

Water Year Data Summary 2007-2008

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - Division of Waters recently posted its "Water Year Data Summary: 2007 and 2008" on the DNR Waters Web site (http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/publications/waters/water_year_2007-2008.html). This publication provides a review and summary of basic hydrologic data gathered through DNR Waters programs. There are four major areas of data collection including; climatology, surface water, ground water, and water use. These topical areas follow the hydrologic cycle and provide important facts concerning the distribution and availability of Minnesota's water resources. A hard copy or compact disk version of the publication is available upon request - Judy Boudreau, Editor; Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - Division of Waters judy.boudreau@dnr.state.mn.us or 651-259-5659.

Water is Life

Six high school students won \$500 scholarships this year in the Freshwater Society's fifth annual Water is Life art contest. The six were chosen from among 29 semi-finalists from across Minnesota. The winners were:

- Alixandra Biber, Kasson-Mantorville High School
- Quanzakari DeChiara-Crillion, Perpich Center for Arts Education
- Bradley Johnson, Le Sueur-Henderson High School
- Luke Muyskens, School of Environmental Studies
- Sarah Olson, Eden Prairie High School
- Meghan Reistad, Elk River High School

Each semi-finalist received a \$100 prize. The high school artists submitted entries that included photography, sculpture, painting and video. Each artist accompanied his or her artwork with a statement reflecting the value of water or the threats it faces in today's world.

The six winners were announced in a ceremony at the Gray Freshwater Center in Excelsior. Sandy Spieler, artistic director of the In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre, was the keynote speaker. She talked about her theatre's many productions that have focused on themes related to water.

To see all of the winning images, [click here](#).

Conservation group appeals Big Stone power plant ruling – Minnesota Public Radio

Sioux Falls, S.D. (AP) — A conservation group is appealing a judge's order dismissing its lawsuit, which accused the Big Stone power plant of violating federal environmental laws by not installing modern pollution controls. The Sierra Club complaint asked a judge to order the owners of the

coal-fired plant to install equipment that would reduce pollution at the plant near Milbank in northeast South Dakota, before they build a second plant on the site. The plant is owned by Otter Tail Power Co., MDU Resources Group Inc., and Northwestern Corp. U.S. District Judge Charles Kornmann sided with the utilities and dismissed the lawsuit because it came after the statute of limitations expired. He also refused to reconsider the case, so the Sierra Club appealed to the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. (August 4, 2009)

Riverblast – Scott Sparlin

Hi All, **Riverblast** is right around the corner on its **usual time** of Friday and Saturday of Labor Day Weekend, this year it is **September 4th and 5th**. We are looking for a few great volunteers to help out with ticket sales and bartending. If you are willing and available please let me know asap. Shifts are Friday 4 to 8 PM---8 to 12 midnight and Saturday 11 AM to 3 PM, 3PM to 7PM and 7PM until closing. We also need help tearing down at 10:30 AM Sunday morning. If you can help please let me know by responding to this email or call me at 507 276 2280 and I will mark you and your time slot down. We all really appreciate it and so does the river. For more information go to <http://www.riverblast.org> to see the schedule of events. I will be sending out an event notice shortly.

FAIR TRADE FILM NIGHT

Come out on Tuesday August 18, at 7.00 p.m. to the Christ the King Lutheran Church (222 Pfau Street) in Mankato to see a number of films including Buyer Be Fair and Chocolate Country. For info: [Mankato Area Fair Trade Town Initiative](#)

“Buyer Be Fair” (2006) explores how conscious consumers and businesses can use the market to promote social justice and environmental sustainability through product labeling with a focus on Forest Stewardship Council certified wood. It also features a section which recounts how the Fair Trade Town idea started in the UK. "...[A]n inspirational but balanced television special that reaches beyond the choir to present the promise of product certification to a wide audience."

Produced as part of Consumers International's Sustainable Coffee Campaign, **Just Coffee (2006)** takes an introductory look at the different types of certified coffees on the market and assesses the benefits for coffee producers and consumers. The film follows the certified coffee chain from the [fazendas](#) of Brazil to the supermarket shelves of Europe and North America. It includes exclusive interviews with certified coffee farmers, market experts, consumer organizations and some of the major figures in the international coffee sector. Just Coffee is a compelling introduction to coffee certification, an ideal resource for anyone interested in sustainability, fair trade and social responsibility.

