

Big Stone II files exceptions brief with PUC

The five Big Stone II participating utilities filed an exceptions brief in support of their certificate of need application with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, according to a Big Stone II news release.

The brief calls into question numerous findings by two Minnesota administrative law judges who, on May 9, recommended that the PUC deny the Big Stone transmission application for a certificate of need. "We do not feel the ALJs adequately considered the testimony of more than 20 expert witnesses in the areas of demand forecasts, energy conservation, renewable energy and probable carbon dioxide emissions costs," Thomas Heller, CEO of Missouri River Energy Services, one of the project participants, said in the news release. "It is our intention that the Big Stone project will provide an answer to meeting the growing energy needs of the state of Minnesota and surrounding region by providing a cleaner coal technology and the capability to accommodate a significant amount of new wind generation resources through the proposed transmission project. The state of Minnesota has mandated that 25 percent of all Minnesota utilities generation portfolio come from renewable resources. Without the necessary additions to the existing transmission grid, including the Big Stone transmission, that mandate cannot be achieved." (Marshall Independent)

- **Big Stone II files exceptions brief with Minnesota PUC,**
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/bigstoneiifilesexceptionsbrief.pdf>

Big Stone II issue coming to a boil

One more challenge has been thrown in the path of the proposed Big Stone II coal-fired power plant following a recommendation made by a two-judge panel that the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission reject an electric transmission line improvement project deemed critical to construction of the power plant. Last week the Sierra Club and Clean Water Action filed a petition asking the state of South Dakota to reject plans to construct the Big Stone II plant because of the allegedly unhealthy levels of air pollution the plant would emit. Minnesota administrative law judges Steve Mihalchick and Barbara Neilson, after taking testimony from supporters and opponents of Big Stone II, decided May 9 that a group of utilities led by Fergus Falls-based Otter Tail Power Co. had not made a compelling argument why the transmission improvements should proceed. One transmission line is to run from Big Stone City, S.D., to Morris, and the other to Granite Falls. The judges' decision, contained in a 65-page report, reversed a previous recommendation the project go forward. The withdrawal of two Big Stone II partners - Great River Energy and Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, which primarily serve eastern and southeastern Minnesota - prompted the second judicial review. (by John Givan, Montevideo American-News)

Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area (RCRCA) seeking director

The RCRCA is hiring a new director to fill the position that will be vacated by current director Jim Doering. Responsibilities will include carrying out all programs and policies adopted by the Board of Directors in a manner consistent with the organization's purpose and intent as defined in the Joint Powers Agreement. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/redwoodcottonwoodposition.pdf>. The deadline for the application is June 6th at 4:30 p.m. We want to wish Jim luck in his new position with the City of Redwood and thank him for all his hard work and dedication with helping improve water quality in the Minnesota River Watershed.

New Rush River Coordinator

I want to welcome Brooke Patterson to the Minnesota River Watershed as the new Rush River Clean Water Partnership Coordinator. Brooke can be reached at 507-237-7409 or brookep@co.sibley.mn.us

Let's Go Paddling

There are a number of opportunities for getting out to paddle one of the many Minnesota River tributaries in the month of June. Organizations across the watershed are sponsoring paddles to help the public connect with a river near them.

- June 6th (Friday) the Mankato Paddling and Outing club is hosting a Watonwan River to Rapidan trip. This is an easy float. Meet at Rapidan Dam Store at 5:30 p.m. For more info call Tom Marks at 388-3001
- June 12th (Thursday) the Lac qui Parle – Yellow Bank Clean Water Partnership will be sponsoring a paddle on the Lac qui Parle River. The route has not been identified at this time and more information will be forthcoming. If the weather is bad the paddle will be held on June 13th (Friday). If you have any questions please contact Mary Homan at 320-598-3319 or mary.homan@lqpc.com
- June 17th (Tuesday) is the Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area's annual Cottonwood River Canoe Trip. Please meet south of Essig at the Cottonwood River canoe access on County Road 11 to canoe into Flandrau State Park, New Ulm. For more information, http://www.rcrca.com/canoe_trip_home.htm
- June 19th (Thursday) is the Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area's annual Redwood River Canoe Trip. Meet at Perk's Park on Lake Redwood and bus up to the starting point, where the Redwood River crosses CR 6, and canoe to Redwood Lake in Redwood Falls. For more information, http://www.rcrca.com/canoe_trip_home.htm
- June 21st (Saturday) is a paddle on the Chippewa River sponsored by the Chippewa River Watershed Project. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Highway 40 Bridge to paddle down to Watson Park. For more information, www.chippewariver.com

