

New canoe landing on Blue Earth

By Dan Linehan - Free Press Staff Writer – May 6, 2009

Canoeists on the Blue Earth River will have a new landing and parking lot this summer just south of Mankato thanks to Blue Earth County. County Engineer Al Forsberg said county staff can construct the gravel parking lot, trail and canoe access to the river during their spare time this summer. It could be paved over and otherwise enhanced in future years.

It'll be located at the river's intersection with County Road 90, on the southeast side of the river (on the right side for paddlers going with the current). The design could change, but the current plan includes a trail of about 500 feet.

There's an existing access about a mile away, on County Road 33 at Jones Ford, but its steep path down to the river makes it dangerous, Forsberg said. Area canoeist Brand Frentz agreed that Jones Ford access unsafe and said canoeists have thought for years County Road 90 was the best place for an access.

There's plenty of room there and the river is calm. He says the most popular canoeing around here is taking the Blue Earth from the Rapidan Dam through the rapids, which end near Jones Ford. He thought "some people might take out at Jones Ford no matter what because that's when the excitement is over," but Forsberg said Jones Ford will be closed when the new access is completed.

The new access will also have a small gravel parking lot, which Mankato canoeist Bob Zoet said is the most important part of a landing. The existing Jones Ford access has no lot, and the roadside can get busy.

New Water Trail on the Redwood River

The Redwood River is also now a state water trail thanks to Senator Dennis Frederickson. The stretch from Marshall to Redwood Falls has been included on the Minnesota River 2 map (Granite Falls to State Hwy 4). All of water trail maps can be found at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/watertrails/az.html>.

MPCA TO BEGIN FIELD WORK THROUGHOUT MINNESOTA

Monitoring crews are beginning the second year of an intensive 10 year effort to assess the condition of rivers, streams and lakes in Minnesota. The work is being funded by the Clean Water Legacy Act that was passed by the legislature and signed into law by Governor Pawlenty in 2006.

The majority of the monitoring activities will focus on watersheds. There are 81 major watersheds in Minnesota, each comprised of a network of largely interconnected streams, lakes and wetlands. The intent of this monitoring effort is to develop a complete picture of the conditions of the various water body types within each watershed.

The monitoring in rivers and streams will be carried out by two biological monitoring units. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency biological monitoring staff are divided into a north team located in Brainerd, and a south team in St. Paul. This summer, the north team will be working in the watersheds of the St. Louis River, Buffalo River and the Elk/Clearwater/Rice Rivers. The south team will be working in the watersheds of the southern St. Croix, Cedar and Chippewa Rivers. In addition to these crews, several local partners will assist with stream monitoring, funded by MPCA grants.

The stream monitoring is designed to measure and evaluate the condition of rivers and streams by studying the biology, including fish, aquatic invertebrates, and plant life as well as habitat and water chemistry. Examples of aquatic invertebrates include insect larvae, crayfish, snails, small clams, worms and leeches.

Stream water chemistry is monitored to provide information about the quality of the water in which these fish and insects are living.

Lake monitoring crews will sample more than 50 lakes in the same watersheds. The lake monitoring teams will focus on nutrient concentrations and other water chemistry parameters to assess lakes for their ability to support recreational uses.

There are certain expectations for what the biology and water chemistry should look like at a given sampling location. If actual samples differ significantly from those expectations, the sampling location could be considered impaired. If that happens, the MPCA would look more closely at what could be causing impairments and find ways to correct problems.

In addition to these watershed activities, the south biological monitoring team plans to sample 65 wetlands around the state as part of a multi-year, interagency effort to better understand wetland water quality and quantity in Minnesota. Other MPCA monitoring teams will track water quality trends at major rivers, and work with the Department of Natural Resources to establish permanent flow and water quality sampling stations at the outlets of most major watersheds in Minnesota. The MPCA also relies on a large contingent of volunteers and local partners statewide to collect water quality data on lakes and streams, which is used to assess water quality.

For more information about the MPCA's condition monitoring program activities, visit <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/biomonitoring/index.html>

Natural Fertilizer from Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry

We here at the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry have been mixing a natural fertilizer that we have used in the Community Gardens with great success. We've also been selling it on a limited basis. Today, I offer it to you!

We're selling the fertilizer for \$5/lb. Comparable fertilizers sell for about twice as much. If you'd like some, just e-mail me and we'll get it ready for you. You'd have to pick it up at the Red Barn at the Community Gardens in Mankato. –Lisa A. Coons; Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry; 170 Good Counsel Dr.; Mankato, MN 56001; (507)389-4272; lcoons@ssndmankato.org; www.ssndmankato.org/earth/

River, Culture & History Weekend

Despite my highest hopes and boldest predictions, it does not appear that we are going to get the rain that is needed to make the Yellow Medicine River navigable. *So we have decided to cancel that trip* and instead encourage everyone who was thinking of going on the Yellow Med to meet this Saturday May 16 at 2:00 p.m. at [Lentz Landing](#) on the **Chippewa River**. **Paul Wymar** of the [Chippewa River Watershed Project](#) will be your guide. CURE volunteers **Scott Wilson**, **Gary Lentz** and **Danny Kurkiewicz** will also be there to assist you.

