

Clean Up the River Environment (CURE) Annual Meeting

A large crowd showed up at the Hollywood Theater in Montevideo on Saturday night – February 9th - despite the bitterly cold temperatures and strong winds. Inside people were warmed by great music, an amazing selection of auction items to bid on, a hearty meal, interesting conversation and an eye-opening presentation by Dr. Angela Wilson. Congratulations to Patrick, Duane, Dixie, Brook and all the CURE members and volunteers who put on a great show and made it worthwhile to go outside. Congratulations also to Shirley Wehrspann for winning the kayak.

If you didn't make it to the CURE annual meeting on Saturday, check out the new 4 minute Big Stone II music video shown during the event by clicking on:

<http://www.youtube.com/RIVERVOICE>.

Friends of the Minnesota Valley

To view a copy of the 2007 annual report go to their website at www.friendsofmnvalley.org (Starting at the home page, navigate from "Who We Are" to "Communications" to "2007 Annual Report." If you want a hard copy send an email to info@friendsofmnvalley.org or call Executive Director Lori Nelson at 952-881-9065.

New Address: Valley Office Park; 10800 Lyndale Avenue South, Suite #120; Bloomington, MN 55420. For mail: P.O. Box 20697; Bloomington, MN 55420. General phone number: 952-881-9055. Fax number: 952-881-3174.

- Lori Nelson, Executive Director: 952-881-9065
- Joe Pavelko, Conservation Projects Manager: 952-881-9075

Sustainable Farm Tent

There is a tremendous opportunity to have a tent at FARMFEST this summer focused on Sustainable Agriculture, Rural Entrepreneurs and related issues. Because this requires a significant investment, the planning team is trying to gauge the interest in rural enterprises, organizations and others who might be willing to have a booth at a cost of \$600/10 x 10 feet of booth space. You can sell product in your space. You can have more than one space. There are 42 spaces available. There is a desire to have representation from across the state.

FARMFEST dates are August 5, 6 & 7, 2008 and it is held in rural Redwood Falls on the Gilfillian Estate. Participants would need to be there all three days. Please respond ASAP with your interest in participating whether it be Yes- No- or Maybe. Indications of your interest should be emailed to Kate Bresaw at bresa001@umn.edu

Thank you for your continued support of rural issues. This is a great opportunity to get exposure for your rural enterprise. Attendance at FarmFest is 30,000 plus each year.

2008 Minnesota Waters Lakes and Rivers Conference

Minnesota Waters is seeking workshop presentation proposals from throughout Minnesota for the 2008 Lakes and Rivers Conference on September 11 – 13 at the Mayo Civic Center, Rochester on the following subjects:

- Invasive Species,
- Stewardship,
- Stormwater,
- Lake management,
- Climate Change,
- Volunteer Monitoring,

For more information on the presentation proposals and the conference, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/mnwaterspapers.pdf>

Volunteer Impact:

Bremer Bank and the Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration is offering a leadership training series: Certificate in Volunteer Leadership. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/volunteerimpact.pdf>

Jobs

The Chippewa River Watershed Project is accepting applications for a 12-week summer intern position (must be postmarked by Friday, March 7, 2008). For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/cwrpintern.pdf>

Events:

On February 14th (Thursday) join Tom Kalahar of Renville SWCD and Ron Bolduan, Minnesota River Valley Photographer for a discussion and photo tour of the unique granite outcrops found in area at 6:30 p.m. in the Basement Meeting Room of the New Ulm Library. This event is sponsored by the Regional River History Center of New Ulm and the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance.

Friends of the Minnesota Valley is hosting 4 open houses throughout the Lower Minnesota River Watershed to promote the Community Clean Ups for Water Quality Program. The open houses will be targeting 20+ cities in the watershed. **Those interested in a local community spring project** are encouraged to attend and find out more about the program which is designed to prevent phosphorus runoff from city streets to local bodies of water at critical times of the year. They will also have hand outs containing city storm water ordinance enhancement language changes and additions for communities to consider adopting into city policy. This! is being done in an effort to help communities meet minimum storm water regulation requirements mandated by the State of Minnesota and even more so to educate and rally residents around improving water quality in their local rivers and lakes which ultimately all drain to the Minnesota River. The events will be held at the following locations and times:

- Tuesday February 12th in the City of Arlington at the Arlington Community Center at 7 PM,
- Tuesday February 26th at 7 PM at the Valley Green Room in LeSueur,
- Tuesday March 4th at 7 PM at the Best Western Chaska Inn and Suites and Tuesday
- Tuesday March 11th at 8 AM at the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce.

For more information or directions call Scott Sparlin at 507 276 2280 or Lori Nelson at 952 881 9065

February 19th (Tuesday) is the next quarterly meeting of the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance at the New Century Charter School in Hutchinson. The meeting will start at 6:00 p.m. with a social hour and food. The regular meeting will get going at 7:00 p.m. and we try to wrap up by 9:00 p.m.

February 19th (Tuesday) is a Public Information Meeting to present information on the Sand Creek Watershed Total Maximum Daily Load Investigation Study at 7:00 p.m. at the New Prague Library. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/sandcreekmeeting.pdf>

March 5th (Wednesday) is the Hazardous Algal Bloom Workshop from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Best Western Hotel, Mankato. For more information, www.seagrant.umn.edu/news

March 6th (Thursday) is the Chippewa River Watershed Project Annual Meeting at the Starbuck Community Center. 5pm Social/Registration/Door Prizes, 6pm Meal, 7pm Program. It's a Celebration of our 10th Anniversary! It's open to all. The meals are free with pre-registration. The pre-registration deadline is March 3. Contact Jennifer at 320-269-2139 ext120 or jennifer.hoffman@rcdnet.net to make a reservation.

