

The Multifaceted Carp – Mankato's Moment on the Stage by Henry Quade

Mankato, Minnesota had a "moment on stage" as a result of local entrepreneur, Armin Kleinschmidt's idea that canned carp could provide a delicious and valuable food source for the military and civilian citizenry during WWII. The history of carp in this county has been a series of swings from respect to disdain. First introduced as a popular immigrant food source, today carp is considered by some a valuable recreational and food resource and by others a pest and a danger to the environment. The author gives us a historical perspective on carp, details the history of Mankato's carp canning venture and discusses environmental impacts and entrepreneurial ventures regarding carp today.

This book (\$12.95) is available exclusively at the Blue Earth County Historical Society Heritage Center Museum Store (415 Cherry Street, Mankato). For more information, <http://www.bechshistory.com>

Our View — Water resources will be key to development - The Free Press (August 01, 2009)

Water resources are emerging as a key to community development in the Mankato region, the state and in the nation as a whole.

Recent local developments suggest water and its use may become a point of controversy in the Mankato region and southern Minnesota. The state of Minnesota has plans to conduct a major monitoring effort to determine the use and level of the Mt. Simon Aquifer that serves much of the Mankato area and indeed other parts of Minnesota. A small controversy has already surfaced in that regard. Local governments had some objection to paying for the study and, as a result, the hand of the state, some say heavy hand, came in and pressured North Mankato by saying it would require more conditions on its water permit if the city didn't help pay for the monitoring study. Indeed, these water permits, or permission to use water, may be an emerging public battleground.

In another case of water controversy, conservationists in southeastern Minnesota are calling on Olmsted County to enforce long-standing rules that require farmers to have 50-foot buffer strips between streams and crops on their land. While the rule has been in place for years, experts agreed it hasn't been enforced completely. Citizens calling for enforcement of these laws may put some farmers in a fighting situation.

Of course, clean water, and the use of water for drinking and industrial production, has public benefits. Everyone benefits from clean and relatively cheap water. That's why it would behoove communities and regions to set up structures to deal with water controversies before they detract from community development.

In some cases, appropriate oversight already exists. The Soil and Water Conservation Districts are helping ease the controversy over farmland buffers in Olmsted County. And nonprofit groups have emerged with the single purpose of preserving quality water resources and bringing public attention to their use.

Groups such as a Coalition for Clean Minnesota River and Clean Up our River Environment are citizen groups that seek grants that will help clean up water resources in the Minnesota River Watershed. Minnesota State University also has the Water Resources Center that provides data and studies that detail the condition of the rivers in the Mankato region.

It will be important for these groups to share resources, work together and develop some kind of public report card to let the community know how we are doing with water resources. There may be such report cards already, but if there are, they need more public exposure.

The Free Press will do its part to bring water resource issues to light, as we've already done on a number of occasions.

We must remember, quality water resources add to community development which can then lead to economic development.

How Green Is Your Job? – Conservation Minnesota

In the new [online summer issue of Conservation Minnesota magazine](#), we hear from three Minnesotans with jobs in new and growing environmentally friendly businesses. The magazine's theme is the successful link between our state's economic health and conservation. Despite a struggling national economy, Minnesota is poised to benefit greatly from investments in "green" industries from wind energy to home insulation to biofuels. Thousands of jobs will emerge to help take us through the 21st century. The online magazine features several videos and opportunities for readers to share stories with us.

Minnesota already has an estimated 56,000 green jobs, and that total could rise beyond 70,000 thanks to the state's strong renewable energy standard. Click the video image below to hear from Doug Hamilton, President of Silent Power; Tony Czech, Solar Electric Installer; Jerry Lilyerd, Owner of Sun Energy.

All this green job talk leads us to ask how green is your job?

Add the points for each of the items below that apply to you:

- Your work directly substitutes more energy efficient, clean energy, waste prevention, water conservation or other green technologies and practices for conventional technologies and practices (5).

[Click here](#) to take the rest of the quiz.

Agroecology Summit Coming Soon

The 2009 Agroecology Summit will be held Friday, August 21, 2009 from 8:00am to 5:00pm at Willow Lake Farm near Windom, Minnesota. With its native grasses, wetlands, ponds, and waterways, Willow Lake Farm is well-situated to demonstrate the advantages of adding conservation practices to conventional agriculture.

