

There are leaves drifting to the ground outside my office window so it must mean it's nearly time for our annual Earth Conference here at Good Counsel! We've been planning for months and I think you might agree that this looks like an exciting conference! We hold the Early Bird registration fee to a very affordable \$20 for the day which includes a local, sustainable lunch. I attach the brochure with all the details.

This year's conference theme "Crisis as Opportunity: Redesigning the Good Life" brings in keynote speaker Deborah Adele from Duluth. Out of her earth-based understanding of theology and yogic ethics, she leads us in a discussion that addresses the multiple crises facing the world community today (economic crisis, climate change, resource depletion, inequity among people) and how we might respond with intention to redefine and redesign the so-called "good life" for all people and the entire earth community.

- Date: Saturday, November 7th, 2009, 9am-3:30 pm
- Where: SSND Provincial House Conference Center
- Fee: \$20 before October 21 (\$15 student rate), After October 21st, pay \$30. Price includes, am coffee, homemade muffins and a sustainably produced lunch.

I hope you'll consider spending this day of conversation and reflection with us in November. If you are unable to open the attachment or any reason, feel free to be in touch and I will gladly send you a hard copy. Organically yours, Lisa A. Coons; Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry; 170 Good Counsel Dr.; Mankato, MN 56001; (507)389-4272; lcoons@ssndmankato.org; <http://www.ssndmankato.org/whatwedo/ministries/earth.php>

For more information: <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/earthconference.pdf>

Corn roast and program on Army Corps' Upper Mississippi River Initiative

The Izaak Walton League-Bush Lake Chapter invites the public to its annual Corn Roast and a presentation on the Upper Mississippi River, Sunday Sept. 20th. Corn Roast is at 4:30 pm. Presentation is at 5 pm. The Bush Lake Chapter is at 7515 Izaak Walton Road, Bloomington 55438. Please bring something to grill and a dish to pass. We will provide roasted corn, butter, hot grill, cold water, and condiments. The presentation is "Update on Upper Mississippi River Restoration," by Brad Walker, Upper Mississippi River Coordinator, Izaak Walton League of America.

The Mississippi River continues to flow to the Gulf of Mexico despite the many dams that we have placed in its path. Occasionally it reminds us, regardless of the hundreds of miles of levees protecting our developments built in floodplain areas, that it is simply tolerating us.

Our obsession with river management has taken a toll on the river ecosystems. These ecosystems have been in decline since the completion of the major dams and levees and are generally continuing to decline even though we have spent hundreds of millions of dollars on restoration efforts over the last two decades.

The primary reason for the construction of the dams, southward barge shipment of grains, has generally been flat or declining over the last couple of decades. Despite this trend, the US Army Corps of Engineers' continuously projects significant future increases in barge traffic and is pushing a major, expensive expansion of the lock system.

Mr. Walker will discuss the general condition of the river environment, with a bit of a history and background refresher, as well as the benefits of a large-scale restoration effort. Also included will be an update of the Corps' lock expansion and ecosystem restoration project, known as the Navigation and Ecological Sustainability Program or NESP, which was included in the 2007 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA).

Please rsvp by noon Saturday Sept, 19th to John and Mary Crampton, 952-884-6704, jcrampt@comcast.net

Special premiere screening of the movie *Fresh*

Learn about the farmers, thinkers and business people across America who are re-inventing the food system at 7 p.m. on Thursday Sept 17 at the Montevideo Community Center (550 S. 1st street). Free and open to all! For more info, contact Tom Taylor 320-269-2105 or visit <http://www.freshthemovie.com/>. Sponsored by the Land Stewardship Project.

The movie "FLOW" - <http://www.flowthefilm.com/> - will be shown again at Centenary Methodist Church, Second and Cherry Streets, on September 14 at 7:30 p.m. It is an award winning documentary about the world water crisis which has been labeled by experts as the most important political and environmental issue of the 21st Century. Irena Salina's documentary builds a case against the growing privatization of the world's dwindling fresh water supply. It focuses on pollution, politics, human rights, and the emergence of a world water cartel.

Interviews with scientists and activists reveal the rapidly building crisis on both a global and human scale. Besides identifying the problem, FLOW gives viewers a look at the people and institutions *providing practical solutions to the water crisis* and those developing new technologies, which are fast becoming blueprints for a successful global and economic turnaround. The film will leave you with the nagging question, "CAN ANYONE REALLY OWN WATER?"