“Chocolate Country” (2007) -- In the isolated hill towns of the Dominican Republic, cacao farmers have been fighting a losing battle with the global economy for as long as anyone can remember. In the village of Loma Guacanejo, things are about to change. If the farmers here can win organic certification and leverage the benefits of Fair Trade, they just might manage to turn the system on its head. To pull it off will take the cooperation of an entire community. Featuring a stirring soundtrack by local folk musicians, and an inside look at chocolate production from seed to pod to bean to powder, this short documentary took the Grand Jury Prize for its category at the Seattle International Film Festival. (TransFairUSA)

TAKE A LOAD OFF AT THE ECO EXPERIENCE

St. Paul, Minn. -- A day at the Minnesota State Fair means a long day on your feet. Come to the Eco Experience, sit back and learn how to take a load off your electric bill, water use and carbon footprint. A variety of live presentations, performances and demonstrations will provide resources for reducing the effects your home has on the environment and your pocketbook.

Collectively, individual actions can make a huge difference. Learn about actions you can take at home from Minnesota's own polar explorer, Eric Larsen. Larsen will be at the Eco Experience on

Wednesday, Sept. 2, at 11 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to talk about climate change and how the choices we make affect the rest of the globe.

Stop by the Eco Experience for kid-friendly shows and time out of the sun or rain. Sewerman will make an appearance to talk about clean water -- be sure to stick around to the end of the show for an unbelievable surprise. And Tricia and her friends, the Toonies, will be singing and talking about ways to reduce, reuse and recycle at home and at school.

Raingardens, rain barrels and native plants can help you conserve water and spend less time on yard upkeep. At the Eco Experience you will learn how these tactics reduce stormwater runoff and cut the amount of time you'll need to spend mowing, fertilizing and watering your lawn.

A great way to get some extra cash is by not spending it in the first place. There are simple, energy-saving steps you can take that will help reduce your electric bills. At the Eco Experience, experts on home energy efficiency and alternative energy will give you tools to reduce your electric consumption.

There will be live performances on the Eco Experience stage daily at 9:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m., 2:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. And there will be food demonstrations on the Eco Experience stage at 10:30 a.m., noon, 2:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. Learn about local fresh foods and the delicious dishes you can make with these healthy ingredients. For more information and schedules, go to <http://www.ecoexperience.org>.

About the Eco Experience: A partnership between the Minnesota State Fair, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and dozens of organizations and businesses across the state, the Eco Experience has become the second most popular exhibit at the Minnesota State Fair. The Eco Experience is the largest environmental event of its kind in the country. Since 2006 over one million visitors have attended the 25,000-square-foot exhibit in the fair's Progress Center to learn about clean water, saving energy, climate change, healthy local food, transportation, green building and remodeling, and other ways to lead more eco-friendly lives.

Iraq Suffers as the Euphrates River Dwindles

JUBAISH, Iraq – Throughout the marshes, the reed gatherers, standing on land they once floated over, cry out to visitors in a passing boat. “Maaku mai!” they shout, holding up their rusty sickles. “There is no water!” The Euphrates is drying up. Strangled by the water policies of Iraq’s neighbors, Turkey and Syria; a two-year drought; and years of misuse by Iraq and its farmers, the river is significantly smaller than it was just a few years ago. Some officials worry that it could soon be half of what it is now.

For the full article: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/14/world/middleeast/14euphrates.html?_r=3

The Third Minnesota Report Card on Environmental Literacy: Making it work for you

- Thursday, September 3rd from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in St. Paul
- Thursday, September 10th from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in Duluth

Free - Advanced registration is required. *The Third Minnesota Report Card on Environmental Literacy*, as with the previous two report cards, offers a snapshot of the environmental literacy of Minnesota adults. Questions were asked of 1000 Minnesota adults on their knowledge about, attitudes toward, and behaviors related to the environment. A portion of the knowledge questions focused on energy and climate change.

In this workshop you'll have time to explore the report card findings by asking questions such as: What's in here for me? Why should I use this information? When should I use this data? How can I use this data? You'll learn how to use the report card results to review, adapt, and develop education efforts that better serve your audiences. Understanding what Minnesotan adults are

thinking, feeling and doing when it comes to the environment can help your education efforts be more successful.

If you don't know the Report Card, please take a moment to read a summary of *The Third Minnesota Report Card on Environmental Literacy* at <http://www.seek.state.mn.us/compact2.cfm?ItemId=1882> .