Presentations will be given during this event. Topics include: the geologic history of Southwestern Minnesota, lake sediment cores dated and analyzed, wood chip bioreactors, controlled drainage, and water quality.

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.

Vineyard and Winery Tour to be Held

JANESVILLE, Minn. (08/10/2009) – Rural Advantage, University of Minnesota Extension and Winterhaven Vineyard and Nursery have combined efforts to host a Vineyard and Winery Tour. This event will be held Monday, August 10, 2009, from 1:00pm to 3:00pm in Rural Janesville, Minnesota.

Winterhaven Vineyard was established in the spring of 2000. The vineyard currently covers over 10 acres with over 6,000 vines, and growing. There are 17 different varieties at this time and adding more each year. Winterhaven is focusing on the newest cold hardy varieties.

Winterhaven Nursery was established during 2001. For two years the nursery plants were grown indoors. These plants were potted, live growing plants. In the spring of 2003, nursery stock begin to be grown outdoors in nursery beds. Winterhaven now sells many bare-root grape vines. A greenhouse is being utilized in order to supply new varieties sooner as potted plants.

2010 will bring another new beginning for the Winter family of Winterhaven Vineyard and Nursery. In April 2010, Indian Island Winery will open its doors to the public. The winery will also be owned and operated by the Winter family and is located in close proximity to Winterhaven Vineyard.

The Vineyard and Winery Tour will begin at the farm of Ray Winter. There, attendees will be given a tour of the vineyard. The second half of the tour will require a short drive to the site of the new winery. Attendees will then be given a sneak peek of Indian Island Winery.

For directions or further information, please view the Winterhaven Vineyard and Nursery website (www.winterhavengrapevines.com) or contact Jill Sackett, Extension Educator, Conservation Agronomist for University of Minnesota Extension and Rural Advantage at 507-238-5449 or sacke032@umn.edu

New NOAA chief brings attention to dead zone -

By JANET McCONNAUGHEY - Associated Press Writer

The "dead zone" off the coasts of Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas, where there is too little oxygen in the water for anything to live, is getting new federal attention under President Barack Obama's administration.

Jane Lubchenco, head of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, has scheduled a teleconference Monday with Nancy Rabalais, who has been studying the problem, called hypoxia, since 1970 and is currently measuring this year's hypoxic area.

"We've got a new administration, a little more environmentally conscious," NOAA spokesman Ben Sherman said Wednesday. "Dr. Lubchenco is a research scientist who has studied the dead zone. She believes it's a national issue, not just a Gulf of Mexico issue."

Lubchenco, Rabalais and other officials and scientists planned to announce the zone's current size and talk about its implications and plans to reduce it. "We want to raise some of the issues behind it and some of the debate about the changes needed to shrink it," Sherman said.

R. Eugene Turner, the Louisiana State University scientist who first linked the dead zone to nutrient runoff from the vast Mississippi River basin, said, "It's the first time anybody in NOAA has done this. I think they're raising the visibility a little bit."

There are more than 500 hypoxic areas worldwide, about 250 of them in U.S. waters, researcher Robert Diaz of Virginia Marine Institute wrote in an e-mail Wednesday. "Hypoxia associated with human activity has now been reported from every coastal state," including Alaska and Hawaii, he wrote.

The Chesapeake Bay alone has a dozen such areas. The Great Lakes and areas off the Pacific Northwest also are areas of concern, according to the NOAA news release. "It's not like the head administrator needs convincing it's an issue," said Turner, who also is Rabalais' husband. But, he added, any federal agency is "a big ship and a small rudder."

Based on the amount of nitrogen flowing down the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers, he predicted in June that the area is likely to be 7,450 to 8,456 square miles. The record is 8,848 square miles, in 2002. In a paper recently published in the peer-reviewed journal "Conservation Letters," Benjamin S. Halpern of the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis looked at hypoxic areas worldwide and ranked the Gulf's as the most affected by what people are doing on land.

"The idea that we have an administration that not only embraces scientists but puts scientists in leadership positions gives me great hope for these kinds of legacy issues like the dead zone, like Louisiana's loss of coastal wetlands," said Aaron Viles, campaign director of the Gulf Restoration Network.

Scientists say that fertilizer and other runoff from farms and cities all the way up the Mississippi and its tributaries feed summer algae blooms that deplete oxygen in waters along the bottom of the gulf. Without quick action, it could threaten the fisheries worked by the largest fishing fleet in the Lower 48 states, the National Research Council reported in December.