Hazelnut Field Day in Lake City

Lake City, Minn. (09/09/2009) – Rural Advantage is hosting a hazelnut field day in Lake City MN, Saturday September 26, from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Minnesota Hazelnut Foundation member and grower Norm Erickson has over 4000 plants growing in his orchard and field day participants will have an opportunity to walk through the planting to see bushes in various stages of growth.

Morning activities include presentations on the MN Hazelnut Foundation, Upper Midwest Hazelnut Initiative, grower experiences and more. Afternoon activities include a walk through the orchard, demonstration of mound layering, and nut processing with value-added applications.

Current growers are encouraged to bring their largest nut for the "biggest nut contest". For more information and a complete agenda visit the MN Hazelnut Foundation webpage at <http://groups.google.com/group/mnhazelnutfoundation>

Directions to Field Day

- MN Hwy 63 from Rochester: As entering Lake City, look for St. Johns Cemetery. Directly after cemetery turn right onto South Cross Street. At T-intersection, turn right onto West Lakewood Avenue / Co. Rd. 9. Hazel field will be on right after elementary school.
- MN Hwy 61 from Winona: As entering Lake City, look for the marina. Turn left onto West Lakewood Avenue / Co. Rd. 9. Travel about 1.0 mile. Look for hazel field on right after elementary school.

For more information, please contact Jeff Jensen at the Rural Advantage office 507-238-5449 or jeff@ruraladvantage.org

Minnesota pheasant hunting prospects decline – Associated Press

St. Paul, Minn. (AP) — Minnesota pheasant hunters are expected to shoot fewer birds this fall. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources says its pheasant index is down 27 percent from last year and 27 percent below the 10-year average. The index had been above average for the past four years, which meant some of the best hunting since the mid-1950s and early 1960s. The DNR cites three factors in the drop. Last winter was moderately severe, some 72,000 acres of private land was removed from the Conservation Reserve Program, and cool, wet weather during the hatch appeared to reduce survival. Hunters should find pheasants in about the same abundance as 2004, when 420,000 roosters were

harvested. Harvests exceeded 500,000 roosters in five of the past six years. September 10, 2009 - (Copyright 2009 by The Associated Press. All Rights Reserved.)

Otter Tail Power Company Announces Withdrawal From Big Stone II

FERGUS FALLS, Minn., Sep 11, 2009 (GlobeNewswire via COMTEX) -- Otter Tail Power Company today announced its withdrawal -- both as a participating utility and as the project's lead developer -- from Big Stone II, a 500-to-600-megawatt coal-fired power plant proposed for near Milbank, South Dakota, with related transmission upgrades in South Dakota and Minnesota.

According to Otter Tail Power Company President and CEO Chuck MacFarlane, the broad economic downturn coupled with a high level of uncertainty associated with proposed federal climate legislation and existing federal environmental regulation have resulted in challenging credit and equity markets that make proceeding with Big Stone II at this time untenable for Otter Tail's customers and shareholders.

MacFarlane explained that Big Stone II contractual agreements require a commitment to proceed after the project receives all major permits, creating a financial obligation on each party that agrees to go forward. "Each Big Stone II participant is in a different position in terms of means and impact of raising capital and mechanisms for recovering those costs from customers," he said. "Given the legislative and regulatory uncertainties and current economic conditions, Otter Tail Power Company is unwilling to create a binding financial obligation of approximately \$400 million for its share of the project at this time."

Big Stone II had been scheduled to be on line in 2011, and now the plant would not begin operating until late 2015 at the earliest. MacFarlane said that the company no longer could delay the project to obtain greater clarity on -- and to mitigate -- risks unique to Otter Tail. Accordingly, Otter Tail chose to withdraw and allow the others to proceed. "We believe the project is important for the region, both in terms of adding baseload power and enhancing regional reliability," MacFarlane said.

While Otter Tail Power Company has invested more than \$300 million in wind energy generation during the last three years, MacFarlane added that dispatchable generation remains an important need for Otter Tail Power Company's customers. As a result, over the next three to six months, Otter Tail Power Company will continue to evaluate other options to meet its customers' need for reliable electricity.

MacFarlane also expressed his company's gratitude for the backing shown for the project. "Our company appreciates the support that customers, regulators, labor, business leaders, and political leadership have shown the project. We especially thank South Dakota elected officials and communities within the plant's vicinity for their commitment," he said.

