

LIFE ON THE RIVER

May of 2009 witnessed commercial fishermen dropping their seines into the Minnesota River near New Ulm for the first time in nearly half a century and Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway photographer Ron Bolduan was there. The results were both unexpected and pleasantly surprising.

The Regional River History and Information Center of New Ulm invites you to view these images and other favorite memories and moments from Ron's years of wandering the river valley. This free to the public presentation focuses on the natural beauty, wildlife, recreation and other human activity taking place upon the river.

Where: New Ulm Public Library Basement
When: 7 PM Thursday November 19, 2009

A Note from Patrick Moore of CURE

I learned today at coffee at Java River that there was a success in catching the people who recently dumped their garbage and a deer carcass down at [Prien's Landing](#) in Montevideo. (He sent me a photo, but it is too grizzly to pass along.)

Public River landings are a popular place to drop off garbage and leftovers from deer butchering according to DNR Enforcement officer **Ed Picht**.

But the DNR is getting better at catching the unconscious perpetrators, thanks to cameras and help from the river loving public.

Ed said that one way that CURE could help would be to purchase more of these infrared cameras for placement at Public Landings along the river.

I told him I would tell you about it and see if there was interest in this idea. The cameras cost about \$300 each.

CURE is working with [giveMN.org](#) to set up an on-line giving web site where people could set up and designate a project like this to encourage others to help fund the placement of dumping deterrent cameras up and down the river.

There are other ideas too -- like our ["No Child Left Inside"](#) campaign.

Patrick J. Moore <http://www.cureriver.org>

p.s. There are new upcoming events posted to our - <http://www.cureriver.org> - check them out!

More notes from the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance October 20th Quarterly Meeting MN River Canoe Trail

Brad Cobb spoke on behalf of a sick Loran Kaardal, telling the group about the Green Corridor Project tentatively receiving the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program grant to work on developing a plan for a canoe trail in the middle section of the Minnesota River. It will be official once they get the letter. Even though it isn't official, this project – the Green Corridor – Minnesota River Trail – has been nominated for a Mid America Trails & Greenways Conference award.

According to Brad, a grant application will be submitted for other segments in the Minnesota River in the future. Volunteers will be needed to help promote the trail and its development in the other segments. The current stretch is for about 40 to 50 miles from Granite Falls to New Ulm. Randy Thoreson of the National Park Service will be coming to do a full presentation to the group in the future. Brad told the group to look for a press release about the grant in a couple of months. The grant pays for a National

Park Service employee to work on behalf of the group on coordinating the planning process, identifying funding sources, developing a stakeholder process.

Patrick Moore informed the group about the plan to remove the Minnesota River Falls dam below Granite Falls and what has happened so far. An open house was held by Xcel Energy which owns the dam and MN DNR in Granite Falls on October 1st. Barr Engineering is currently conducting a study of the dam and lowered the water level to see what the structure looks like. According to Patrick, Xcel Energy officials are looking for help in communicating the benefits of a potential dam removal to the general public. Ultimately it is Xcel's decision about what is to be done with the dam. Most likely the decision will come down to the cheaper option. Moore was told that Xcel has offered to sell the dam to Granite Falls and the Ethanol as long as those entities take over the liability and repair costs. A local group including the ethanol plant and golf course has spoken out against the dam removal.

The dam serves as an obstacle for migrating fish and a barrier for recreation paddling. Removing the dam would have a lot of benefits for fish migration and people using the Minnesota River. There could be a lot of economic benefit and impact to local communities by removing the dam.

Mankato Convening on Climate Change

Climate change is a concern for low-income communities and proposed solutions can create new opportunities. Learn more about issues and opportunities important to nonprofit, labor and faith organizations. Speakers include:

- Pat Benson, Minnesota Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy
- Leah Gardner, Minnesota Council of Nonprofits
- Southeast Area Labor Council representative

Details: Date: Thursday, December 3rd

Time: 1:00-3:00 PM

Location: Blue Earth County Historical Society, 415 E. Cherry St, Mankato

Directions and map: [Directions and Google Map](#)

Fee: Free, but please RSVP online.

To RSVP: [RSVP online now](#) - by logging in (password assistance available) and selecting "RSVP for Free Events, Briefings and Convenings."

