

3rd Crop Demo Plot Tour

Rural Advantage will be holding a 3rd Crop Demo Plot Tour as part of their 2009 3rd Crop Walk-n-Talks. This event will be held Sunday, August 30, 2009, at Heritage Acres in Fairmont, Minnesota, from 5pm-7pm. There is no cost and pre-registration is not necessary.

This informal field day will allow attendees to view numerous 3rd Crop plantings at varying growth stages as well as hold discussions on the management strategies associated with each planting. 3rd Crop species in the Demonstration Plot include: Aronia, Dogwood, Hazelnuts, American Plum, False Indigo, Black Currant, and much more.

If you are curious about 3rd Crops or are thinking of adding them to your landscape, please join Rural Advantage on Sunday, August 30, 2009. Directions to Heritage Acres:

- From Interstate-90: Take Fairmont Exit 99 (Co Rd 39) South. At the four-way-stop, turn left (east) and follow Lake Avenue for approximately 1.0 mile. Heritage Acres is located on the south side of Lake Avenue between the bridge and the armory.

For more information on the 3rd Crop Demo Plot Tour, please contact Jill Sackett – Extension Educator, Conservation Agronomist – University of Minnesota Extension and Rural Advantage at 507-238-5449 or sacke032@umn.edu

WEIGH YOUR GREEN COMMITMENT AT THE ECO EXPERIENCE

St. Paul, Minn. -- There are plenty of scales at the Minnesota State Fair: for weighing produce, livestock and even midway-goers. An exciting new interactive exhibit at this year's state fair, the Eco Scale Challenge, allows Eco Experience visitors to see the effect their choices at home and on the road have on emissions of carbon dioxide.

Home energy use and transportation for the average household are responsible for approximately 21 tons of carbon emissions a year, according to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Even small changes can add up to big reductions. For instance, if visitors move the transportation slider on the Eco Scale to carpool or bus just twice a week, the scale points to a yearly carbon savings of half a ton. Committing to proper vehicle maintenance, which lowers emissions, cuts another half ton. Energy-saving actions at home, like turning off unneeded electronics, washing clothes in cold water, and lowering the temperature of the water heater, cuts another half ton of carbon.

The Eco Scale Challenge not only allows visitors to see how their actions lighten their impact on the environment, but allows them to see how tradeoffs in their decisions work. Other categories on the scale include reducing/recycling, renewable energy, sustainable yard, saving energy, and eating local foods.

As visitors travel through the Eco Experience, they'll receive a stamp as they learn how they can help the environment and, for kids, collect a prize at the end.

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 fair. Since 2006, more than one million visitors have attended the 25,000 square-foot exhibit to learn more about clean water, saving energy, climate change, healthy local food, transportation, green building and remodeling, and other ways to lead more eco-friendly lives.

Discover easy and uniquely Minnesota ways to go greener in your daily routine by exploring cutting-edge green technologies and having fun with interactive displays, kids' activities, performances and more. More information and schedules are at <http://www.ecoexperience.org>.

Agritourism Workshop

On Thursday, August 20, there will be an Agritourism Workshop coordinated by Renewing the Countryside (<http://www.renewingthecountryside.org/>) along with others and sponsored by Minnesota Grown & North Central SARE. If you are interested in developing an agritourism enterprise on your farm or expanding agritourism in your community, this is an event you don't want to miss. Successful local agritourist business owners Audrey Arner, Kristi Fernholz, Chuck Ellingson and Charlotte Haugen will discuss the ins and outs of agritourism. You can register for this workshop by go to the web site: <http://milanagritourismworkshop.eventbrite.com/> and filling out the on-line form.