FLD Biobaler WB55 Demonstrations to be Held in Minnesota

As woody and herbaceous biomass becomes more and more viable for renewable energy, equipment companies have started engineering machines capable of harvesting the biomass quickly and efficiently. One such company is FLD Biomass Technologies of Canada who specialize in the design and manufacturing of machinery for agricultural and forestry production. A number of organizations are proud to be funding a demonstration tour of FLD Biomass Technologies' FLD Biobaler WB55 in various locations around the state of Minnesota from September 17 to September 24.

The FLD Biobaler WB55 is an all-in-one tractor-pulled machine capable of cutting, compacting, and baling biomass up to four inches in diameter and 25 feet in height. This maneuverable machine has a rotating blade or hammer cutting system that has a low power requirement and produces naturally drying bales that can be transported using standard equipment. The Biobaler is suitable for many woody crops including: willow, poplar, aspen, alder, under story vegetation, and invasive woody vegetation.

FLD Biobaler WB55 Demonstration Tour Schedule:

- September 17 - Waseca - U of M Southern Research and Outreach Center (SROC) 12pm – 3pm
Willow/Poplar - Gregg Johnson's
Contact Info: 507-837-5617 johns510@umn.edu

Directions to SROC Site: From State Hwy 14 follow signage for State Hwy 14 West. Immediately look for Co Rd 27. It will take you past airport. Follow to Co Rd 57 and the road construction. Travel east about 1 mile to Agricultural Ecology Research Farm.

Note: Due to travel time, field day will start at 12pm.

- September 18 - Madelia – Rural Advantage and U of M Extension 10am – 3pm Woody Invasives - Jill Sackett's Contact Info: 507-238-5449 sacke032@umn.edu
Directions to Site: From State Hwy 60 take the Co Rd 9 Exit to Madelia. Immediately west of the on/off ramp is Co Rd 13 (Hammond Hwy). Travel about 5 miles west on Co Rd 13. The site will be on the north side of Co Rd 13 about 1 mile east of the town of Grogan.
- September 19 - Faribault – The Nature Conservancy 10am – 3pm Woody Invasives - Neal Feeken's Contact Info: 612-331-0738
nfeecken@tnc.org
Directions to Site: Faribault Wildlife Management Area is SE of Faribault. Travel South on Co Rd 45 for 1.0 mile. Turn East (right) and travel 0.5 mile on township road.
- September 20 - Afton - Belwin Conservancy 10am-3pm Woody Invasives - Eric Palmen's Contact Info: 651-436-5189 ext. 103
eric.palmen@belwin.org

Directions to Site: 1553 Stagecoach Trail South, Afton, MN www.belwin.org/directions/

- September 21 - Ogilvie – Ann Lake WMA - MN DNR 10am – 3pm Alders/Willows - Dave Pauly's
Contact Info: 763-384-7108
david.pauly@dnr.state.mn.us

Directions to Site: From Ogilvie, go 4.5 miles north on State Hwy 47.

Sponsors of the FLD Biobaler WB55 Demonstration Tour include: Belwin Conservancy, The Blandin Foundation, CINRAM – University of Minnesota, Iron Range Resources, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Power, The Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society, The Minnesota Sharptailed Grouse Society, The Nature Conservancy, Rural Advantage, Southern MN Initiative Foundation, University of Laval – Canada, University of Minnesota Extension, University of Minnesota Southern Research and Outreach Center – Waseca, The Wildlife Management Institute, and Woodcock Minnesota.

For more information regarding the scheduled demonstrations, please contact the listed contact person or Jill Sackett – Extension Educator, Conservation Agronomist – University of Minnesota Extension and Rural Advantage. 507-238-5449 sacke032@umn.edu

Hard-hitting documentary [FOOD INC.](#) -- the film the food industry doesn't want you to see!

- Showing on Wednesday (Sept. 23rd) and Thursday (24th) @ 7 & 9:30 PM in the lower level of the CSU at Mankato State
 - Showing on Friday (25th) and Saturday (26th) @ 8 PM in CSU 284
- Free for MNSU students, \$1 for others

In "Food, Inc.", filmmaker Robert Kenner lifts the veil on our nation's food industry, exposing the highly mechanized underbelly that's been hidden from the American consumer with the consent of our government's regulatory agencies, USDA and FDA. Our nation's food supply is now controlled by a handful of corporations that often put profit ahead of consumer health, the livelihood of the American farmer, the safety of workers and our own environment. Featuring interviews with such experts as Eric Schlosser (Fast Food Nation), Michael Pollan (The Omnivore's Dilemma) along with forward thinking social entrepreneurs like Stonyfield Farms' Gary Hirschberg and Polyface Farms' Joe Salatin, "Food, Inc." reveals surprising -- and often shocking truths -- about what we eat, how it's produced, who we have become as a nation and where we are going from here. (Fandango)

Greetings Region 9 Renewable, friends, and interested parties

You are invited to an exciting fall kick-off meeting for Region 9 Renewable on Friday, September 18, 9 AM at Region 9's new location (Mankato Civic Center Plaza - where Mankato City Offices are) in the Blue Earth River meeting room.

