

### Minnesota River Board Meeting

The next Minnesota River Board meeting is scheduled for **Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup>** (Monday) at the **Savage McColl Pond Environmental Learning Center** (13550 Dakota Avenue South, Savage, MN). The Executive Committee will meet at **9:00 am**. The Full Board meeting will begin at **10:00 am**. A lunch and tour of the facility will follow the Board meeting.

Please RSVP by Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup> so that we have an accurate count for lunch. Thank you,  
**Karnell W. Johnson**; Minnesota River Board; MSU Mankato; 184 Trafton Science Center South; Mankato, MN 56001  
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### Paddling the Upper Minnesota River Watershed – Patrick Moore

Get your canoes and kayaks ready for the 18th annual CURE Rivers & History Weekend May 16 & 17! Make plans now to camp out at [Watson Lion's Park](#), canoe the rivers of the area, learn some history and make some new friends. Details about the weekend can be obtained by calling the CURE office toll free at 1-877-269-2873 or by visiting <http://cureriver.org/> and clicking on "[CURE News](#)"

Word has it that the **Yellow Medicine** and **Hawk Creek** are too low but the other area rivers are fine. In preparation for the 16th & 17th, **Brian Wojtalewicz** is leading an advance scouting expedition on the **Pomme de Terre this Saturday, May 9th** to clear away dead fall on the river. Brian is looking for a few good volunteers to help him. If you are able and willing, [reply to this e-mail](#) and we'll get you connected.

CURE is all about fostering *a reverence for the world around us*. We say: "Start with a river and go from there." There is a lot to be thankful for and amazed by right in our own back yard. Hope to see you soon in the "Boundary Waters of Southern Minnesota!" Patrick J. Moore;  
[rivervoice@cureriver.org](mailto:rivervoice@cureriver.org)

p.s. Bring your instruments, lawn chairs and ghost stories to the campfire concert starting at 8 p.m. on Saturday, May 16th.

### DNR Water Trails Web Site

Check out the new DNR water trails Web site featuring in-depth information on Minnesota's 30 state canoe and kayak routes at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/watertrails/index.html> to find water levels and trip planning basics and to download free maps showing campsites, rest areas, and river miles. Podcasts with descriptions and stories about canoe and kayak trips will be posted regularly, so check back often (Minnesota Conservation Volunteer magazine).

State Canoe and Kayak Routes for the Minnesota River:

- Minnesota River (Big Stone Dam to Fort Snelling),
- Pomme de Terre River,
- Chippewa River,
- Cottonwood River,
- Watonwan River

### Volunteers Needed

Bueno Cinco de Mayo to you! I have need for some volunteers to help prepare the Kids' Garden for the season. Can you help with this project? I'm planning a time this Saturday 10 am - 1 pm. Please come. No gardening experience necessary. It's not a huge area and many hands make the work go so much faster than I am able to do on my own. Stonyfield Farms is offering a free 1 year subscription to those interested. [Here is the link.](#)

With gratitude - -Lisa; Lisa A. Coons; **Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry**; 170 Good Counsel Dr.; Mankato, MN 56001; (507)389-4272; [lcoons@ssndmankato.org](mailto:lcoons@ssndmankato.org); [www.ssndmankato.org/earth/](http://www.ssndmankato.org/earth/)

### **Fishing the Minnesota River**

Looking to add more diversity, mystery and excitement to your fishing outings? Head for the Minnesota River.

To read the complete story, click on this link:

<http://news.dnr.state.mn.us/index.php/2009/05/04/minnesota-river-offers-mystery-diversity/#more-42986>

### **GET THE LEAD OUT FOR THE FISHING OPENER**

As you sort through your tackle box dreaming of the big one you're going to catch this year, remember to make it a safe year for wildlife. Search your equipment for lead sinkers and jigs, and replace them with lead-free fishing tackle. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) says that lead is a toxic metal that poisons birds and other wildlife, including Minnesota favorites such as loons and eagles.

When lead sinkers are lost through broken fishing lines or other means, birds can inadvertently eat them. Water birds such as loons often swallow lead sinkers when they scoop up pebbles from the bottom of a lake or river to help grind their food. Eating just one lead sinker can poison a loon. Eagles can ingest lead by eating fish that have themselves swallowed lead sinkers.

