

Over 120 people showed up to hear Carrie Jennings talk about the Geology of the Minnesota River in Montevideo last Thursday including all the way from Bloomington and Chaska. The standing room-only crowd expressed a lot of enthusiasm for the topic and how Carrie presented the information. Three reporters showed up for the presentation and here are two of the stories they wrote, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/mnrivergeologypresentation.pdf> and <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/snapshotsofglacier.pdf>. I want to thank everyone who came out on a cold January night and especially those who helped with the event including the CURE staff, Dave Craigmile and of course Carrie Jennings. Thanks again.



Hawk Creek Watershed Project held an Information and Appreciation meeting yesterday in Willmar. A large crowd heard from four dynamic and interesting speakers including Dr. Shannon Fisher from the Water Resources Center on “BMP Challenge and Water Quality Credit Trading” and “Fingerprinting Sources of Sediment in the MN Basin” by Dr. Charles Regan of MPCA. Darrell Schindler, coordinator of the Hawk Creek Watershed Project gave an update on this watershed project. Here are some highlights:

- The project has received \$6,303,046 in funding since 1997,
  - More than half has been for loan money for septic system upgrades,
  - In 2007 the project spent \$61,558 on Best Management Practices (BMPs) and \$35,584 has already been encumbered for this year,
  - BMPs have included 249 total projects including 940 acres of buffer strips and 52 side inlets.
- Darrell, Stephanie and Dean did a great job with the meeting.

The Minnesota River Green Corridor project has been recommended by LCCMR (Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources) for \$1 million in funding to the legislature for expanding recreation and conservation possibilities along the Minnesota River through public land ownership. According to Loran Kaardal, “The Green Corridor Team is focused on public acquisition, preservation, restoration and recreation on lands within the glacial River Warren’s river bed from Upper Sioux Agency State Park to Fort Ridgely State Park.” For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/greencorridors.pdf>

In the Montevideo American-News – “Big Bend Lutheran Church pays final \$8,000 for restoration project.” *Members of the Big Bend Lutheran Church congregation have contributed the last \$8,061.08 needed to pay for a streambank restoration project. At a Jan. 8 Chippewa County commissioners meeting auditor/treasurer Jon Clauson said the county now has the final payment in hand.*

Xcel Energy has Education and Environment grants available. February 14<sup>th</sup> is the deadline. For more information go to <http://www.xcelenergy.com/docs/LOI-Instructions-RetApp.pdf> to download a more detailed information.

### **Events:**

#### **Upcoming Technical Service Provider Trainings:**

Watershed managers with TMDL studies and implementation plans addressing Impaired Waters will want to note a new training program designed to increase the number of public and private technical service providers available to assist land owners and managers in implementing conservation practices and installing structures. Water quality improvement requires not only motivational programs like education and incentives/cost-share, but also requires technical assistance to help land managers make the necessary changes. NRCS and other cost-share providers have frequently experienced backlogs of program implementation because of shortages

of trained and certified personnel to provide the technical assistance.

As watershed managers, you can help identify and recruit potential technical service providers in and near your watershed to assist with conservation needs assessments and practice implementation. You can inform them about the new, low-cost, training opportunities described below that will prepare them to assist land owners and managers with conservation planning and implementation programs that are part of your watershed restoration plan.

Through funding provided by the Clean Water Legacy Act, University of Minnesota Extension in partnership with NRCS, MDA, and BWSR, is offering one and two-day courses to help prepare public agency staff and private service providers for certification by USDA-NRCS as Technical Service Providers or to acquire Technical Approval Authority (TAA) for specific practices. Certification may in turn facilitate new business opportunities and partnerships for private, public and nonprofit sector technical professionals, especially related to impaired waters restoration efforts. The target audience includes primarily crop consultants, agricultural coops, agricultural engineering firms, conservation districts, watershed districts and joint powers boards.

#### **Minnesota Nutrient Management 590 Training:**

- January 29, 2008  
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Mahnomen, MN; Shooting Star Casino
- January 31, 2008  
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Morton, MN; Jackpot Junction Casino

This one-day Technical Service Provider (TSP) training course will provide agricultural professionals and other service providers most of the training necessary to become certified to prepare nutrient management plans for USDA Conservation Programs.