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

Water Quality Articles:

Austin Utilities works to conserve. As heating bills continue to rise due to the high cost of natural gas people are looking to conserve by reducing home energy costs,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/austinutilitiesconserve.pdf>

Minnesota agency finds problems with Big Stone II. The Minnesota Department of Commerce has concluded that the Big Stone II power plant's utilities have not proven the need for a new, large coal-fired power plant, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/bigstoneproblems.pdf>

Bush says he might veto farm bill. President Bush has warned he will veto any farm bill that would raise taxes or does not include reforms of some farm programs,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/bushmightvetofarmbill.pdf>

Deer congregate in Duluth railyard. For many white-tailed deer, the BNSF railroad yard in Duluth is an unlikely sanctuary, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/deerduluthrailyard.pdf>

Fridley firm must pay fine for alleged pollution. Eco Finishing Co., a metal finisher, has agreed to pay \$25,000 in civil penalties and \$100,000 toward projects that will reduce the potential effects of hazardous waste and wastewater generated by the company,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/fridleyfirmpaypollutionfine.pdf>

Leaving no hydrocarbons unburned. Alan Linda of the Daily Journal provides answers about cost comparisons between burning fuels like corn, wood, oil and gas,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/leavingnohydrocarbons.pdf>

Neighborhood wants more wind power use. Students looking for a way to reduce their carbon footprints now have another way to contribute to the environmental cause – using wind power,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/neighborhoodwantsmorewind.pdf>

Progress Slow To Reduce Carbon Emissions in Minn. With a deadline just four years away, 32 Minnesota cities that pledged to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions to below 1990 levels are facing difficulty in getting the process started,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/progressslowclimatechange.pdf>

Agricultural exports stimulated by weak dollar. The U.S. dollar is declining against foreign currencies, which gives American producers of farm machinery and grain a trade advantage that is expected to spur exports in 2008,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/agriculturalexportsstimulated.pdf>

Algae Could Be The Next Cleaner, Greener Fuel. A report out says greenhouse gas emissions could double in the next 30 years due to producing ethanol from corn and algae could be the fuel of the future, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/algacouldbenextcleanenergy.pdf>

Biofuels May Hinder Antiglobal-efforts. Two new studies suggest biofuels like ethanol made from corn will actually increase carbon-dioxide levels,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/biofuelshinder.pdf>

Carbon credits could be windfall. Methane gas produced by decaying garbage at Fargo's municipal landfill could be more valuable than just producing electricity,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/carboncreditscouldbewindfall.pdf>

Energy policy experts say more needs to be done. A panel of energy policy specialists have said despite Minnesota leading the way in energy initiatives more work needs to be done, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/energypolicyexpertssaymoreneedtobedone.pdf>

Local chapter strong after first 25 years. The first out-state PF chapter in Kandiyohi County was named Minnesota's best at the recent National Pheasant Fest in St. Paul, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/localpheasantsforeverchapterstrong.pdf>

Long-awaited bill could be passed as soon as Thursday. Legislators are expected to pass a dedicated conservation funding bill this session, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/alongawaitedbillcouldpass.pdf>

Developers find Green Acres program is the place to be. A Legislative Auditor reports Minnesota's 40-year experiment with protecting farmers on the urban fringe has silently spiraled into a vast tax-scheme for developers, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/greenacresanddevelopers.pdf>

Kids just don't get out (doors) much anymore. The trend appears unmistakable: A smaller percentage of people in Minnesota, the United States and elsewhere are participating in outdoor recreation such as hunting, fishing, camping and visiting parks, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/kidsdontgetoutmuch.pdf>

Polar bears' plight becomes key to climate fight. Both sides of the global warming debate agree conservationists finally have the poster species to the help reduce greenhouse emissions, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/polarbearplight.pdf>

Lake Learning column: The tremendous power of lake ice. Ice is looked upon as a way to enjoy winter fun, but it can also wreak havoc on the lakeshore, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/tremendouspoweroflakeice.pdf>

Ethanol plants may get tougher rules. New ethanol plants in Minnesota would be required to undergo a more rigorous environmental review, specifically concerning environmental impact on groundwater, air pollution and soil erosion, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/ethanolplantsmaygettougherrules.pdf>

Bigger piece of the pie. State lawmakers could make history this week by voting to allocate more money to natural resources, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/biggerpieceofpie.pdf>

Cashing in on global warming. Carbon is now traded like a commodity on the Chicago Carbon Exchange and for farmers and cities it could mean an unexpected cash infusion, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/cashinginonglobalwarming.pdf>

Energy independence, yes; income equality, no. Columnist Ralph Kikngsbury of the Grand Forks Herald is afraid future generations will not have the opportunities available to earlier generations, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/energyindependenceincomeequality.pdf>

Ethanol industry's job impact overstated. A new report says the ethanol industry is creating far fewer jobs than supporters claim and could face a decreasing demand for labor in coming years, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/ethanolindustryjobimpact.pdf>

Top USDA official says failure to pass a new farm bill would be 'catastrophic' for agriculture. A failure to reach agreement on a new farm bill before the old one expires March 15 would be a disaster for most agricultural sectors of the U.S. economy, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/farmbillneedstobepassed.pdf>

Our View – State Water quality diminishing. In a Mankato Free Press editorial, they say Minnesota has been unable to get a handle on the water quality issue, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/statewaterqualitydiminishing.pdf>

Use of wildlife lottery funds remain topic of debate. Are the funds promised by state government actually being used for conservation practices, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/wildlifelotteryfunds.pdf>

"When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world" – John Muir

"Man is a complex being: he makes deserts bloom – and lakes die" – Gil Stern

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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