Workshop Presenter: Denise Stromme, Environmental Education, Pollution Control Agency

THERE IS NO COST FOR THIS WORKSHOP BUT REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. There are limited spaces available. To register, hit reply or send an e-mail to ee-events@pca.state.mn.us or call 651-757-2070 and specify which workshop location you would like to attend. (If you do not receive a confirmation notice, please notify us.) The September 3rd workshop location is in the MN Pollution Control Agency's 2nd Floor Large Conference Room, 520 Lafayette Road, St. Paul. The September 10th workshop location is at the Duluth MN Pollution Control Agency, 4th Floor, 525 Lake Avenue South, Suite 400. These workshops are open to all working in the environmental and/or education field.

This workshop is one of the Environmental Education (EE) Capacity Building Workshops sponsored by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Environmental Education Capacity Building is developing effective organizations and individual leaders in order to achieve comprehensive EE programs at the state and local level. - EE-Events Team; Environmental Education, MPCA; ee-events@pca.state.mn.us; Phone: 651-757-2070
<http://www.mnseek.net>; <http://www.pca.state.mn.us>; <http://www.nextstep.state.mn.us>

Events:

August 19th (Wednesday) is **RiverNight 2009 and Annual Awards Ceremony** sponsored by Minnesota Waters. The award ceremony will be held aboard the historic showboat Centennial docked at Harriet Island in St. Paul. The evening river cruise takes place aboard the historic river boat the Betsey Northrup, also docked at Harriet Island. For more information, <http://www.minnesotawaters.org/documents/2009%20RiverNight%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

August 21st (Friday) is the **10th Annual Agroecology Summit** at Willow Lake Farm in Windom. For the past 10 years, producer Tony Thompson has thrown open his barn doors to host this free event. This event will feature thought-provoking speakers, field tours, and constructive dialogue. Lunch is provided & the food is always excellent, much of it from local producers. This event is FREE to the public, but registration is required. Please register via email to Tony Thompson at salix@rconnect.com. An email packet will be returned to registrants with directions, etc. For more information, http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/agroecology_2009.pdf

August 27th (Thursday) through September 7 (Monday) is the **4th Annual Eco Experience** at the Minnesota State Fair from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. The Eco Experience is located at the Progress Center on the corner of Randall and Cosgrove. Look for the 123-foot high wind turbine blade. LEARN MORE: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/ecoexperience/>

October 6th & 7th (Tuesday and Wednesday) is the **Nobel Conference – H2O Uncertain Resource** at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter. This conference will examine the current state of world water resources. Immediate threats to the health of rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters, oceans, and all forms of aquatic environments will be confronted by leading scientists. Environmental ethics and potable water as a basic human right will be examined alongside human tragedy resulting from contaminated resources. For more information, <http://gustavus.edu/events/nobelconference/2009/>

October 26th – 27th (Monday and Tuesday) is the **Water Resources Conference** at RiverCentre, St Paul. The Minnesota Water Resources Conference presents innovative and practical water

resource management techniques and highlights research about Minnesota's water resources. For more information, <http://wrc.umn.edu/waterconf/index.htm>

November 7 (Saturday) is the **Crisis as Opportunity: Redesigning the Good Life Conference** from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the School Sisters of Notre Dame Mankato Provincial House Conference Center (170 Good Counsel Drive. For more information: <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/thegoodlife.pdf>

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

Water Quality Articles:

[Commentary: What happened to the family farm? Maybe it's still there](#) (Albert Lea Tribune). In the 1980s and '90s and even now, government and people have been trying hard to save the "family farm." Evidently, we Americans use the family farm as a piece of Americana and feel the need to preserve what we feel it represents.

[Outlook for farms pessimistic](#) (Fairmont Sentinel). Minnesota Agriculture Commissioner Gene Hugoson painted a dark picture of the short-term future of farming Wednesday at Farmfest.

[Local foods get a boost under a Rybak initiative](#) (Minnesota Daily). With summer in full swing, farmers markets and gardens are cropping up all over the city and there may be quite a few more next year with a new initiative in place that has Minneapolis officials on record supporting the growth of the local food economy and culture in the city.

[Controlling farm runoff could have multiple benefits](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). A big contributor to the Gulf of Mexico's 'dead zone' is farmland runoff, but a new approach to farmland drainage may help reduce its size.

[Commentary: Agricrat](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Agricrat (AG-ri-krat) n. [agriculture, the science, art and business of farming + Democrat, one of the two major political parties in the United States] a group of politicians, led by Collin Peterson of Minnesota, who hold increasing sway over the agenda in Washington.

[Plants pool to create new owner](#) (Mankato Free Press). Residents of western Waseca County have watched the ethanol plant rise out of the corn fields, have watched the seasons change from fall to winter to spring to summer as the plant sat idle, and have watched the ownership change with the seasons.