MINNESOTA ENERGY ETHANOL FACILITY TO PAY \$1.15 MILLION ENVIRONMENTAL PENALTY

St. Paul, Minn. -- Minnesota Energy Inc. will pay a civil penalty totaling \$1,150,000 for a variety of alleged violations at the company's ethanol-production facility in Buffalo Lake. Occurring from 2006 to 2008, the violations were discovered during Minnesota Pollution Control Agency staff inspections of the facility, and through review of operational records the company is required to submit to the MPCA under its environmental permits.

\$250,000 of the penalty will be paid in cash, with the remaining \$900,000 taking the form of a supplemental environmental project (SEP). The SEP calls for the company to sell a water well that it had developed in anticipation of expansion and five acres of adjacent land to the city of Buffalo Lake for \$900,000 less than market value.

Many violations are alleged in the agreement, particularly the failure to properly operate an air-emissions control system called a "thermal oxidizer" that was required by a 2003 consent agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The unit had many operational problems and shutdowns in 2006-2008.

Other alleged violations include failure to inspect and maintain other production and pollution-control equipment; failure to report shutdowns and breakdowns of air-pollution-control equipment; failure to monitor and sample emissions and wastewater discharges according to permit requirements; exceeding

permitted wastewater discharge limits; failure to develop a stormwater management plan and manage stormwater as required by permit; and other recordkeeping and reporting violations.

Under the SEP in the penalty agreement, the company will sell a well that produces drinking water low in arsenic to the city of Buffalo Lake, whose existing water supply is high in arsenic. The well and associated five acres are about seven miles north of the city. The company agreed to sell the well and land to the city for \$900,000 less than market value. SEPs commonly are a component of environmental penalties, and may include environmental improvements to the facility or other projects to benefit the environment. Projects must be approved by the MPCA.

In addition to paying the civil penalty, the company agreed to resolve the violations through corrective actions, including specific plans on how it will ensure compliance with permit limits and prevent reoccurrence of the violations in the future. Those requirements have been met.

When calculating penalties, the MPCA takes into account how seriously the violations affected the environment, whether they were first-time or repeat violations, and how promptly they were reported to appropriate authorities. Penalties also attempt 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, refer to the agency's Web site at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/newscenter/enforcement.html>.

Water Quality Special Awards

The Minnesota River Board is offering special awards for projects relating to water quality and we could use 2-3 judges at the junior/senior fair on Feb. 6 and up to six judges at the elementary fair on May 1. If people are interested in volunteering in general, there is a registration form available at https://msufair.norsoft.net/Judge_Registration.aspx. If you are interested in volunteering as a special awards judge for the Minnesota River Board please contact Susie Carlin, at 507-389-6279 or susan.carlin@mnsu.edu for more details.

COOL, WET FALL POSES CHALLENGES FOR LAND-APPLICATION OF MANURE

St. Paul, Minn. -- October's cool, wet weather delayed more than the crop harvest. At some livestock farms, full manure basins created anxious moments for farmers awaiting harvested fields so they could land-apply manure. Fortunately, November's warmer, drier weather allowed the harvest and land-application to catch up.

Recognizing Minnesota's unpredictable weather, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) officials are developing advice for livestock producers who deal with the impact of wet weather on manure management.

Each fall after harvest, farmers pump millions of gallons of liquid dairy, beef and hog manure from storage basins and inject them into the soil as fertilizer for next year's crop. When land-applied at proper rates and setbacks from sensitive features, such as open water and drain tile intakes, the manure benefits crop production while minimizing the impact on water resources.

"If livestock producers find themselves in a bind, we really encourage them to seek out our feedlot staff for advice," says Randy Hukriede, an MPCA feedlot program manager. "By working together, we can find the best possible solutions. County staff, such as feedlot officers, extension and Soil and Water Conservation offices can help, too."

While planning for such situations is essential, many tools are readily available to manage livestock manure during adverse conditions. All suitable measures should be used to avoid overflows of liquid manure storage basins, and to keep surface-applied liquid manure outside the 300-foot setback from sensitive features.

After Dec. 1, feedlot owners with a National Pollutant Discharge Eliminations System (NPDES) permit who wish to apply liquid manure to frozen soil must notify their state feedlot program representative. This

notice should include an aerial photo that clearly outlines the location of the proposed land-application. It is also important to contact your county regarding any local ordinances.