For registration information or for more details on this TSP training, visit <http://wrc.umn.edu/outreach/tsp/nmptraining/index.html>

#### **Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) Training for Engineering and Agronomic Components**

April 1-2, 2008; starting at 9:30 a.m. on the 1st St Cloud, MN; Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites

This two-day training course provides an opportunity for both agricultural professionals that prepare nutrient management plans involving manure and licensed engineers that work with manure and wastewater handling and storage systems to obtain training required by NRCS in Minnesota to develop Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMP). This state-specific course is considered equivalent to the National CNMP Training Courses and will provide individuals with an alternative training opportunity in Minnesota if unable to attend the National training.

For registration information or for more details on this TSP training, visit <http://wrc.umn.edu/outreach/tsp/cnmptraining/index.html>

January 26<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) is snowshoeing with Warren Wagner in the Minnesota River bottomland sponsored by the Mankato Paddling and Outing Club starting at 1 p.m. For more information call Warren at 507-388-7383.

February 5<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday) is a "Mentoring Leaders in Environmental Education" facilitated discussion in Mankato at the Snell Motors – Community Room from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. There is no cost for this discussion but registration is required. To register, please send an e-mail to [ee-](mailto:ee-)

[events@pca.state.mn.us](http://events@pca.state.mn.us) (preferred) or call 651-215-0266. A second one will be held on February 6<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday) from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the MPCA office in St. Paul.

February 9<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) is the **CURE (Clean Up the River Environment) Annual Meeting** at the Hollywood Theater in Montevideo. Waziyatawin Angela Wilson, PhD is the guest speaker. Her topic is The Dakota People and the Minnesota River. Hear about the untold story of the forced marches between Montevideo, Mankato and Fort Snelling after the Dakota War of 1862 ended at Camp Release. For more information contact the CURE office at 1-877-269-2873 or go to their web site at [www.curemriver.org](http://www.curemriver.org)

February 11<sup>th</sup> (Monday) Rural Advantage – 3<sup>rd</sup> Crop Producer Meeting; 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. at Knights of Columbus Hall, Fairmont; Info: No cost; topics include Miscanthus as a bioenergy crop, Agroforestry, Small Grains, Hybrid Hazelnuts, and more. Contact Jeff Jensen (507) 238-5449 or [jeff@ruraladvantage.org](mailto:jeff@ruraladvantage.org) for more information or brochure

February 19<sup>th</sup> (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 25<sup>th</sup> (Monday) is a free session on “Public Drainage and County Ditches” at the Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial Secondary School. There will be a discussion relating to current ditch laws, information about any recent changes and how they effect landowners, and what you can expect in the future with any required drainage changes. For more information: 507-726-2673.

March 6<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) is the Chippewa River Watershed Project Annual Meeting at the Starbuck Community Center. For more information contact Kylene, Paul or Jennifer at 320-269-2139 ext. 120.

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

## **Jobs**

Wright Soil and Water Conservation District is hiring a Resource Conservationist/Urban Specialist to carry out construction site erosion control reviews for compliance with NPDES and local rules, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/wrightswcd.pdf>

The MN Department Agriculture has a position open for AGRIC ADVISOR to assist with the coordination and implementation of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture’s Pesticide Management Plan and related functions, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/agricadvisor.pdf>

Koochiching Soil and Water Conservation District is looking for a Program Assistant to provide administrative and program assistance according to policies established by the district, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/koochichingswcd.pdf>

A Resource Conservationist position is open at the North St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District office in Virginia. This person will perform a variety of technical and administrative work to support the programs and activities of the district, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/northstlouisswcd.pdf>

The Clay Soil and Water Conservation District announced the opening of a Water Resources Management Technician position in Moorhead. This person is responsible to administer and implement the current Clay County Comprehensive Local Water Management plan, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/clayswcd.pdf>

## Water Quality Articles:

**Number Of MN Waters Known To Be Polluted: 1,400.** The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is looking to add more water bodies to the already growing impaired waters list, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/impairedmnwaters.pdf>

**More water testing leads to more evidence of pollution.** A total of 1,400 rivers, lakes and wetlands are currently listed for impairments, the largest yet by MPCA, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/watertestingpollution.pdf>

**Midtown Energy project faces new challenges.** A proposed wood-fired plant for Minneapolis will get a more thorough environmental review but is facing other challenges, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/midtownenergyfaceschallenges.pdf>

