the National Weather Service's [Upper Mississippi Valley Air Quality Forecast Guide](#). When on this site, choose "1Hr Average Surface Smoke" from the Guidance Element drop-down menu. Use the Element Period menu to select the time for which you would like to see the predicted smoke pathway.

Hourly air pollution information is available via the MPCA's [MPCA's Air Quality Index website](#). Updates on the extent of the Pagami Creek fire are available at <http://www.inciweb.org/incident/2534>.

Freshwater Society and InCommons sponsor contest for innovative ideas to protect lakes and rivers from pollution. Four \$500 prizes will be awarded.

Do you want to reduce urban runoff and pollution that flow into lakes and rivers? Do you have a good idea for how you and your friends and neighbors could work together to clean up soil, grass clippings and leaves from streets and storm drains? And could you use \$500?

Then we have a contest for you. The Freshwater Society and InCommons are sponsoring a Work For Water "micro challenge" that will award two \$500 prizes for the best short-term community projects to protect waters from the pollution found in the leaves, grass and soil that wash into streets.

In addition to the two statewide prizes, a grant from the Little Falls-based Initiative Foundation, will provide two additional \$500 prizes for the best ideas coming from entrants in the [14 counties](#) the foundation serves in Central Minnesota.

The contest opened Sept. 20, and entries will be accepted until Oct. 11. The winner will be announced Oct. 18. The project must be completed by Nov. 12. [Enter here](#). [Learn more](#) about the contest, what ideas qualify and which ones do not.

Who can enter? Individuals, church groups, Scout troops, service clubs, neighborhood groups, lake associations, school organizations and classrooms. What kind of project can you suggest? Almost anything you can accomplish by Nov. 12. Be imaginative, and have fun. The main requirement is that the person submitting the entry must be 18 years old.

The Freshwater Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating and inspiring people to value, conserve and protect all water resources. Located in Excelsior, Minn., adjacent to Lake Minnetonka, it has a long history of association with the University of Minnesota. For more information, go to www.freshwater.org.

InCommons is a Bush Foundation initiative aimed at supporting local leadership and inspiring community problem-solving at the grassroots level. Its purpose is to connect people through local gatherings, engagement and web networks so they can find and share credible tools, knowledge and resources to solve community problems. Learn more at www.incommons.org.

Photo Contest Deadline for Chippewa River Watershed Project October 1st

Did you take a great shot on the Chippewa River this summer or did you take some photos on a lake vacation to Minnewaska, Reno, Games, Villard or camped in Glacial Lakes or Sibley State Park or spent time at any of the other wonderful spots in the 1.3 million acre watershed?

If you did, enter your favorite photo featuring water in the Chippewa River Watershed Project Calendar Contest. We need photos for the 5th Annual Photo Contest. The winning photos will be published in a 2012 calendar and featured on the Chippewa River Watershed Project website and other publications. The "Best in Show" winner will have their winning photo professionally matted and framed.

Photo submissions are due to the Chippewa River Watershed Project by October 1, 2011.

Anyone is eligible to enter the contest; you do not need to live in the watershed to submit a photo, just the photo has to be from the watershed. Entries should include a river or lake feature or have a water quality theme. Photos from all seasons are encouraged.

Submissions are limited to a maximum of three photos per person. Photos can be submitted digitally or as paper photos. All photo entries must include a submitted Registration Form to be eligible for the contest.

For more complete contest rules and registration forms, visit the Chippewa River Watershed Project's website www.chippewariver.com or ask me for more information. Maps of the watershed are also available on the website.

Residents work together to keep waterfront clean
The Associated Press

Chris Pence stands at the top of a bank where a new cabin is being landscaped on Bay Lake, pointing out all the landscapers are doing right.

They have built just a small sand beach, protected by sediment barriers and flanked by trees and tall grass. Swales at the bottom of the hill catch rainwater before it runs into the lake.

Pence is the land services supervisor for Crow Wing County, and standing next to him is the cabin's owner, Dave Perry, wearing shorts and sunglasses. "We're trying to do everything right," Perry says, sounding a bit nervous to have a county zoning official on his property.

