

Voyage down the Minnesota River

Tim Krohn and John Cross of the Mankato Free Press are paddling down the Minnesota River on the 10th anniversary of their initial journey. They left Big Stone Refuge on Sunday and have made it as far as Upper Sioux State Park on Tuesday night. On their journey, the two men have experienced some challenging paddling conditions including tackling numerous tree snags, portaging heavy gear around dams and white caps on Lac qui Parle Lake.

On the journey this far, Tim and John have interviewed Patrick Moore of CURE about the impact of the proposed Big Stone II Coal Plant on the Minnesota River. *For conservationists along the Minnesota River, stopping the expansion of the Big Stone power plant has become the single most important goal in decades. "It's a proposed corporate water grab from Big Stone Lake. It's an incredibly dangerous precedent and is against everything Minnesotans stand for," said Patrick Moore.*

They made it to Del and Shirley Wehrspann's place near Montevideo on Monday evening after a hard day of paddling. Tim wrote about Del's struggle to stop the drainage of large wetland near the Minnesota River and CURE's efforts to get young people involved in the organization. *Del Wehrspann, an Iowa farm boy who became a Minnesota River Valley livestock buyer, hadn't planned on becoming an activist who would stand up to local and state officials.*

But his anger at seeing the river damaged by drainage led to a protracted legal battle and to him helping form the CURE group – the most effective and active environmental organization on the Minnesota River.

To follow Tim and John as they make their way down to the Minnesota River, check out the Mankato Free Press web site at: http://www.mankato-freepress.com/local/local_story_186141054.html

Prize Catfish Caught

"Big D" the 35-pound catfish released on New Ulm's Capitol for a Day back in May was caught last Saturday evening. Tina Miller of Franklin hooked the \$1,000 fish with a 6-inch sucker minnow at around 11 p.m. For her effort, Tina will collect the prize money donated by New Ulm Area Sport Fishermen and KNUJ Radio. The idea behind the contest was to get people interested in the Minnesota River and fishing.

"Big D" the catfish weighed five pounds less when Tina caught it and still swims the Minnesota River. Tina and her boyfriend Jamie Hale unclipped the special tag, weighed the fish, took a photo and released the catfish back into the water.

Find Your Eco-IQ at the 2008 Minnesota State Fair Eco Experience

From enacting one of the nation's more aggressive alternative energy plans to record transit ridership, Minnesotans are embracing the green lifestyle. At the 2008 Eco Experience, Minnesota State Fair-goers will learn about Minnesota's green future – including wind and solar energy, alternative fuels, vehicles and transportation, organic foods and more. To take the Eco-quiz go to <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/findyoureco.pdf>

Employment:

Board Conservationist Positions – Board of Water and Soil Resources

BWSR is now accepting applications for 4 Board Conservationist positions (in Rochester, Duluth and Marshall). The deadline to apply for any of these open positions is July 18, and they are all posted on the BWSR website at www.bwsr.state.mn.us/careers

Extension Educator – Conservation Agronomist

This position will focus on education and applied research around sustainable farming systems that promote higher levels of non-point source pollution mitigation practices. This position will be targeted to advance the adoption of Alternative Crops; to create sustainable systems; increase adoption of practices that build soil health; promote crop rotations of 3-5 years; educate and advance carbon sequestration and nutrient trading opportunities in the region; promote the use of integrated pest management and economics as part of sustainable systems. This position is funded by Rural Advantage and will be based out of their office in Fairmont. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/conservationagronomist.pdf>

Regional Wildlife Biologist - Oregon, Washington and Idaho

The National Wild Turkey Federation (www.nwtf.org) is seeking an experienced individual for full-time employment as a Regional Wildlife Biologist covering the states of Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

http://www.nwtf.org/contact_us/jobs.html

Events:

July 15th (Tuesday) is the **Minnesota River Watershed Alliance quarterly meeting** at the Hutchinson Event Center on the south end of Hutchinson (Note: this has been a change of location from the New Century Charter School). A social hour begins at 6 p.m. and the meeting at 7 p.m. For more information contact Scott Kudelka at 507-389-2304. For a map go to: www.hutchinsoneventcenter.com/howtogether.htm

July 17th (Thursday) is the **Chippewa River Geology Presentation** starting at 7:00 p.m. at the Starbuck Community Center. Carrie Jennings, a Glacial Geologist with the MN Geological Survey will be giving a presentation highlighting the glacial history of the Lake Minnewaska area and western Minnesota. Refreshments will be served. For more information contact Jennifer Hoffman at 320-269-2139 ext. 120.