In June 2008, the Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Watershed Nutrient Task Force called for cutting nitrate and phosphorus levels in the basin by 45 percent to reduce the hypoxic area by half. "The last administration pretty much let it lie," said Turner. He said any indications of whether there will be real action may come when the task force meets in Des Moines, Iowa, in September.

Much of the runoff comes from farms - both from fertilizer and from animal wastes. In one example of an idea for government intervention to help reduce farm runoff, Iowa's agriculture department asked in February for \$31 million in federal money to test a plan to encourage farmers to turn some of their fields to wetlands that would absorb the chemicals. The federal money would pay half the cost of replacing old drainage pipes with newer, bigger ones that could boost yields enough to more than offset the loss of land.

Perennials for Food and Fuel

BENSON, Minn. (08/14/2009) – The role of perennials in agriculture is a varied one. Perennials can provide food, fuel, and fiber to a growing world. If you would like to learn more, please join Prairie Horizons Farm and their partners for "Perennials for Food and Fuel: Managing Diversity on the Landscape". This event is a two-part field day focused on sustainable agriculture and perennial crops. Mark your calendars for Friday, August 14, 2009.

The morning will begin with the Prairie Horizons Farm Tour / 3rd Crop Walk-n-Talk from 9:00am to 12:00pm. Listen as the owners of Prairie Horizons Farm guide attendees in rotational grazing on certified organic pasture, Lowline Angus production and marketing, and 3rd crop species.

Stay for the afternoon and participate in the Production Conservation on Working Lands / Pope County Working Lands Initiative Tour from 1:00pm to 5:00pm. This tour will include the following: rotational grazing systems, multi-species grazing, cooperative grazing, native perennial grasses and legumes for biomass production, invasive species control, native remnant prairies, public/private partnerships, and innovations for increasing the acreage of well-managed, high quality grasslands.

Both farm tours are FREE of charge. Lunch will be served to those who RSVP no later than August 7th. To register for this event, please contact Mary Jo Forbord at 320-239-4054 - sustainablefarming@hcinet.net or Jill Sackett at 507-238-5449 – sacke032@umn.edu

Directions: Prairie Horizons Farm is 11 miles north of Benson on State Hwy 29, or 11 miles south of Starbuck on State Hwy 29. Look for the Prairie Horizons farm gate on the east side of the highway.

Project and Research Partners include: Rural Advantage, Productive Conservation on Working Lands, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Minnesota DNR, Pope County Working Lands Initiative, Chippewa River Watershed Project, Pope County Soil and Water Conservation Service, NRCS, Pope County FSA, USDA Agriculture Research Service, and the University of Minnesota.

2009 ECO EXPERIENCE WILL FEATURE NET-ZERO ECO HOUSE

St. Paul, Minn. -- A 2,200-square-foot, net-zero home that generates as much energy as it consumes in a year will be featured at the Eco Experience at this year's Minnesota State Fair.

Created by SALA Architects, the 2009 Eco House is a modern-design home with four bedrooms and two baths. Construction on the house began July 22 by Showcase Renovations and Mike Otto Builders, and will be completed in time for the fair.

An Eco House has been featured at the Eco Experience for two years. This year's Eco House includes several innovative, eco-friendly features, including:

- **Net-zero:** The Eco House is a net-zero home, which means it generates as much energy as it consumes in a year. Net-zero is different from homes that are off the electric grid in that it generates energy from the sun during the day, and stores that energy in the utility grid during the peak utility load times.
- **Solar Heating:** The Eco House has a south-facing working facade that incorporates photovoltaic and solar hot water panels into the architecture. This aids in the production of energy and is designed to also serve the many other needs of the house, such as summer shading, winter passive solar heating, water collection, and operable thermal blanketing. At the same time, the thick, insulated north wall stops wind from penetrating the house. The north side is constructed of structurally insulated panels that are easy to disassemble and reuse, which also helps the Eco Experience stay true to its mission of reducing waste.
- **Solar Chimney:** Another new feature for this year's Eco House is a solar chimney that heats incoming fresh air in the winter and helps with natural ventilation in the summer.
- **Outdoor Features:** The Eco House features a green roof on the carport, raised beds to grow vegetables, a rain garden with native plants, and a pervious driveway to soak up rainwater.
- **Indoor Features:** Inside, the Eco House features a low-flow showerhead, a toilet that has a gray water sink system, LED lights, and a kitchen countertop made of reclaimed walnut shells.