While it is hard to get an accurate count of water birds and birds of prey that die from eating lead fishing tackle, research indicates that fishing-related lead poisoning can be easily avoided by using nontoxic alternative sinkers and jigs.

In loon breeding areas -- the Great Lakes, northeastern United States and eastern Canada - studies show that lead poisoning accounts for about 25 percent of dead loons found by researchers. In some areas, up to 50 percent of loon mortality is caused by lead.

This year, the MPCA and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) partnered with the nonprofit angling group, Recycled Fish (<http://recycledfish.org>), to offer a special, "Sustaining Anglers, Fish & Ecosystems," (S.A.F.E.) Angling Kit that contains lead-alternative sinkers and biodegradable lures, as well as hooks and other supplies.

"No group is better positioned to be stewards of our natural resources than anglers," said Teeg Stouffer, Executive Director of Recycled Fish.

The kits are available at Joe's Sporting Goods in St. Paul and on the Red Rock Wilderness Web site at <http://www.redrockstore.com>

Tips to help anglers safeguard wildlife and themselves:

- Use fishing weights made from non-hazardous materials such as steel, tin and bismuth.
- Dispose of old lead sinkers and jigs at your local hazardous waste collection site.
- Wash your hands after handling lead fishing tackle or cleaning your tackle box.
- Ask your favorite retailer to stock non-lead fishing tackle.

In many states, lead-free tackle isn't just a good idea -- it's the law. Restrictions and bans of lead fishing sinkers and jigs are becoming more common, both in the U.S. and in other countries. (Contact: Rebecca Helgesen, 651-757-2421 Saint Paul, Minn.) For more information, visit the MPCA Web site at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/oea/reduce/sinkers.cfm>

### **EPA: Ethanol crops displaces climate-friendly ones**

WASHINGTON — The Environmental Protection Agency said that corn ethanol — as made today — has a worse impact on climate than gasoline when land use changes are considered. But EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson said today that future improvements in production technologies are expected to make ethanol and other biofuels more climate friendly than gasoline. The EPA, in a preliminary assessment of ethanol, said worldwide changes in land use must be considered when assessing ethanol's impact on climate change.

Some scientists said that by using more land to grow ethanol crops, there is an increase in greenhouse gases as vegetation that absorbs carbon is replaced. Meanwhile, President Barack Obama issued a directive to find ways to get automakers to make more cars that can run on ethanol and to make ethanol more widely available at fueling stations. (By H. Josef Hebert, Associated Press)

### **MARSHALL'S DOWNTOWN PROJECT GENERATES PENALTY FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF HAZARDOUS WASTE RULES**

St. Paul, Minn. -- The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and the city of Marshall have reached an agreement that resolves alleged violations of hazardous waste rules related to a major downtown street and utility project. The city has paid a \$28,250 penalty and is required to complete a subsurface soil investigation.

The hazardous waste originated when the project encountered contaminated soil and groundwater during street and utility reconstruction along Main Street in 2007. The soil and ground water were contaminated by tetrachloroethene and trichloroethene, which may cause liver problems and increase cancer risk in humans.

The project initially encountered the contamination in 2006 during soil excavation. In February 2007, the city entered the project site into the MPCA's Voluntary Investigation and Cleanup (VIC) program. Under the federal Land Recycling Act, the program promotes clean-up of sites by parties not responsible for previous contamination.

However, contractors operating at the direction of the city during reconstruction activities failed to account for about 5,500 gallons of contaminated slurry generated during underground, directional drilling activities. The waste drilling slurry was discharged to unlined pits next to the construction site, and later transported to a holding tank at the city's wastewater treatment facility.

Alleged violations of hazardous waste rules consisted of failure to evaluate the waste drilling slurry and contaminated soil in a timely manner, manage and dispose of it properly, receive necessary permits, and notify the MPCA of a discharge with potential to cause pollution. The agreement requires the city to submit and implement an additional site investigation report and a final response action implementation report, which includes final waste disposal records to the VIC program for review and approval.

A stipulation agreement such as this one is a tool used to achieve compliance with environmental laws. When calculating penalties, the MPCA takes into account how seriously the violation affected the environment, whether it is a first time or repeat violation, and how promptly the violation was reported to appropriate authorities. It also attempts to recover the calculated economic benefit gained by failure to comply with environmental laws in a timely manner. For a comprehensive list of enforcement actions by the MPCA, go to the agency Web site at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/newscenter/enforcement.html>

The mission of the MPCA is to work with Minnesotans to protect, conserve and improve our environment and enhance our quality of life. Contact: Forrest Peterson, 320-441-6972

**MDA reminds farmers to help protect water quality by following pesticide labels**

ST. PAUL, Minn. - With spring fieldwork in high gear, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) reminds all agricultural professionals about the importance of observing legally required pesticide application setbacks to protect state water resources.