Other guided trips on Saturday May 16th include:

- John White with Exchange Students on the Minnesota River. Meet at [Prien's Landing](#) by 1:00 p.m.
- Greg Wyum and Yours Truly on the Lac qui Parle. Meet at [Earthrise Farm](#) at 1:00 p.m.
- Brian Wojtalewicz and Scott Tedrick on the Pomme de Terre. Meet at [Trinity Lutheran Church](#) in downtown Appleton by 11 a.m. Thanks to Brian and CURE volunteers for going ahead of time last weekend on the PdT to clear away deadfall. Everybody tipped except Brian. He wants everyone to know that for this trip, you should bring a dry bag with a change

of clothes. Experienced paddlers are encouraged to step up to the PdT challenge. Beginners will have a better time on the Chippewa or Minnesota.

After we are all done paddling we will meet at the [Watson Lion's Park](#) for food, music and storytelling. The Watson Lion's are serving up BBQ's and beans from 4 to 7 for a \$5 suggested donation. Feel free to bring your own food, a dish to pass and something to drink. Camping is free. Bring lawn chairs and instruments.

Duane Ninneman is getting his **History Talk** together about how European and Yankee religious movements influenced the white settlement of the Upper Minnesota River Watershed. This will not be a debate of any kind, just a sitting around and sharing what we know about who came to this area in the 1870's and 80's and what kind of religious communities they created. It is a fascinating story for the intellectually and historically curious.

I am reading the [Wordy Shipmates](#) by Sarah Vowell right now as a backdrop to this History Talk. My, how interesting it is to be an American. A little bit of introspection might do us all some good -- not to mention a relaxing float on a river! Hope to see you this weekend! - Patrick J. Moore - rivervoic@cureriver.org

Green Living Expo - River Hills Mall

Come out on May 16th (Saturday) from 10 am to 9 pm and May 17th (Sunday) from 11 am to 6 pm for the Green Living Expo at River Hills Mall in Mankato. Local businesses are coming together to educate customers and display their special service or products related to the idea of sustainability and being environmentally friendly. For more information <http://www.riverhillsmall.com/html/Events.asp>

Minnesota River Board

Monday – May 18th is the Minnesota River Board meeting at Savage McColl Pond Environmental Learning Center in Savage. The meeting starts at 10:00 a.m. with a lunch along with a tour and presentations from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. On the agenda is the Executive Director's Evaluation, Request for Funding from the Crystal Loon Mills Clean Water Partnership, Conservation Marketplace Policy Committee and FY2010 Workplan Discussion. The packet of material for Monday's meeting (5/18/09) is now available on our website at the following link: http://mrbd.mnsu.edu/org/mrbd/meetings_full.html

May 2009 – WaterFront Newsletter

Check out the WaterFront newsletter at:

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/tmdl/waterfront/index.html>. In this issue: **Funding Updates**

- Clean Water funds up to legislators
- State, federal resources partner to restore wetlands
- Conservation funding guide now online

Worth Noting

- 'Tis the season to monitor water
- EPA launches Healthy Watersheds
- MPCA revises bacterial protocols
- Protect water by following pesticide labels

Events

- Conferences address erosion, water and more

Kids' Peace Garden – Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry

Yep, it's the **Kids' Peace Garden** - where kids dig in and learn about gardening! The Community Gardens at Good Counsel are the place to be to grow delicious food and learn about Earth's cycles, compost, and the animals that visit and live in the gardens. (Scholarships available to those in need by calling 507-389-4272.) In this spring session **we'll plan and plant a pizza**

garden, a salsa garden, a traditional Native American Three Sisters' Garden, flowers, and potatoes. We'll harvest our first meal together - a spring salad! Thursdays, May 21 - June 18, 6 pm - 7:15 pm. \$35. Register through Community Education by calling 507-387-5501.

Since our standing-room-only workshop on composting with worms, many have asked for more information and resources for buying these red wigglers. The Recycling Association of Minnesota has a good video and other resources on worm composting basics as well as red worms for sale. Their website is www.recycleminnesota.org. Happy gardening, worm composting or whatever activity brings you closer to Earth this season! – Lisa A. Coons; **Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry**; 170 Good Counsel Dr.; Mankato, MN 56001; (507)389-4272; lcoons@ssndmankato.org; www.ssndmankato.org/earth/

Job Opportunities:

NACD Communications Associate and Web Manager

The National Association of Conservation Districts is seeking a Communication Associate and Web Manager. The selected candidate will maintain and improve extensive website, write for newsletters, participate in conference planning and assist with member outreach and presentations. A full job description is available on NACD's [website](#). They are seeking a candidate that has strong communication, writing and computer skills; experience with web design/maintenance; and a bachelor's degree in related field. Please email a copy of your resume and two writing samples to jobs@nacdnetwork.org to apply.