319 Water Quality Funding

MPCA posted a list of the 319 proposals that are to be funded in 2010:

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/cwp-319.html> Projects in the Minnesota River Watershed include:

- Cottonwood River Native Vegetation Water Quality – Minnesota Department of Agriculture
- Minnesota River Community Clean-Ups for Water Quality – Friends of the Minnesota Valley
- Rush River TMDL Implementation Project for Fecal Coliform – Rush River Watershed
- Minnesota River Tributary Phosphorus and Flow BMPs – Scott Watershed Management Organization
- Lower Minnesota River Dissolved Oxygen Elevation Project – Renville County
- Redwood River Watershed Nonpoint Pollution Reduction Project – Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area

Organic Community Gardening Open House

The Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry celebrates the 14th year of Organic Community Gardening on Good Counsel Hill with an Open House. The event is scheduled for Saturday Aug. 22, 10am-2pm. We invite the public to come see what it's like at the gardens. We have tours, workshops and a potluck lunch planned. It's all free and all are welcomed. *Join us for tours, a potluck lunch, workshops, and refreshments.*

10:00 a.m. – Tour of the Community Gardens

11:00 a.m. – "Dehydrating the Harvest"
with Barb Lamson, master gardener & passionate cook

11:30 a.m. – "Community Supported Agriculture Farms (CSAs): *WHAT ARE THEY?*"
Liza & Joe Domeier from Pehling Bay Farm

12:00 p.m. – Potluck Lunch! *(All are welcomed)*

1:00 p.m. – "Cooking with Solar Ovens"
Linda Ganske

The Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry is located at 170 Good Counsel Drive in Mankato. For more information about either program call Lisa Coons at the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry at 389-4272 or e-mail lcoons@ssndmankato.org. The Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry is an educational ministry of the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Contact: Lisa A. Coons; Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry; School Sisters of Notre Dame; 170 Good Counsel Dr.; Mankato, MN 56001;

Turning turkey poop into power – MinnPost

By Kevin Ronnan

With around 49 million turkeys raised each year, Minnesota is No. 1 in the country for turkey production. And with that many gobblers comes a lot of you know what. One company has figured out how to turn all that poop into clean, profitable power.

Fibrowatt operates a plant in Benson, Minn., that burns all that turkey poo to make electricity. Plant Manager Greg Langmo explains how 100 daily truckloads of this turkey litter are producing enough energy to power 44,000 homes, as well as the plant itself.

THE TWENTY-FIRST ANNUAL ST. CROIX RIVER RESEARCH RENDEZVOUS

October 20, 2009 at the Marine on St. Croix, Minnesota and Sponsored by [St. Croix Watershed Research Station](#)

Since 1989, the St. Croix River Research Rendezvous has been a significant forum for the presentation and discussion of scientific investigations centered on the watershed of the St. Croix River. We are inviting the submission of papers for oral or poster presentation at the 2009 Rendezvous.

Papers may cover plans, current research, research findings and related experiences focusing on the St. Croix River and its surrounding landscapes. A dedicated poster session will be scheduled during the day. Abstracts will be printed and made available to Rendezvous participants and the scientific community in general. We encourage you to participate by presenting a paper or poster in the comfortable setting and atmosphere of Warner Nature Center, Marine on St. Croix, Minnesota.

Abstracts should be submitted via e-mail to researchstation@smm.org. Please indicate your preference for oral or poster presentation.

Abstracts are limited strictly to a single 8.5" x 11" page and may include a single figure. Each abstract will consist of title (IN CAPITAL LETTERS), author(s), and affiliation(s). The abstract narrative then follows. Please provide **suggestions for reading** with no more than two (2) citations for those wishing further details of the research subject.

DEADLINE Friday September 11, 2009
FOR
SUBMISSION:

FOR FURTHER [St. Croix Watershed Research Station](#)

INFORMATION: 16910 152nd Street North
Marine on St. Croix, Minnesota 55047
(651) 433-5953 phone
(651) 433-5924 fax
researchstation@smm.org

Or
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/stcroixriverrendezvous.pdf>

Chippewa River Watershed Project Photo Contest

The CRWP Photo Contest and Calendar have been a great outreach tool that we're once again seeking submissions.

The Chippewa River Watershed Project is sponsoring a photo contest and seeking photos that feature the Chippewa River Watershed, including its many tributaries and lakes. The winning photos will be published in a 2010 calendar and will be featured on our website and various publications.

The "Best in Show" winner will have their winning photo professionally matted and framed. Photo submissions are due to the Chippewa River Watershed Project by September 15, 2009.