"Minnesota farmers understand the importance of doing our part to protect our natural resources, and that includes following setback requirements," MDA Commissioner Gene Hugoson said. "Many products have setback requirements, so it is important to carefully read the pesticide product label before using a product."

Atrazine, and pre-packaged or tank mixes containing atrazine, carry label-specific application setback requirements. These application setback requirements are measured as the distance between a sensitive area and the area of application. Legal requirements include a 66-foot application setback from the area where field runoff enters streams, rivers and certain types of tile inlets, a 200-foot setback from lakes and reservoirs, and a 50-foot setback from wells (including irrigation wells) or sinkholes.

Some insecticide products used to control soybean aphid require both a 10-foot vegetative filter strip, and an application setback of 25 feet for ground applications or 150 feet for aerial applications near surface waters.

Weed and pest control might be difficult in areas where effective products cannot be used. If corn or soybeans are planted near surface water, sinkholes or wells, use of certain pesticide products may be prohibited. Options in these areas include not applying products that carry such restrictions, not cropping these areas, or using alternative products that do not carry application setback or filter strip requirements.

Carefully reading labels and working with an Ag professional or chemical dealer can resolve the selection of weed and pest control products. Commercial applicators responsible for pesticide applications must follow label requirements and cannot be expected to apply products in areas where such use is a violation of the label.

In addition to any label requirements for application setbacks and vegetative filter strips, the MDA strongly encourages adoption of voluntary Best Management Practices for use of all agricultural herbicides, especially when using products containing acetochlor, alachlor, atrazine, metolachlor and metribuzin. Also, growers and applicators should be aware that Minnesota shoreland rules are being revised by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. These rules require agricultural land within specified distances of public waters to be maintained in permanent vegetation or operated under an approved conservation plan (Minnesota Rules, Chapter 6120). Contact your county zoning administrator for details. **This release is available on the MDA website at <http://www.mda.state.mn.us>**

### **Events:**

May 7 – 8 (Thursday & Friday) is the **2009 Lakes and Rivers Conference** at the Mayo Civic Center in Rochester. Choose from more than 50 informational presentations on a variety of topics. For more information or to register: [www.minnesotawaters.org](http://www.minnesotawaters.org)

May 12<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday) is **Rasmussen Woods in Springtime Bloom Hike** from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Elk's Nature Center, Mankato. On this guided hike you will have the chance to experience the sights, sounds and smells of Rasmussen Woods in springtime bloom. Catch the woods waking up from its winter nap and set the stage for a season of plant identification in the woods or in your own backyard.

May 16<sup>th</sup> (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 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> (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 26<sup>th</sup> (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://mrbdc.mnsu.edu/calendar/index.html>

### Water Quality Articles:

[MPCA: Excel Dairy must clean up its act](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). A smelly northwestern Minnesota dairy faces tougher restrictions because uncontrolled gases from its manure basins have created a public health hazard for its neighbors.

[\\$300 million in environmental projects closer to reality](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Dozens of environmental projects to be paid for with new sales tax money are a step closer to reality, after a Senate committee vote Tuesday.

[Tree lovers to help bring conservation plan to seed](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Volunteers in Coon Rapids will plant thousands of trees to help fight invasive species.

[Biodiesel panel looks at reliability](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). As the Minnesota law requires increased concentrations of the fuel, many say more study of its performance is needed.

[Dakota County hunts for energy savings](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The county and cities are learning a lot about energy use and policy as they evaluate possible projects for federal stimulus money.

[Bisphenol-A and baby bottles are an unsafe mix, Senate bill says](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The Minnesota Senate has given preliminary approval to a bill that would ban the sale of baby bottles and sippy cups containing a chemical some consider a hazard.

[County board rejects amended trail agreement](#) (New Ulm Journal). The Brown County board rejected a second county-wide trail agreement Tuesday morning.

[Garden waters itself](#) (Austin Post Bulletin). A spot that used to hold water will sprout another place to collect the same thing -- although in a much different form.