Events:

May 16th (Saturday) is the **2009 Wheelies Expo & Family Bike Ride** from 9 a.m. to 12 noon at Huber Park, Shakopee. This bike ride will go from Shakopee to Chaska and back for a total of 10 miles. There will be a light refreshment and healthy snacks. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/familybikeride.pdf>

May 16th & 17th (Saturday & Sunday) is the **River, Culture & History Weekend** at Watson Lion's Park on the Chippewa River near Watson, MN. Six paddling trips will be offered: Pomme de Terre River, Minnesota River, Chippewa River, Lac qui Parle River, Yellow Medicine River and Hawk Creek. For more information go to: <http://sites.google.com/a/cureriver.org/river-history-weekend/>

May 26th (Tuesday) is a **Community Conversation – “Would Mankato Benefit from a Co-op?”** from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Elk's Nature Center, Mankato. During the past couple of years, conversation around the topic at hand has happened over coffee, in the grocery store line and as people of like minds and preferences cross paths. Meetings held recently have determined that there is a strong community interest in exploring the possibilities. Join interested community members the last Tuesday of each month and keep moving this question into action mode.

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

Water Quality Articles:

[Arts, outdoors spending plan moves forward in House](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). A Minnesota House Committee today approved a bill that distributes tens of millions of dollars from a new dedicated sales tax for the outdoors and the arts.

[Our View: State moves ahead on bioenergy](#) (Mankato Free Press). Minnesota government leaders and Gov. Tim Pawlenty can take pride in moving Minnesota forward with a strategic energy policy that is leading the country.

[Green energy laboratory approved for Minnesota State U](#) (MinnPost). Mankato officials are excited that the Legislature has given final approval for a \$1.5 million green-energy laboratory at Minnesota State University.

[Plastic bags and recycling: A primer](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Question and answer about plastic bags and recycling.

[Legislature OKs legacy outdoors package](#) (Pioneer Press). The Minnesota Legislature gave overwhelming approval Friday evening to bills that direct more than \$300 million over the next two years to outdoors habitat, parks and trails, water cleanup and the arts.

[Ben Lieberman: Ethanol wasn't so pretty up close. Wind won't be, either](#) (Pioneer Press). Repeating past mistakes has long been a part of Washington's energy policy, but Congress used to wait a while before making the same blunder again. Not anymore. New legislation requiring wind energy closely resembles the ethanol mandate that sparked a backlash just last year.

[Fixit: Efficient furnace the best bet for saving energy](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Karen Youso recommends putting in a high-efficiency furnace or boiler over putting in new windows.

[Governor signs BPA ban, chemical oversight bill](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Governor Tim Pawlenty signed a bill Friday restricting the sale of children's drinking products made with Bisphenol A, or BPA.

[Study: large number of deer ticks carry Lyme disease](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Before you go out and enjoy this spring's warm weather, you may want to take a few precautions to avoid deer ticks.

[Opinion: A cautious step on BPA](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). A new law best summed up as taking an abundance-of-caution approach has put Minnesota on the front lines of the battle over a chemical called Bisphenol-A (BPA).

[Testing eagles determines river contaminants](#) (KSTP TV). The National Park Service will test young bald eagles along the Mississippi River to determine the level of contaminants in the water.

[Clean Water Act needs restoration](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Today's generations may have trouble grasping just how horrifying the nation's water quality was a few decades ago. But a 1969 Time magazine article quickly puts it in perspective.

[In an industry known for asphalt, Murphy Warehouse grows green](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The company turned a dirty-water problem into a retention pond and rain gardens to water its new front yard of prairie grasses. Rain gardens and acres of prairie grasses bring the company praise for pollution abatement, resource stewardship -- and big savings.

[Paul Aasen and Paul Austin: From the toilet to lakes, streams, wells](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Legacy Amendment money should be used to improve the handling of raw sewage.

[Waves of opposition greet riverfront preservation bills](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). House and Senate measures would allow new state development rules that some property owners and cities say could restrict their rights.

[Our View — MSU is capitalizing on green](#) (Mankato Free Press). All the talk about creating green energy and green jobs is turning to reality as state funding comes through for a green-energy laboratory at Minnesota State University.

[State report finds little contamination in water supplies](#) (Associated Press). Minnesota health officials say annual tests of community drinking water supplies in the state show little evidence of contamination.

We are cutting out our kidneys to enlarge our stomachs. – Eric Freyfogle, Illinois law professor, on the destruction of wetlands - 1991

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