Photos can be submitted digitally or as traditional photos. Photos must be taken in the Chippewa River Watershed and should include a feature a river or other water/water quality theme. Photos should be taken within the last five years. Registration Forms MUST accompany photos to be eligible for the contest.

Contact me for more information. Please pass this onto family and friends who may be interested. I am looking forward to seeing a lot of wonderful photos of the Chippewa River Watershed. Thanks, Jennifer Hoffman; Watershed Specialist; Chippewa River Watershed Project; 629 North 11th Street, Suite 17; Montevideo, MN 56265; 320-269-2139 ext 120.

Photo Contest Poster: <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/chippewariverphotocontest.pdf> and registration form: <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/chippewaregistrationform.pdf>

Minnesota Trails Initiative announces membership campaign

The Minnesota Trails Initiative (MTI) has been working for 12 years to make the vision of a trail across the state from Ortonville, down along the Minnesota River to Le Sueur, then along the Cannon River to Red Wing a reality. Missa Varpness, MTI's summer intern said that a legal decision soon to be made by the Minnesota Supreme Court could clear the way for trail development between Wegdahl and Granite Falls. That positive decision could be huge for our area communities as it would help to attract young people and families to live and work in this area.

Montevideo resident, Anna Moore says that "Trails could provide a stronger link between the communities of Granite falls and Montevideo, and increase recreation and activity amongst young and old alike." "I think that trails being in a lot of people to do biking and it encourages them to get out walking or biking. We can get all over town riding on the trails without worrying about being in the streets," says Carrie Christenson.

Public help is needed to make the case for support of the trails to our elected officials and the public in general. To that end, MTI is starting a campaign to raise money to help in this effort. A mail campaign is about to begin and Varpness announced that a new Facebook Group called "Minnesota Trails Initiative" has just been posted. If you have an interest in the trails system in the area, watch for new postings of events as well as announcement of new YouTube videos. Connecting with others that feel that the creation of a trails system in our area would be a positive idea with much benefit to all citizens.

Grant Opportunities:

Clean Water Partnership Funding

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) is accepting proposals for Clean Water Partnership (CWP) grant and loan funding as of July 20, 2009. Proposals will be accepted from local governmental units interested in leading a nonpoint source pollution control project to protect or improve water bodies. Priority for funding will be given to projects preventing degradation of unimpaired waters. For a project to be considered a protection/prevention project, proposers will need to document that the water body(ies) being addressed is currently meeting state water quality standards for a particular pollutant of concern, or has not been assessed but is known to be support beneficial uses.

MPCA anticipates allocating more than \$2 million for grants and about \$2 million for loans this year. Eligible applicants for CWP grants and loans include watershed districts, tribal authorities, cities and counties, and watershed management organizations.

MPCA will accept two types of proposals:

1. Resource investigation/diagnostic study projects monitor, assess and develop a diagnostic study on the status of a water body(ies), and also develop an implementation plan to address the needs of the water body(ies). Resource investigation projects are only eligible for grant funding.
2. Implementation projects will implement activities identified by a comprehensive assessment and planning process in the watershed or around the water body of concern. Such assessment must consist of an MPCA-approved CWP Phase I, or equivalent diagnostic study and implementation plan. Implementation projects are eligible for both grant and/or loan funding.

There is a \$250,000 limit on each grant funding request. There is no limit for a loan request. The due date for proposals is 4:30 p.m. CDT September 18, 2009. Proposals must be sent electronically to the CWP Proposal Mailbox: CWP-319.grant.program@pca.state.mn.us. CWP Grants will be administrated via standard three-year grant agreements. Proposers who are awarded funds will be able to begin project work as early as the beginning of 2010. For more information, send an email to CWP-319.grant.program@pca.state.mn.us or call Pete Fastner at 651-757-2349.

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 places 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/>

August 28th and 29th is a **Mussel Weekend** – presentation and hike. A presentation will be given on August 28th (Friday) starting at 7:00 p.m. at the Ney Nature Center outside of Henderson on Hwy 19 and a hike on August 29th (Saturday) starting at 9:00 a.m. at Red Jacket Park (2.5 miles south of Mankato off of State Highway 66). Be prepared to get wet and dirty. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/musselpresentation09.pdf>

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:

[Walz champions organic farmer cause](#) (Owatonna People's Press). Congressman Tim Walz is on a mission to give organic farmers a fighting chance.