Sediment, Soils & Glacial Landscapes in the Valley of the Green Giant Forum

The Minnesota Association of Professional Soil Scientists (MAPSS) is sponsoring their 2008 Summer Tour & Business Meeting on July 18th (Friday) from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Ney Nature Center outside of Henderson. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/sedimentsoilglaciallandscapes.pdf>

NPS Community Planner position

The National Park Service (NPS) is looking to hire a Community Planner position in St. Paul to work with the NPS and closes June 6th. The position is a Community Planner GS-0020-09. The vacancy announcement number is SACN-MISS-08-07-DEU.

MAJOR DUTIES:

Incumbent conducts planning workshops and coordinates meetings for local governments concerning development issues that affect water quality in the Mississippi River and its primary regional tributaries. Conducts workshops and provides one-on-one assistance for landowners whose development activities (including on-site waste treatment systems and agricultural practices) affect water quality. Works with other government agencies and outside groups to accelerate completion of Total Maximum Daily Load plans for contaminants in the river. For more information, Steven P. Johnson, Chief of Resource Stewardship, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area National Park Service at 111 E. Kellogg Blvd., Suite 105; St. Paul, MN 55101; 651-290-3030 x223 or steven_p_johnson@nps.gov

Events:

June 5th (Thursday) is a **State Conservation and Preservation Plan Public Forum** from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Best Western North Mankato (111 Range Street). The public will have a chance to provide input on draft recommendations for conservation and preservation of

Minnesota's environment and natural resources. For more information,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/statewideconservationpreservationplan.pdf>

June 14th (Saturday) is a **Hike at the Gneiss Scientific & Natural Area** near Granite Falls. Please meet at the Hardees parking lot (147 Highway 212 E.) at 9:00 a.m. We will drive out to the site from there.

June 17th (Tuesday) is a **Grass and Grazing – A Renewable Resource Tour** sponsored by the Big Stone SWCD and others. The tour begins at the Hilltop Café (U.S. Hwy 12 & U.S. Hwy 75) in Ortonville with registration from 9:00 to 9:30 a.m. with boarding the bus at that time. For more information call 320-839-6149 ext. 3.

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

Water Quality Articles:

Algae: The Key To Energy Independence? With the rising cost of gas and concerns that too much of our food is being used for fuel, the world could really use a new way to make energy,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/algakeyenergyindependence.pdf>

Arts and the environment advocates launch referendum campaign. A coalition of more than 200 groups is kicking off a campaign to convince Minnesotans to approve a constitutional amendment this fall, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/artsenvironmentreferendumcampaign.pdf>

Council set, funding campaign can begin. On the front end, lawmakers approved a bill to ask voters this fall if they want to increase the state's sales tax by three-eighths of 1 percent and dedicate the proceeds to natural resources, clean water, parks and trails, and the arts,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/councilsetfundingcampaign.pdf>

Dennis Anderson: Plenty to thank, but also more work to be done. A lot of people deserve credit for getting a proposed constitutional amendment for dedicated funding to voters. Now all that's left is its passage, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/dennisandersonplentytothank.pdf>

Fine arts/great outdoors drive kicks off. Supporters of a proposed constitutional amendment that would dedicate a portion of the state sales tax to natural resources and the arts hope a combination of money and "people power" will win approval for the plan in the November election,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/fineartsgreatoutdoorsdrive.pdf>

Biodiesel: Down to the last drop. A threefold increase in the average of soybeans has made it financially impossible for some refineries to continue manufacturing biodiesel. Nevertheless, Minnesota has passed the country's toughest mandate to use biofuel,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/biodieseldownlastdrop.pdf>

Forum Editorial: Bush's veto of farm bill out of touch. According to the Fargo Forum, "The arrogance of the Bush administration regarding the new farm bill is astonishing,"
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/bushvetofarmbilloutoftouch.pdf>

Congress enacts farm bill. Congress enacted a massive farm bill with new and bigger subsidies for farmers, plus more food stamps for the poor,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/congressenactsfarmbill.pdf>