Minnesota State Fair visitors will be able to see the Eco House at the Eco Experience from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Thursday, Aug. 27, through Monday, Sept. 7. The Eco Experience is in the Progress Center, at the corner of Randall and Cosgrove (look for the 123-foot-tall wind turbine blade).

A partnership between the Minnesota State Fair, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, other state agencies and dozens of organizations and businesses, 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, local food, transportation, green building and remodeling, and other ways to lead more eco-friendly lives.

At the Eco Experience, fair-goers can discover easy and uniquely Minnesota ways to go green in their daily routines by exploring cutting-edge green technologies and having fun with interactive displays, kids activities, live performances and more. For more information, go to <http://www.ecoexperience.org>.

Release the swarms. Beekeeping now legal in Minneapolis – MinnPost
By Ken Ronnan (July 30, 2009)

Ever wanted to keep bees in Minneapolis? Well, now you can. Beekeeping, which had been banned for 34 years, has been legal in the city since June. Would-be keepers can expect an initial city permit to cost \$100 and then \$50 annually, and they need permission from neighbors to start operations.

Supporters think urban beekeeping could be a great boost to the bee populations, which overall, has been mysteriously declining in recent years. Honeybees are one of the main pollinators of plants and trees, not to mention all the delicious regurgitated honey they produce.

Job Announcements:

Resource Technician

The Heron Lake Watershed District (HLWD) has a full-time opening for a Resource Technician in the HLWD office, located in Heron Lake, MN. The main responsibilities for this position will be implementing an environmental education program, seeking outside funding for HLWD programs, and promoting, planning and inspecting Best Management Practices.

The activities related to the education program would include designing and hosting presentations, workshops, and other educational materials. For seeking outside sources, the applicant must have strong technical writing skills. This position would provide technical assistance to HLWD residents interested in installing Best Management Practices related to soil and water conservation. Experience in surface water monitoring would also be beneficial. This position requires assisting with a wide variety of programs administered by the HLWD.

For a complete job announcement,
<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/heronlakeresourcetechnician.pdf>

Events:

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/>

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

Water Quality Articles:

[16-year-old gets grant to plant](#) (Faribault Daily News). 16-year-old Annemarie Keller was awarded a \$400 grant in March from the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education program to plant a garden and ultimately run a stand and sell her produce.

[Organic farmers hope trucks increase business](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Farmers in southeastern Minnesota hope to capitalize on a growing interest in local foods, and have launched a trucking business to haul their produce direct to office buildings in the Twin Cities.

[Opinion: For farm reform, regular politics won't cut it](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). One of the more neglected areas of national security policy has been agriculture. A strong economy underpins America's national security, and our nation's rural economy is closely linked to Wall Street and Main Street. With agricultural products still accounting for almost 10 percent (\$115 billion) of American exports, we cannot neglect farm policy as we seek to rebuild a foundation for economic recovery.

[Future of farmland program in question](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). A popular Dakota County program that has kept about 6,000 acres of land off-limits for development is approaching a turning point as its initial funding dwindles.

[Companies weigh proceeding with S.D. coal-fired power plant](#) (Associated Press). Five power companies will decide this fall whether to move forward on a proposed \$1.6 billion coal-fired power plant that would serve more than a million customers in Minnesota, the Dakotas, Montana and Iowa.

[Our View — Energy key place for stimulus dollars](#) (Mankato Free Press). We need roads, we need bridges and federal stimulus money can help with that, but recent investments in Minnesota energy infrastructure may pay off even more in the long run.

[Geothermal systems heating up](#) (Mankato Free Press). Natural gas bills can drop dramatically with geothermal heating/cooling.

[Older home gets fitted with geothermal](#) (Mankato Free Press). Kathy Brynaert cautions that patience is required for anybody thinking about installing a geothermal heating and cooling system.

[Home-based wind turbines not living up to the hype](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Independent studies of home-based wind turbines show they often fail to generate as much electricity as their makers claim they will.

[Thy neighbor's energy usage](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). A pilot program applies a jolt of behavior modification.

[Thefts of lady's slippers alarming](#) (Associated Press). Minnesota's state flower, the showy lady's slipper, can't help drawing attention. But lately, the beautiful wild orchid — pink and white with a distinctive pouch-like shape — has been attracting thieves.