Helpful practices

- Begin to land-apply immediately on portions of harvested fields that have dried sufficiently.
- Pump manure-storage basins partially and land-apply in spring.
- Look for other available fields belonging to neighboring farmers, or other approved manure-storage space.
- For better access to wet fields, fill tankers to less than capacity.
- Reduce the impact of manure applied to the surface of wet or frozen soil:
 - Avoid steep slopes; seek fields or parts of fields with less than 6 percent slope for solid manure, 2 percent for liquid manure. Or, apply to fields with greater than 30 percent residue.
 - Stay 300 feet away from sensitive features, such as surface waters and open tile intakes.
 - Till along contours to create furrows to capture any potential runoff.
- Avoid floodplain or flood-prone areas.
- Keep application rate low enough to avoid runoff or ponding during and after application.
- Check with the county regarding local ordinances.
- Report any discharges from land-application or liquid-manure-storage-area overflows to the State Duty Officer (Call 800-422-0798.), and take immediate action to reduce environmental impact, such as creating temporary berms to stop discharge; temporarily plugging culverts and drain tile intakes to prevent manure inflow; and soaking up liquid with absorbent material, such as hay, straw, cornstalks or wood shavings.
- Do not construct or modify your basin without approval from the MPCA or county feedlot officer.
- Do not store manure in unpermitted basins.

Be prepared: plan ahead.

While not much can be done about the weather, it is possible to be prepared to better deal with the impact of bad weather on manure management and land-application. A little more investment in storage, conservation practices, and planning can be a very cost-effective form of insurance. It also reduces the risk of economic loss of nutrients from surface-applied manure without incorporation.

- Arrange to have a portion of land-application acres planted with small grains and other early-harvest crops.
- Attempt some spring land-application to create more fall and winter manure storage.
- Install vegetated buffers and blind tile intakes to alleviate 300-foot setback.
- Develop a contingency plan.
- Ensure that all land-application equipment is calibrated and in good condition.
- Expand liquid manure storage capacity.

For more information, contact your MPCA regional office (Call 800-657-3864.) or county feedlot officer (See <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/hot/feedlots.html#contacts>.), or go to the MPCA feedlot Web page at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/hot/feedlots.html>

Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota

Tomorrow at 6 p.m. everyone who believes in creating our own children's museum here in Mankato will be celebrating the opening of The Amazing Castle, a national traveling exhibit at Madison East Center. If you haven't yet, it's time to RSVP. It's going to be the most AMAZING event yet!

You can RSVP by replying to this email and pay at the door, or you can now purchase your ticket on-line! We just upgraded our capabilities to accept credit card payments on-line, so supporting the Children's Museum has never been easier! To purchase your ticket on-line go to:

<https://app.etapestry.com/cart/ChildrensMuseumofSouthern/default/category.php?ref=3092.0.654470>

You can secure your tickets right now for the exclusive fundraising celebration. When you show up tomorrow, just tell the check-in folks you paid on-line and let the merry making begin!

To ensure tomorrow is a "knight to remember" teams of dozens of volunteers have been working day and night to create our biggest, most fun-filled event to date. It's important for our constituents to witness first-hand the impact of the Children's Museum in action. Your attendance is crucial in creating awareness

and demonstrating the community support needed to create something this special. More than anything, imagine all the fun to be had!

What: Celebrate the opening of a major traveling exhibit for children here in Mankato

Where: The old Walgreens storefront at Madison East (Go in the 1400 Madison Ave entrance next to the Mankato Clinic and you can't miss us)

When: Thursday, Nov 19th, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. (families can play in the exhibit for free starting at 4 p.m.)