[Groups pushing for passage of Clean Water Restoration Act](#) (Outdoor News). Conservation and sportsmen's groups in the state are asking Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., to support a bill they say will ensure protection of millions of acres of wetlands and thousands of miles of streams and rivers.

[Constitutional spending is taking shape](#) (Outdoor News). A Senate finance division was set earlier this week to assemble and approve a spending bill from three of the four pots of money created by the constitutional amendment voters approved last fall.

[Biodiesel use and debate set to rise](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). The amount of biodiesel sold in Minnesota will jump starting today. All diesel fuel sold in the state must contain at least 5 percent of the alternative fuel derived mostly from soybeans. That change is good economic news for struggling biodiesel producers.

[Minnesota PUC won't reconsider Big Stone II transmission lines](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission today rejected pleas to reconsider its decision approving construction of transmission lines into the state from a \$1.6 billion coal-fired power plant in South Dakota.

[Will Kaul: Citizens have plenty of input on utilities](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The facts on three new power lines came out in dozens of public events.

[Wind power: Tunnel vision at U](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). To improve efficiency of wind power, scientists at the University of Minnesota's St. Anthony Falls Laboratory think small scale.

['Light' goose population remains high](#) (Outdoor News). Another spring light goose season - the result of an ongoing federal "conservation order" - wrapped up this week, but indications are that despite the efforts of hunters, the population of snows, blues, and Ross' geese (collectively, "light" geese) remains high, and their Arctic breeding habitat continues to take the resultant abuse.

[Midwest gets \\$29 million for 'recovery' projects](#) (Outdoor News). Minneapolis - National wildlife refuges and national fish hatcheries across the Midwest will receive an infusion of nearly \$29 million as part of Congress' and President Barack Obama's "economic recovery plan," Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced earlier this week.

[Annis working to strengthen Minnesota's turkey industry](#) (Agri News). This year is shaping up to be challenging one for turkey growers, said Minnesota Turkey Growers Association's new president, Rahn Annis.

[How To Reduce Food Miles With Backyard Garden](#) (WCCO TV). It might be the bad economy forcing you to look for new ways to save or the idea that you and your family want to be a bit more "green". Whatever the reason, more and more people are planting vegetable gardens.

[Minnesota statewide news and notes](#) (Agri News). News on wind power, Children's 4-H Garden program, North Star Foods rebuilding, MN Milk Production, etc.

[Cows Invited To Sup In Minn. Wildlife Areas](#) (Associated Press). Drivers in western Minnesota may be surprised to soon see cattle grazing on several state and federal wildlife management areas.

[Ag education evolving](#) (Mankato Free Press). Some things about high school agriculture programs will never change. But some things are changing, too.

[Sandy Rummel: Water bill is based on science, long-term strategy](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). Not long ago, the discovery of perfluorinated compounds in some east metro communities made headlines. Later, volatile organic chlorides were reported in St. Louis Park and other communities. Meanwhile, Minnesotans are warned each summer about the number of fish from certain waters they can eat, and which lakes or rivers might be unsafe for swimming.

[Groups tussle over division of Legacy funds](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The hearing lasted well past midnight. Miss Twin Cities 2009 testified. So did advocates for zoos, a Russian art museum and an Irish cultural center -- even somebody from the State Bar Association. All were elbowing and jostling over a cascade of dollars headed toward arts and cultural projects from the state's Legacy Amendment.

[Climate debate heating up for Minnesotans in Washington](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Minnesota's members are getting put on the spot over energy legislation meant to slow global warming, and the debate splits on regional as well as party lines.

[Salons Start Recycling Hair To Help Environment](#) (WCCO TV). Ever wonder what happens to all that hair left on the floor after you get a haircut?

[Environment bill aids some counties](#) (Alexandria Echo Press). Minnesota counties with lots of state-owned land may like an environment spending plan that protects state payments they receive.

[Construction underway on house powered entirely by sun](#) (MN Daily). The University of Minnesota's solar decathlon team will be displaying the completed house at the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

*All across the world, in every kind of environment and region known to man, increasingly dangerous weather patterns and devastating storms are abruptly putting an end to the long-running debate over whether or not climate change is real. Not only is it real, it's here, and its effects are giving rise to a frighteningly new global phenomenon: the man-made natural disaster.*  
President Barack Obama

**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

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