[Twin Cities businesses set up 'giving gardens' that yield produce for food shelves](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). Twin Cities businesses are shunning manicured lawns on their corporate grounds in favor of 'giving gardens,' where employees and other volunteers raise produce for food shelves.

[Healing with Minnesota soil](#) (Quad Community Press). Local family strives to eat, live healthy by buying locally grown food.

[Lawyers, non-profits shed light on wind industry](#) (New Ulm Journal) Farmers, landowners, city and county officials packed a Springfield Community Center meeting room Tuesday to listen to industry experts shed light on wind energy development issues.

[Efforts To Save Minnesota's Poisonous Snakes](#) (WCCO TV). The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is working to keep poisonous snakes around.

[Housing rebound may stall on climate law, GE, builders say](#) (Bloomberg News). Legislation requiring new U.S. homes to be more energy-efficient threatens to smother a rebound in the housing market, homebuilders say.

[GM: New Volt gets 230 mpg](#) (Associated Press). General Motors Corp. said Tuesday that its Chevrolet Volt rechargeable electric car should get 230 miles per gallon of gasoline in city driving, more than four times the current champion, the Toyota Prius.

[Gas prices, trail upgrades contribute to biking boom](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Bicycle traffic in Minneapolis increased 15 percent from 2007 to 2008, pushed apparently by a combination of high gas prices, continuing trail and infrastructure development and other factors.

[New study approach could improve water quality](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). A pilot project in the Red River Valley could improve how Minnesota monitors water quality statewide.

[Researchers find high levels of estrogen in wastewater](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Researchers at the University of Minnesota have discovered high levels of estrogens from plant sources in some industrial wastewater.

[Naming rites begin for anonymous creek in Scott County](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). An anonymous creek between Shakopee and Jordan may soon honor the family whose property it crosses. But naming, or renaming a site, can be an unwieldy process.

[Youth Farm also growing leadership and community in a St. Paul garden](#) (MinnPost). One local group, called Youth Farm and Market Project, is all about teaching youngsters to garden while teaching them something about themselves.

[Chickens may come home to roost in St. Paul](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The city might make it easier for residents to keep the birds.

[Bowstring becoming focus of DNR bluebill die-off attention](#) (Minnesota Outdoor News). During the past two fall migrations, bluebills by the thousands have perished at northern Minnesota's Lake Winnibigoshish as a result of parasites that infect the birds.

[River otter's return a sign of healthier Mississippi](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Trapping and pollution almost drove the river otter out of Minnesota.

[Studies offer new insights into causes of deformed frogs](#) (MinnPost). New studies from two groups of researchers working half a world apart just added important insights into this tantalizing environmental puzzle – while leaving a full explanation still out of reach.

[Almanac: Duck harvest, hunter numbers continue to fall](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Last year, for the first time in 20 years, the state sold fewer than 100,000 state duck stamps.

[Canoe route doesn't have input from Native community](#) (Twin Cities Daily Planet). A proposed canoe route through the Twin Cities portion of the Mississippi River seeks to host thousands of children at camp grounds built upon Native American holy sites along the river.

[State officials outline more budget cuts](#) (Associated Press). Gov. Tim Pawlenty's solo budget-balancing plan drew closer to completion Friday, when his administration announced another \$13.6 million in cuts that will hit tax and human services bureaucracy, Twin Cities transit and natural resources programs.

[Property owners oppose new access on northeastern lake](#) (Minnesota Outdoor News). The state DNR has had opposition to new lake accesses in the past, but this might be the first time residents of a lake have banded together to block an access on the grounds that it could bring invasive species other than plants; they've also demanded a statewide moratorium on access development.

[Moss-based pool filter shows promise as chlorine alternative](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). A moss-based water filtration system testing in St. Paul this summer has shown promise as a way to keep pools clean while using fewer chemicals, city officials said.

When the well's dry, we know the worth of water. – Benjamin Franklin

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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