**Minnetonka forgoes buffer zone rule.** After citizens protest a required 25-foot natural buffer along 13 lakes and 9 miles of creek, the City of Minnetonka removed the requirement from a revised shoreline protection ordinance, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/minnetonkaforgoesbufferrule.pdf>

**Bag 'em up: Plastic sacks losing appeal.** A group of supermarkets in the Twin Cities have decided to ban plastic bags from their stores by spring, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/plasticsackslosingappeal.pdf>

**Xcel Energy rescues algae biofuel project.** Xcel Energy gives \$150,000 to research the use of algae as a biofuel to the University of Minnesota and Metropolitan Council, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/xcelenergyalgaebiofuel.pdf>

**Home Blower Tests Can Save Energy, Money.** A blower door test will help homeowners find where cold air leaks are in their house and will help save money, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/homeblowersaveenergy.pdf>

**Documents say EPA staff favored California waiver for tailpipe emissions; administrator denied.** The administrator of EPA is being called by Congress to testify about his denial for California's tailpipe emissions waiver, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/epacaliforniatailpipeemissions.pdf>

**Sustainability is everyone's job, but some get paid for it.** Colleges and businesses across Minnesota are moving employees into jobs that deal with sustainability, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/sustainabilityjobs.pdf>

**Southdale cooling system is uncool.** The "pump-and-dump" cooling system used by Southdale Shopping Center and other businesses and institutions in the past is considered environmentally unfriendly and is being replaced, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/southdalecoolingsystemuncool.pdf>

**Irresponsible few ruin things for the responsible many.** Many anglers and hunters in Minnesota are increasingly becoming upset about some off-highway-vehicle riders impacting Minnesota's natural resources, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/irresponsibleactions.pdf>

**Lawmakers say agreement on new federal agriculture policies is two months away from seeing the light of the day.** An agreement on the new Farm Bill looks to be at least two weeks off and could see increase funding for conservation programs, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/farmbillstillneedstime.pdf>

**It's time to talk about dedicated spending for natural resources.** Garry Leaf of Sportsmen for Change is leading the charge to the legislature to pass a dedicated funding proposal for natural resources, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/dedicatedspendingnaturalresources.pdf>

**Ag giants persuade MPCA to alter rule.** MPCA has backed off a more stringent water quality limit for acetochlor after being pressured by giant Agricultural groups, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/aggiantsandpesticides.pdf>

**Water will be recycled rather than be discharged.** Excelsior Energy has added about \$20 million to the cost of its \$2 billion clean-coal energy project for a regional water quality improvement program, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/recycledwaterforplant.pdf>

**Hydroelectric power's dirty secret revealed.** According to climate experts, "Hydroelectric dams produce significant amounts of carbon dioxide and methane, and in some cases produce more of these greenhouse gases than power plants running on fossil fuels", <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/hydroelectricpowerdirtysecret.pdf>

**Grass Makes Better Ethanol than Corn Does.** Midwestern farms prove switchgrass could be the right crop for producing ethanol to replace gasoline, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/grassbetterthanethanol.pdf>

**Dennis Anderson: Wildlife groups can't save the world alone,** <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/wildlifegroupscan'doitall.pdf>

*Life in the wilderness, especially when one is alone, is a continual contemplation and communion with God and Spirit regarding eternal values. One does not have to assume any particular stance, invoke incantations, repeat over and over again words such as "Oom," chant, or sing. To me these are merely hypnotic devices used to bring the mind into focus and into the realm of silence by those who do not have the privilege of living in situations where peace is all about them. There is no doubt of the efficacy of such ways of preparation or they would not be followed by hundreds of thousands, but when quiet is all around, with no sounds but natural ones – bird songs, wind, washing of waters against shores – the stage is always set for meditation and reflection, whatever one may chose to call it. Man may not be conscious of contemplation or seeking wisdom, for often no revelations come. Normal and unplanned contemplation comes as softly as the falling rain or the first snows in late fall when the entire world is waiting. While no great answers may come at these times, they do infiltrate occasionally and unobtrusively into one's consciousness, but usually there is simply a sense of peace, removal, and a happiness beyond understanding. – Sigurd Olson*

**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](http://www.watershedalliance.blogspot.com)**

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.

Thanks,

Scott