For the entire article, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/crowwingcountylanduse.pdf>

Job Announcements:

Hubbard SWCD District Manager

The Hubbard County Soil and Water Conservation District is accepting applications for a district manager position until 10/7/2011. A bachelor's degree in natural resources management or related field is required plus some management experience preferred. Duties include: Manage the daily operation of the SWCD by supervise and direct all activities of SWCD personnel and develop and manage the SWCD budget, work plan, and reporting requirements; Manage and implement SWCD Collaborative Programs – Cost-share, RIM, WCA, Rural Rainfall, Tree Program, Observation Well Program, State Revolving Fund, and Local Water Plan; Manage District informational and educational programs; and Provide support for the SWCD Board. Please mail cover letter, resume, and references to the address below or you can e-mail it to: melissa.koebernick@mn.nacdnet.net

Executive Director of Minnesota Agriculture and Rural Leadership Program

The Minnesota Agriculture and Rural Leadership program at Southwest Minnesota State University is seeking an Executive Director for the program to begin October 17, 2011 or a date to be negotiated. The individual is responsible for administrative oversight by managing fund development, business operations, promotions and participant recruitment. The Executive Director is responsible for the successful operation of a comprehensive cohort-leadership development educational program. This program is specifically designed to enrich the skills of adult leaders in Minnesota who have agricultural and/or rural backgrounds and interests.

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

Events:

September 24th (Saturday) is a fun-filled **Fund-raising Event** for the Joseph R. Brown Heritage Society starting at 5:30 p.m. at the Minnesota New Country School located in Henderson, Minnesota. The event will feature the unveiling of the newly commissioned bronze bust of Joe Brown followed by dinner and an evening with renowned soprano Alison England performing “Songs I Love to Sing and Stories I Love to Tell”. Visit <http://www.joebrownrivercenter.org/> now for information about Ms. England and ticket availability. This is a limited seating event so get your tickets now!

September 24th (Saturday) is the **6th Wood Lake Battlefield Symposium** at Kilowatt Community Center (600 Kilowatt Drive) in Granite Falls from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The mission behind this symposium is to better understand the Minnesota/Dakota history of 1862, to promote public awareness of the need to preserve the Wood Lake Battlefield site and to protect the battle fallen. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/woodlakesymposium.pdf>

September 30th (Friday) is the **Meander Kickoff Event** from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in downtown Granite Falls to feature Music, Food, History and Art. This brand new event will showcase picturesque downtown Granite Falls as a gateway to the Upper Minnesota River Valley and all the art, culture and natural beauty it has to offer. For more information on this event, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/meanderkickoffevent.pdf>

October 6th (Thursday) is the **Showing of the documentary: *Truck Farm*** at 7:00 p.m. at the Treaty Site History Center in St. Peter. Filmmakers Ian Cheney and Curt Ellis transformed granddad’s ’86 Dodge into a traveling 20-member CSA. They planted between the wheel wells with arugula and tomatoes, parked the truck on a Brooklyn street, and waited for the sun and rain to work their charms. 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.

October 9th (Sunday) is the **Mankato River Ramble Bike Tour** with different routes of 12 to 54 miles. The ALL NEW Mankato River Ramble will embrace the best of both bicycling worlds – off-road paved trails and quiet country roads. The 12-mile Minneopa Falls Loop will visit the beautiful state park. Riders seeking a greater challenge will love the Lake Crystal Loop that visits the handsome hamlets of Rapidan, Lake Crystal and Judson. For more information, <https://www.bikeriverramble.org/>

October 15th (Saturday) and 16th (Sunday) is the **Make-and-take snowshoe workshop** at Lac qui Parle State Park. On Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. workshop presenters will teach attendees how to string the laces on pre-built wooden snowshoe frames, then demonstrate how to use them. The \$75 registration fee includes the snowshoe kit and materials. Lunch will not be provided, so attendees should bring a sack lunch. Class size is limited to 12 people and advance registration is required so that the appropriate quantities and sizes of snowshoe kits may be ordered. Registration deadline is Oct. 3. To register, contact the park office at (320) 734-4450 ext 225 or e-mail cara.greger@state.mn.us.

November 4th (Thursday) is the **Showing of the documentary: *Rain in a Dry Land*** at the Treaty Site History Center in St. Peter. How do you measure the distance from an African village to an American city? What does it mean to be a refugee in today’s “global village”? *Rain in a Dry Land* provides eye-opening answers as it chronicles the fortunes of two Somali Bantu families moved to the U.S. 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 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.

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://mrdbc.mnsu.edu/calendar>

Environmental/Conservation Articles:

[DNR to simplify BOC structure, find new members](#) (Minnesota Outdoor News). The DNR is making changes to the committees that review expenditures from the Game and Fish Fund, which is the bedrock fund for natural resources management.

[Minnesota DNR seeks applications for spending oversight committees](#) (Minnesota Outdoor News). Minnesotans who would like to serve on committees that review how the MN DNR spends Game and Fish Fund dollars are welcome to submit an application by October 14th.

[Anger builds over wait to take on BWCA fire](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The blaze that has consumed more than 156 square miles has reignited long-simmering local anger with a federal policy to let fires in the national wilderness area burn unless they threaten people or property.

[Marshall Council gives support to bike trail proposal](#) (Marshall Independent). It will take teamwork, Marshall City Council members said, but there is support for the idea of a bike path connecting the cities of Marshall and Lynd with Camden State Park.

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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