[Wind turbine noise concerns prompt investigation](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Wind farms are rapidly expanding across the Midwest, and a growing number of residents who live near the wind turbines are complaining about noise.

[It isn't always easy to be green in the suburbs](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Where can a wind turbine be used? Maple Grove and other cities are providing the answers by revisiting their zoning codes.

[Editorial: All hail the ethanol defender](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). President Obama's nominee as ambassador to Brazil, Thomas A. Shannon Jr., is a longtime diplomat trained to speak honestly without giving unnecessary offense.

[Panel urges better separation of science and politics in federal agencies](#) (MinnPost). A panel of ideologically diverse scientific and regulatory experts recommended Wednesday that firm rules

be established to keep politics from overriding science when federal agencies, such as the Food and Drug Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency, are devising their regulations.

[Birdwatchers, ready your hammers: Carrol Henderson's new book is here](#) (MinnPost).

"Woodworking for Wildlife" has sold 90,000 copies since Henderson, supervisor of the DNR's nongame wildlife program, first reworked his instructional pamphlet into a 48-page book in the mid-1980s.

[Peterson, Walz challenged at Farmfest on climate reform](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Skeptical rural voters quizzed two Minnesota congressmen Tuesday over their support of climate change legislation.

[Coal Group Is Linked to Fake Letters on Climate Bill](#) (New York Times). A trade group representing [coal](#) producers and power companies says that it indirectly hired a lobbying firm that sent fake letters to lawmakers purporting to be from nonprofit groups opposed to climate-change legislation.

[Minnesota companies working to reduce carbon footprint](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). If you're turning off lights and driving less these days to save money and maybe help the planet, you're not alone.

[Stimulus money flows to wastewater](#) (Minnesota Daily). Federal stimulus funds will have leaked more than \$82.5 million to clean water infrastructure in Minnesota by mid August, but this is only a fraction of what some say statewide facilities need.

[Farmers Market offers abundant variety of fruits, vegetables, preserves and baked goods](#) (New Ulm Journal). Foodies will know this already - but for those who don't, flavorful, colorful produce can be found in abundance at the Farmers Market that takes place in the Running's Fleet and Farm parking lot in New Ulm, 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. on Thursdays.

[State ag agency perseveres as farm economy, state budget worsen](#) (St. Paul Legal Ledger). Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) Commissioner Gene Hugoson was joined on the panel at the large three-day gathering in southwestern Minnesota by four other luminaries of Minnesota agriculture.

[Expansions hurt ethanol plants](#) (Fergus Falls Daily Journal). The ethanol industry is one that is growing every year. But a broad expansion has caused financial difficulties for some ethanol plants.

[Interior secretary visits Minn.](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Interior Secretary Ken Salazar is urging states to take advantage of federal stimulus money for environmental projects.

[Dennis Anderson: A blow is struck for the ducks](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Forming the Minnesota Duck Action Congress is a start, and that task was achieved Saturday at Game Fair. Stands were taken on many matters, all to benefit waterfowl.

[As worries about climate change grow, a community in the Pacific Ocean is already dealing with the effects](#) (MinnPost). Two thousand miles to the east of the Carterets, and roughly halfway between Hawaii and Australia, Tuvalu – population: 12,000 – is often billed as the first community in the southwestern Pacific Ocean likely to be devoured by the region's rising and increasingly turbulent seas.

[Janesville ethanol: Rationalizing economic development investments](#) (Twin Cities Daily Planet). News announcements in the past week regarding ethanol and new owners for a southern Minnesota ethanol plant offer hope that a more rational approach to economic development will emerge from the current recession.

[Composting is easier than people might think](#) (Albert Lea Tribune). Many people do not realize how easy composting can be and what a nice end product for the garden or flower bed they will produce.

[Pawlenty unallots \\$1.5 mil from DNR's FY2010 budget](#) (Minnesota Outdoor News). Gov. Tim Pawlenty unallotted nearly \$1.5 million from the DNR's Fiscal Year 2010 operating budget as part of his effort to balance the state's budget.

[Some question the environmental impact of clunkers program](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). The "cash for clunkers" program was touted as a way to stimulate the economy while helping the environment by getting gas guzzlers off the road. But some experts say the legislation doesn't go far enough to help the environment.

Everybody needs beauty as well as bread; places to play in and places to pray in, where Nature may heal and cheer, and give strength to body and soul alike. – John Muir

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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