July 19th (Saturday) is **Lac qui Parle Sesquicentennial Heritage Celebration** from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Lac qui Parle County Park. The day features historical exhibits and demonstrations, musical entertainment, historical readings, guided park area tours, kid's games and activities, along with food and beverages. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/dawsonflyer.pdf>

July 19th (Saturday) is the **Day at the Dam Celebration** from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Rapidan Dam. There will be tours of the park, boat rides on the reservoir, music, informational displays, horse draw wagon rides, lawn games, family activities, and food from The Dam Store. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/celebrateblueearthday.pdf>

Minnesota River Board Annual Meeting

Hello! You are invited to attend the MRB Annual Meeting on July 21st (Monday) at the Best Western in North Mankato. To reserve a seat and lunch, contact Susie Carlin by July 15th at 507-389-5491 or by email susan.carlin@mnsu.edu. For the Full Board packet please visit www.minnesotariver.org

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

Water Quality Articles:

[Extending Minnesota's growing season](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). A few Minnesota farmers are trying to stretch the limits of Minnesota's growing season. They hope to take advantage of a growing demand for locally grown produce.

[You hear it at the store: Paper or plastic?](#) (Albert Lea Tribune). Plastic bags vs. paper bags. The question still lingers out there. I wrote an article in March of 2005 about the dilemma and people are still confused or uncertain about the “right” choice. The answer is: “I brought my own reusable bag.” Maybe!

[Worship the earth](#) (Minnesota Women’s Press). Several years ago, Lissie Rappaport Schifman was sitting at the High Holidays service at Temple Israel, pregnant and between jobs. She started thinking. Thinking about where she was going to now devote her energy.

[Crowds gather to watch coal come crashing down](#) (It’s Getting Hot in Here). In what is perhaps a beautiful foretelling of our energy future – crowds gathered in St. Paul Minnesota yesterday to watch a coal smokestack come crashing down.

[Gas price proposals don't add up to action in D.C.](#) (Star Tribune). Minnesota's congressional delegation is parading home for July 4th without much to brag about on the season's hottest political topic: \$4-per-gallon gas.

[Making waves: proposed Mississippi River turbine stalled](#) (Minnesota Daily). The Crown Hydro project, a proposed hydropower turbine located at St. Anthony Falls in the Mississippi River, has been stalling for nearly a decade, and a 5-4 vote against the project last December by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board sheds doubt on its future.

[Pawlenty owes the state a PUC for the 21st century](#) (Morris Sun Tribune). Now is the time for Gov. Tim Pawlenty to make good on his reputation as a forward thinking energy leader by appointing a new Public Utilities Commissioner (PUC) who understands and upholds the laws the governor himself has enacted to move Minnesota into a 21st century energy economy.

[U.S. Agriculture Secretary: Congress looks over Schafer's shoulder](#) (Forum Communications). Congressional agriculture leaders moved from crafting a farm bill to skeptically watching Bush administration officials put it into action.

[DNR is dealt a setback to its mission of conservation](#) (Star Tribune). The Department of Natural Resources' expanding fleet of 300 "flex-fuel" vehicles is undercutting the agency's mission to conserve wildlife habitat and clean up the state's lakes and rivers, according to two Minnesota conservation groups.

[The power of corncobs](#) (Star Tribune). This fall, the Chippewa Valley Ethanol Co. will go in search of the humble corncob. A \$150,000 state grant will help the central Minnesota farmers' cooperative test two collection systems to gather the small, scratchy harvest remnant: one that rides piggyback on a combine and one that follows behind.

[Air conditioning carries a high cost in energy and dollars](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). The definition of air conditioning for many Minnesotans is a trip to the lake or a drive up the North Shore. But a growing number consider themselves perspiration averse and prefer if not outright demand, that houses, cars and workplaces be artificially air conditioned. What are the effects?

[Biomass plant still on track](#) (Morris Sun Tribune). Despite problems with the system to feed it, the University of Minnesota, Morris' biomass burner should be ready to heat the campus this fall.

[Penguin in a coal mine? Woes signal sea trouble](#) (Associated Press). The dwindling march of the penguins is signaling that the world's oceans are in trouble, scientists now say.

[Our view: People making small changes can make difference](#) (Star Tribune). The EcoMom Alliance was founded with the realization that in the face of pollution, toxic waste, playgrounds, parks and food all treated with harmful pesticides, there is a choice: change or don't.

[David Morris: Sustainable economy is the core of freedom](#) (Star Tribune). This July 4th, as with all July 4ths, our political leaders will retell the inspiring story of how a brave band of colonies declared their independence from the mightiest empire on earth. And, as usual, they will leave out one crucial aspect of that story: We declared our economic independence before we declared our political independence.

[Commentary - Is your property protecting lakes?](#) (Alexandria Echo Press). In Minnesota, we value our lakes. How well does your waterfront protect shoreland habitat and water quality? Put your property to the test by answering five short questions from the Shoreland Stewardship Checklist.

Eventually, all things merge into one, and a river runs through it. The river was cut by the world's great flood and runs over from the basement of time. On some of the rocks are timeless raindrops - - under the rocks are the words and some of the words are theirs. – Norman MacLean, [A River Runs Through It](#)

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>

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

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