Why: Support the community initiative to bring a children's museum to Mankato

How much: \$25 per person, \$5 ages ten and under, free for one and younger

Job Announcements:

Valley Stewardship Network, an exciting non-profit conservation group working in the Kickapoo River Watershed, is seeking qualified candidates for the Water Quality Monitoring Coordinator position. The current coordinator will be leaving effective January 1, 2010. Some training time in December with up to 25 hours per week beginning in January. Hours of training depends on qualifications. Work involves volunteer monitors, training sessions, data compilation and program development. Coordinator reports to Board of Directors. See attached job description. Send letter of interest to: VSN, 124 ½ South Main St., Viroqua, WI 54665 or via email to: vsngeneral@gmail.com

Job Description: Water Quality Monitoring Program Coordinator; *Reports to:* Executive Committee; *Supervises:* Volunteers; *Status:* Non-Exempt/Part-time; *Compensation:* Hourly wage + Fuel Costs

Overview: The Water Quality Monitoring (WQM) Program Coordinator is primarily responsible for planning, coordinating and delivering the VSN Water Quality Monitoring Program. S/he develops workshops and trainings, participates in the creation of WQM materials, provides assistance to partner organizations, researches WQM issues, maintains WQM database(s) and facilitates regular monitoring of VSN target rivers, streams, and tributaries.

Essential Responsibilities:

- Assist in developing annual WQM program plans and budget.
- Contribute to the planning and delivery of all facets of program work.
- Maintain database(s) of water quality data, WQM monitors and resources.
- Design and conduct educational workshops for schools and citizen monitoring.
- Design and conduct WQM training sessions.
- Maintain adequate supply and condition of testing equipment.
- Manage distribution of testing supplies and equipment.

Other Responsibilities:

- Attend one water quality event/workshop annually.
- Assist with program funding and grant development.
- Assist the Projects Coordinator as needed.
- Assist with other Stewardship / Education activities when needed
- Assist with community group support and development, when threats to water quality is evident

Knowledge and Skills:

- Bachelor's degree in relevant area and at least one year's work experience or four years relevant work experience.
- Strong organizational skills and excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Familiarity with water quality monitoring techniques and testing parameters.

Events:

On **November 18th (Wednesday)** is the **King Corn and Big River Double Feature** from 7:00-9:00 p.m. for \$10.00 at the Riverview Theater (3800 42nd Avenue South) Minneapolis, MN 55406. For information or for a student group-rate, contact Abby at abby@iatp.org or 612-870-3433.

On November 24th (Tuesday) is a **Lac qui Parle and Yellow Bank TMDL Informational Meeting** at the Canby Community Center (110 Oscar Ave.) from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. and 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Madison VFW (711 2nd Street). The purpose of the meetings is to review the TMDL process and preliminary findings in the watershed.

December 1st and 2nd (Tuesday and Wednesday) is the **Growing the Bioeconomy: Solutions for Sustainability Conference** at the University of Minnesota Continuing Education and Conference Center. Agricultural producers, landowners, community and business leaders, citizens and students interested in economic development and biorenewables are encouraged to attend and identify ways they can participate in agriculturally-based and forest-based solutions to the global climate change and energy supply issues facing Minnesota. Details and registration at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/biorenewables>

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

Water Quality Articles:

[Grant application will include trail between Minnecon and Riverside](#) (New Ulm Journal).

Application will include trail between Minnecon and Riverside.

[Energy seminar gives public insight on saving, conserving](#) (Marshall Independent). Energy seminar gives public insight on saving, conserving.

[Pawlenty shoots buck, but struggles to find it](#) (Associated Press). Gov. Tim Pawlenty shot a buck during the Governor's Deer Opener last weekend, but he and his hunting companions were unable to find the wounded animal.

[Living Green Expo cancelled for 2010](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). Next year's Living Green Expo has been cancelled due to budget cuts, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency said.

[Conservation Reserve cuts will affect farmers, soil, water, habitats -- and prices](#) (MinnPost). An old joke, more popular in urban than in rural areas, explains why farmers tend to wear seed caps with the bills pushed up off their foreheads.

[LqP goose hunting needs Arctic blast](#) (Minnesota Outdoor News). Time is running out on the Lac qui Parle Wildlife Management Area goose hunt, and still the "big push" of Canada geese to the area has yet to arrive.

[Windmill farm opponents prompt companies to pause](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Planned for Greenvale Township, the project originally called for 11 two-blade windmills.

[Community Clean-ups cut water pollution](#) (New Ulm Journal). A Community Cleanup project featuring local residents and leaders from Twins Cities environmental organizations is being made into a DVD to encourage other Minnesota communities to create water conservation projects.

[Groups push Christmas lights recycling effort](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). The Recycling Association of Minnesota collected 600 pounds of Christmas lights in a small town west of the Twin Cities last spring, just by handing out flyers to homeowners holding garage sales.

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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