Reggie Edwards, Region 9 Executive Director will be presenting his proposal for a Renewable Energy District. We will also have as a guest speaker Christina Mills from [Windustry](#) who is hoping for lots of questions. Please pass the word along to anyone you think would be interested. Hope to see you there!
Katy, Region 9 Renewable Chair

CURE to Sponsor 2nd Annual "Crazy Kayak Race on Pomme de Terre River Sunday Sept.20

Clean Up the River Environment (CURE) is organizing a unique race event on the Pomme de Terre River this Sunday, Sept. 20, 2009 starting at 1:00 p.m. from the City Campground in Downtown Appleton. The race is open to anyone, but contestants should pre-register by calling CURE at 1-877-269-2873. Those who simply want to watch the race can do so from the footbridge over the Pomme de Terre River in downtown Appleton.

"This is an extreme kayaking event for crazy people who don't mind low water flows, crashing against rocks, possibly getting dumped in the river and jostled about by fellow Crazy kayakers, " according to Patrick Moore, CURE's Executive Director.

Admission to the race is free. The entire race is expected to last less than 10 minutes. According to race rules, contestants must have their own kayak, wear a lifejacket and enter at their own risk. Constants are asked to line up starting at 12:30 p.m. at the top of the newly established rapids on the Pomme de Terre River near the Trinity Lutheran Church Parking lot in downtown Appleton. At the sound of the starting gun, contestants will dash paddle (navigating the rocks) toward several flags strung across the river at the bottom of the rapids. The goal is to grab and tear off one of the plastic flags while paddling by. Only one flag grab per contestant will be allowed. One of the flags will be worth \$100 but which flag is the prize winner will not be revealed until after the race is over and all the contestants have assembled on the foot bridge for the award ceremony.

"Last year's race was a big hit," said Moore. "The water is lower this year, so it should be interesting."

The event is organized in conjunction with the City of Appleton's annual Applefest Celebration. Immediately after the kayak race, there will be a rubber duck race on the river at 1:30 p.m. and the Applefest Parade on Appleton's Main Street starting at 2:00 p.m. For more information about Applefest, call the Appleton Chamber of Commerce at 320-289-1527.

Volunteer for 2009 Cleanup of the Minnesota River – Belle Plaine

Volunteers are needed to help cleanup the Minnesota River at the Belle Plaine State Wayside. The area is an old salvage yard with large metal items protruding from or lying on the ground. Over 10,000 tires remain in brushy woods. It is a difficult site and there may be some heavy lifting involved. Volunteers must be healthy and in good physical condition.

- Saturday, October 3rd
- 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (lunch provided for all volunteers after the cleanup)
- Meet before 9 a.m. at the site
- For more information and RSVP Eva Johnson (adoptariver.dnr@state.mn.us) or 651-259-5620. Please let Eva know by Friday, September 25th if you are planning to participate.
- Flyer information: <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/belleplaineleanupevent.pdf>

Events:

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://mrdbc.mnsu.edu/calendar/index.html>

Water Quality Articles:

[Local delights in the lunchroom](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). School lunch managers around the state are working to get more locally grown items onto their noontime menus.

[Widely touted wildlife habitat grants hit snag at DNR](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). A new Minnesota wildlife habitat program was announced last week as having "tremendous potential" for kick-starting projects in a slow economy. A Department of Natural Resources news release invited groups to apply for \$3.7 million in grants.

[Group challenging plans for three high-voltage lines across Minn.](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). A citizens group is challenging plans for three major transmission lines across Minnesota, but backers of the so-called Cap-X project say the lines are key to the state's energy future.

[Despite rains, lake languishes](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Rain in August did little to help shrinking White Bear Lake in a drought-stricken east metro, but some relief is seen across the state.

All the water that will ever be is, right now. – National Geographic, October 1993

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

Scott Kudelka
Minnesota River Watershed Alliance
Communications Coordinator
Water Resources Center
184 Trafton Science Center S
Mankato, MN 56001
507-389-2304
scott.kudelka@mnsu.edu
<http://watershedalliance.blogspot.com>