

Hello all,

I hope everyone had an enjoyable Thanksgiving and got to spend some time in the great outdoors. By the sound of it we could be enjoying some snow by the weekend. Dust off those cross-country skis and snowshoes.



Fred Harris of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has announced the release of a new report titled: "Native Plant Communities and Rare Species of the Minnesota River Valley Counties" by the DNR's Minnesota County Biological Survey. To view the cover of this report, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/biologicalstudy.pdf>

According to Fred Harris, Chapters focus on 17 counties that border the river and cover the following topics: Geological history, Pre-settlement vegetation, Current vegetation, Rare plants, Rare animals (mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians, fish, freshwater mussels). Also included with the report is a compact disk containing 2 map series: A: current vegetation and rare species locations, and B: survey sites coded for statewide significance for biological diversity. The report also includes a complete county by county checklist of vascular plants for the region.

We have started mailing out copies to the following groups: SWCDs, county environmental services or planning departments, conservation organizations, public and university libraries, County commission chairs, nature centers, state and federal parks or refuges, watershed districts, as well as selected staff of the DNR, BWSR, PCA, and Minnesota River Basin Data Center. If there are other Alliance members who would like to receive a copy and are not sure they are already on our list to get one, they should e-mail me and we'd be happy to send them one. Fred Harris can be reached at fred.harris@dnr.state.mn.us or 651-259-5084.

Over 70 people attended the first open house for the Crystal Loon Mills Clean Water Partnership in Lake Crystal on Monday, November 26th. Sarah Duda, Project Coordinator, was very pleased with the turnout and sees it as a positive kickoff for the project. Additional meetings will be held in the future to target specific stakeholders including agriculture producers and shoreline residents. For more information contact Sarah Duda at 507-389-2299 or by email at sarah.duda@mnsu.edu.

Earthlab.com has a few ideas on how people can make it a greener or environmentally friendly holiday season:

- Give locally made gifts. Eighty percent of toys purchased in the United States are made overseas, so you can reduce pollution and fuel costs associated with shipping products by looking for the "Made in the U.S.A." seal,
- Skip ribbons and bows. To replicate the finishing touch, use raffia or flowers instead of ribbons. If two of every three households conserved an arm's length of ribbon, the amount saved could tie a bow around the Earth.
- Burn soy or beeswax candles. The flickering glow is lovely, and these candles will burn 50 percent longer and 90 percent cleaner than their petroleum-based paraffin counterparts. They also are made from renewable resources,
- Decorate with lights using light-emitting diodes (LEDs). Three strands of LED bulbs running for five hours every day between Thanksgiving and New Year's will average only 30 cents in total energy costs, compared with \$60 for three regular strands.

The Capitol Region Watershed District is hiring a full-time Water Resource Specialist. For a full job description contact their office at 651-644-8888 or check out the web site: www.capitolregionwd.org

The Board of Water and Soil Resources is accepting applications for a Board Conservationist position in the Metro Region. For more information: www.bwsr.state.mn.us/careers/index.html

Minnesota Waters is looking for an experienced Executive Director. For more information on this position: <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/mnwatersdirector.pdf>

Events:

The Water Resources Center at Minnesota State University is hosting an open house on November 30th (Friday) to celebrate their 20th Anniversary following a presentation to the University Biology Staff. The presentation starts at 2 p.m., with the open house from 3 to 4:30 p.m. For locations check out the flyer at http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/openhouseposter_hres.jpg

Tonight the Dakota County Association of Townships is holding a public information session on proposed powerline construction at the Eureka Town Hall, 25043 Cedar Avenue, Eureka Township (November 28th) at 7 p.m. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/powerlinesfight.pdf>

The Minnesota River Watershed Alliance's Strategic Planning Session scheduled for December 4th (Tuesday) has been postponed until further notice. If you have any questions please contact Scott at 507-389-2304.

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

Water Quality Articles:

- **Hopes fade for 2007 Farm Bill in Senate.** According to conservation leaders it looks like the new Farm Bill will not be passed this year and it could result in some conservation programs suffering, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/farmbillhopesfade.pdf>
- **Dedicated funding talk turning to finer details.** The 2008 Legislature will most likely be tackling the Dedicated Funding issue early in the session, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/dedicatedfundingtalk.pdf>
- **Earth-friendly developer: Not an oxymoron.** There is more interest by construction companies and the public to use sustainable principles for building lasting, well-designed homes, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/earthfriendlydeveloper.pdf>
- **State could gain jobs from 'green,' study says.** A study by the Sierra Club and the United Steelworkers says the Twin Cities and Minnesota can add more than 18,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs in wind, solar and other alternative-energy businesses over the next decade, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/stategaininggreenjobs.pdf>
- **Good Question: What Happens To My Recycling?** Ben Tracy of WCCO TV looks at what happens to the stuff we set on the curb to be recycled, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/whathappensrecycling.pdf>
- **Wisconsin AP Centerpiece: Toilets becoming more water-friendly.** The newest generation of high-efficiency toilets developed in the last seven years uses only 1.3 gallons per flush and does the job on the first try, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/waterfriendlytoilets.pdf>
- **David Kutoff: A responsible and safe way to recycle electronic gear.** According to David Kutoff, CEO of Material Processing Corporation don't resort to stockpiling your old electronic gear in the closet or garage, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/recycleelectronicgear.pdf>
- **Minnesotans drive billions of vehicle miles a year, but the growth has leveled off.** Every year for decades drivers in Minnesota and across the nation have been driving more miles, a lot more miles. Until now, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/vehiclemileageleveloff.pdf>

- **Some tech-item recycling actually endangers workers, pollutes environment overseas.** Are we asking enough questions when it comes to what happens to our recycled electronic gear, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/recyclingproblems.pdf>
- **Do we buy ethanol (in Minnesota) because we have to?** Where is the demand coming from for ethanol? The public? The government?, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/buyingethanol.pdf>
- **Fixit: Energy tips for saving money without spending money.** There are plenty of tips for consumers to cut back on their energy usage, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/energytips.pdf>
- **Getting into the green grove.** An agreement among Midwestern Governors call for more conservation, carbon capture, more biofuels, more renewable energy and a market-based system to support the efforts, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/gettinggreengroove.pdf>
- **Sen. Klobuchar launches 'Carbon Buster' contest for state K-12 students.** U.S. Amy Klobuchar has started the "Carbon Buster Awards of Excellence" competition to encourage students across Minnesota, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/globalwarmingchallenge.pdf>
- **Recycle your e-waste for free!** A new state law requires manufactures to collect the e-trash and they are turning to local recyclers to gather it for them, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/recycleewastefree.pdf>
- **Edina residents see red over murky water.** You don't like the look or taste of your drinking water? Talk to residents in Edina who are afraid to use their tap water for cooking or bathing, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/murkywater.pdf>
- **Report PVC came from old well.** An investigation report prepared for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency says the synthetic chemical polyvinyl chloride found in a private well near Beaver Creek came from an old well casing, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/pvcoldwell.pdf>

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: www.watershedalliance.blogspot.com

Thanks,

Scott

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