[Wild parsnip out of control](#) (Fillmore County Journal). Drive down just about any road in this part of the state and the ditches are crowded with a weed that can get up to four feet tall or more that is topped with an umbrella (flat topped clusters) of hundreds of yellow flowers producing numerous seeds.

[Alexandria lakes tainted by zebra mussels](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Lake Le Homme Dieu and six other connected lakes at Alexandria have been officially designated as infested waters, making it illegal for boaters to transport water from them. Officials found zebra mussels in Le Homme Dieu in late June.

[Gulf's 'dead zone' much smaller than predicted](#) (Associated Press). The Gulf of Mexico's "dead zone" — where there is too little oxygen in the water for anything to live — is less than half the size predicted earlier this year but also unusually severe, a scientist said Friday.

[Drought '09: Issues arise in east-central Minnesota](#) (Minnesota Outdoor News). While lack of summer rainfall in parts of Minnesota has been enough to send lawns into submission, it's likely the cumulative effect of several consecutive summers with below-normal rainfall is to blame for lake levels low enough to cause access problems.

[Drought '09: Issues arise in east-central Minnesota](#) (Mankato Free Press). Trees are stressed, grass is crispy, but watering seems wasteful. Conscientious citizens wonder what to do.

[U of M putting more effort into researching organic production](#) (Agri News). Special funding from the 2007 Legislature is helping the University of Minnesota increase their research efforts into organic production.

[Invasive zebra mussels linked to toxic blue-green algae blooms](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). As if there aren't enough reasons to keep zebra mussels out of Minnesota lakes, add one more: toxic blue-green algae blooms.

[History-making landfill do-over in Washington County](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Hazardous 3M trash buried decades ago in Washington County is being dug up and will be reburied with a protective lining.

[State agencies outline \\$11 million in budget cuts](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). State finance officials have detailed \$11 million in spending cuts that government departments and agencies will absorb in the current fiscal year. The cuts are part of Gov. Tim Pawlenty's larger unallotment plan that erased a \$2.7 billion budget deficit.

[Robert Thorson finds Minnesota lakes above average](#) (MinnPost). When Robert Thorson looks at a lake, he does not see the same things you see.

[Ag Official Urges Minn. To Eat Local This Week](#) (Associated Press). State Agriculture Commissioner Gene Hugoson is challenging all Minnesotans to eat locally grown foods this week.

[Organics have no more nutrients, study says, but that's not really the point](#) (MinnPost). Just as more Minnesota grocery stores go organic, along comes a study from Britain that declares that organic foods contain no more nutrients than conventionally produced foods.

[\\$3 million from stimulus to clean up diesel engines](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). The Minnesota Environmental Initiative has been awarded a \$3 million federal stimulus grant to clean up diesel engines in the state.

[Almanac: Lessard Council sets five planning meetings](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council will hold five planning meetings over the next two weeks, at which about 20 invited conservation professionals will address varying regional conservation goals.

[Ethanol plant defaults on loans](#) (Fergus Falls Daily Journal). The operators of a Fergus Falls ethanol plant are facing serious financial difficulties, according to Otter Tail County officials. Otter Tail Ag Enterprises has defaulted on loans, county auditor Wayne Stein told members of the Otter Tail County Board of Commissioners this week.

[It really is cooler](#) (New Ulm Journal). If you still don't believe we're having an abnormally cool summer, New Ulm Public Utilities has the stats to prove it.

[Controversy likely ahead when duck limits get set](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Minnesota duck hunters will have the usual limit of two wood ducks daily this fall in a season that will last 60 days. Or the woodie limit might be changed to three daily.

[Another invasive plant takes root in Lake Minnetonka](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Flowering rush is the fourth invasive species to be found in Lake Minnetonka. But, so far, there's no evidence of zebra mussels.

[Nick Coleman: Nature is out there, if you'll just notice](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). There's been some silly talk this summer about how Americans who are unemployed should be taking advantage of their "free time" by thinking of themselves as enjoying "fun-employment."

[One silver lining of the economic downturn](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Less is more: People are buying less stuff and throwing less away, meaning less energy spent hauling and more landfill space.

[DNR seeking \\$24.5 million for state AMAs and WMAs](#) (Minnesota Outdoor News). Conservation would receive a huge shot in the arm if the capital investment proposals made by the DNR and Board of Water and Soil Resources come to fruition.

*Climb the mountains and get their good tidings.
Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees.
The winds will blow their own freshness into you...
while cares will drop off like autumn leaves. – 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,

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