Embarrassing mix-up throws House override of President's farm bill veto in doubt. The House overwhelmingly rejected George W. Bush's veto of a \$290 billion farm bill, but what should have been a stringing defeat for the president became an embarrassment for Democrats,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/embarrassingmixupfarmbill.pdf>

Farm bill is mixed news for organic growers. The farm bill is one way the federal government guarantees farmers can make it through hard times,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/farmbillmixedorganicgrowers.pdf>

Ethanol producers defend their value. Leaders in the ethanol business say their industry is under attack, and two unlikely forces have joined for the battle – oil companies and the grocery industry, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/ethanolproducersdefendvalue.pdf>

Editorial – Are you keeping the lakes clean? Now that Memorial Day has come and gone, cabins are opening all around the lakes area for another season of summer fun. There are measures for those with lake property to help the environment,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/editorialkeepinglakesclean.pdf>

It was a ‘good session for conservation and wildlife.’ Environmental advocates made some great strides in the areas of conservation and transit during the 2008 session of the Minnesota Legislature but missed opportunities for energy independence,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/goodsessionconservationwildlife.pdf>

Good to the last drip: Minneapolis to spend \$180,000 to market its (wait for this) tap water. Never mind the bottles: It's the tap water. You can forget whatever you've heard about the coming water wars - - the water marketing wars are already here,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/goodtothelastdrip.pdf>

Lots of people say bicycling beats high gas prices. High gasoline prices have people turning to an old form of transportation: the bicycle,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/lotspeoplebicyclinghighgasprices.pdf>

New laws take a small step to address global warming. On the issue of global warming, the 2008 Minnesota Legislature didn't do much,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/newlawsglobalwarming.pdf>

A recycled idea for saving at the pump. There's one sure-fire way to cut your gas costs: Drive slower, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/recycledideasavingpump.pdf>

Wind turbines turn \$2.3 million in profits for Duluth Seaway Port Authority. Fiscal year 2007 will go down as the most profitable ever for the Duluth Seaway Port Authority due to large shipments of wind power equipment,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/windtrubinesprofitduluthportauthority.pdf>

Young people hard hit by gas prices. The rising cost of gas is hitting young people hard,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/youngpeoplehithardgasprices.pdf>

Volunteers to help beautify shoreline: rant pays for native fauna around Cannon Lake. Volunteers are being sought to help plant more than 1,000 native grasses, flowers and shrubs along the shoreline of Cannon Lake in Shager Park,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/cannonlakebeautifyshoreline.pdf>

Peterson announces funding for conservation. Congressman Collin Peterson recently announced that the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) has approved \$12,913,560 of federal funds to various agricultural producers in Minnesota's 7th District through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP),
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/petersonannouncesconservationfunding.pdf>

‘Recycle More Minnesota’ campaign launched. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Recycling Association of Minnesota have launched a statewide educational effort to promote

and reinvigorate recycling at home, at work, and on-the-go,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/recyclemoreminnesotalaunched.pdf>

Study: We're feeling global warming now. Global warming is already affecting the nation's forests, water resources, farmland and wildlife and will have serious consequences in the next 25 to 50 years, according to a government report,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/werefeelingglobalwarmingnow.pdf>

Winners and losers in ag economy. Ethanol and biodiesel production are getting an "inordinate" amount of the blame for rising food prices,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/winnerslosersageconomy.pdf>

As food prices spiral, farmers turn a fine profit. The steepest run-ups in food prices since 1990 are hurting grocery shoppers, restaurants and school cafeterias but they're making others rich, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/foodpricesspiralfarmersprofit.pdf>

There is growing awareness of the beauty of country . . . a sincere desire to keep some of it for all time. People are beginning to value highly the fact that a river runs unimpeded for a distance. . . They are beginning to obtain deep satisfaction from the fact that a herd of elk may be observed in back country, on ancestral ranges, where the Indians once hunted them. They are beginning to seek the healing relaxation that is possible in wild country. In short they want it. – Olaus J. Murie, naturalist, writer and co-founder of The Wilderness Society.

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

Scott Kudelka
Minnesota River Watershed Alliance
Communications Coordinator
Water Resources Center
184 Trafton Science Center S
Mankato, MN 56001
507-389-2304
scott.kudelka@mnsu.edu
<http://watershedalliance.blogspot.com>