

Hello all,

I ran across an article about the Christmas tree in St Paul being as tall and bright as the one in New York's Rockefeller Center. Except, the St Paul tree will be using 60,000 incandescent mini-lights compared to Rockefeller's 30,000 energy-efficient light-emitting diodes (LEDs). The Minnesota tree will be on 24 hours a day for five and half weeks, costing about \$1,300 and producing 18.7 tons of greenhouse gas carbon dioxide according to estimates by Phil Smith, energy specialist at the Minnesota Department of Commerce state energy office. Anne Hunt, St Paul mayor's office sustainability coordinator said, "The city is committed to reducing its overall CO2 emissions, (but) we decided not to be a Scrooge this holiday season. The tree in Rice Park is such a wonderful winter destination."



Tom Kalahar and Ron Bolduan did a presentation on the Granite Rock Outcroppings in Minnesota River Watershed to around 35 people last Thursday in Redwood Falls. Ron showed a diverse selection of photos and Tom talked about the need to save these unique natural areas before they disappear along with the native prairie and wetlands. LCCMR funds of almost \$600,000 have paid for a number of perpetual easements to protect these valuable granite rock outcroppings.

The Minnesota River Turbidity TMDL work group met last Tuesday in Mankato as they continue to develop a watershed model to look at what type of scenarios (example: an increase of 15% in conservation tillage) will improve water quality. According to Larry Gunderson, the various Watershed Projects will play an important role in the implementation phase of this project. Additional stakeholder meetings will be held along with research that looks sediment sources (field and nonfield – stream bank, ravine, gullies, etc.).

Minnesota and 11 other states are filing a lawsuit over reporting standards for toxic chemicals against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This is the result of EPA adopting a rule reducing the burden on businesses and companies to report toxic chemical releases and waste management information. (Minnesota Public Radio)

Target is introducing Biodegradable Gift Cards made of PHA (polyhydroxyalkanoate), a resin made of corn and other sugar-producing plants. The selection of 12 eco-friendly cards includes themes like candy canes, holiday lights, and snowmen and will be available for a limited time. (TwinCities.com)

Jobs:

Brown-Nicollet-Cottonwood Water Quality Board is hiring a Water Quality Specialist/Water Quality Program Director. For more information:

<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/waterqualityspecialist.pdf>

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>

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is hiring Hydrologist 1 positions for the Marshall, Hutchinson and Cambridge offices. These positions are permanent classified and will provide support to the Area Hydrologists in these locations for approximately a two-year period. To apply online go to <https://statejobs.doer.state.mn.us/ResumeBuilder> or submit a resume AND

a completed State of Minnesota Employment Application form to: Minnesota Department of Employee Relations (DOER), 200 Centennial Office Building, 658 Cedar Street, St Paul, MN 55155. For more information: contact Dave Leuthe at 507-359-6050 or dave.leuthe@dnr.state.mn.us

Events:

On December 6th at 8 p.m. (Thursday) Jim Doering, Executive Director of the Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area (RCRCA) will be giving a presentation covering a brief history of the RCRCA and what can be done to improve water quality of Lake Titloe at the Lake Titloe Beautification Committee Meeting. The meeting will be held at the Sibley County Courthouse Annex Basement in Gaylord.

Come out to the Grand Opening of the Ney Nature Center's Ski Chalet (snow or no snow) on December 9th (Sunday) from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. You will be able to get some skiing tips and meet the Board of Directors and volunteers. The Ney Nature Center is located outside of Henderson. For more information <http://neycenter.org/index.html>

National Pheasant Fest and Convention will be from January 18 to 20, 2008 at the RiverCentre in St Paul. For more information: www.pheasantsforever.org or 1-877-773-2070.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is offering educator training workshops to introduce their new curriculum for K-8 called "Fishing: Get in the Habitat!" To view a descriptive table of contents and two sample lessons go to www.mndnr.gov/minnaqua/leadersguide. For more information on the program contact Kathy Beaulieu at 507-359-6049 or kathy.beaulieu@dnr.state.mn.us

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

Water Quality Articles:

- **Granite Falls, Minn., ethanol plant faces \$300,000 in fines from Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.** The ethanol plant is being fined for numerous environmental violations which includes exceeding water-quality discharge limits and record keeping, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/ethanolplantfacesfines.pdf>
- **Important deadline approaches for feedlot operators.** Approximately 5,000 feedlot operators across Minnesota signed up for an extension to be in full compliance with a Minnesota law covering feedlot pollution. The extension ends in 2010, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/feedlotdeadline.pdf>
- **Conservation groups warn of bird crisis.** Almost a third of continental U.S. birds, 178 species, are in imminent peril and could go extinct if action isn't taken to preserve their habitat and numbers, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/birdcrisis.pdf>
- **Fired Minnesota Pollution Control Agency employee drops whistleblower lawsuit – for now.** Paul Wotzka, former MPCA and MN Department of Ag hydrologist will continue legal action against MPCA in the future, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/whistleblowerlawsuitdropped.pdf>
- **Commentary: State has edge in electronics recycling.** Brita Sailer, DFL-Park Rapids offers her opinion on Minnesota's new e-waste law that requires electronics manufactures to help pay for collection and recycling of household electronic waste, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/edgeinelectronicrecycling.pdf>

Other used electronic news: Target has become the first major retailer to offer refurbished products by fixing some of them and reselling at a discount by web-only as an experiment. They reported a good response by the public but haven't decided on whether to continue with the program. (Minnesota Monitor)

Hennepin County takes electronics free of charge, year-round from residents at two drop-off facilities. A total of 775 residents dropped for used electronics on November 17 (the day for the Mall of America electronics recycling event), making it the busiest day on record. In 2006 the county collected 4.5 million pounds of electronics. Started in 1992, the program removes and reclaims lead, cadmium, scrap metal and other components from solid waste.

- **Wind is tops as renewable power source.** The wind industry is going through some growing pains as the issue of transmission lines or lack of them comes more into focus, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/windtoprenewablesource.pdf>
- **Minnetonka's shoreline buffer plan hits a snag.** Minnetonka's attempt to be a leader in championing water quality met resistance from waterfront residences, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/minnetonkashorelineplan.pdf>
- **Biodiesel industry sputtering.** The high price of corn has led a shift from soybean acres to more corn production and resulted in the higher cost for biodiesel, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/biodieselindustrysputtering.pdf>
- **Farmland is now the hot real estate deal.** As home values continue their downward spiral, the price of farmland continues to rise rapidly, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/farmlandrealestate.pdf>
- **Can the tax man call you a farmer if you've never seen a tractor?** Tax breaks for rural landowners are being looked at by the legislative auditor's office, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/taxmanfarmer.pdf>
- **New science from an old oil spill.** An oil spill near Bemidji in 1979 has been studied for environmental effects of oil contamination by geologists, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/newscienceoldoilspill.pdf>

We often talk about our lakes and the need to clean them up. But let's not forget that our rivers and streams are the arteries and veins which carry the water to our lakes. They are the indicators of how we are living and treating our environment (Del Wehrspann's comments at a Minnesota Environmental Quality Board meeting on October 3, 1991)

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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