

Credit River: A Water Quality Success Story

The Credit River has been removed from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA's) list of impaired waters. While this may be easy to say, it's a bit harder to say exactly why water quality has improved. The Credit River --which flows north from New Market Township through Credit River Township and the City of Savage before discharging to the Minnesota River -- was originally listed as impaired due to high *turbidity* in 2002. Turbidity is a measure of water clarity (essentially, how clean or dirty the water may be); in the Credit River, much of this was related to the amount of sediment in the water.

This level of improvement comes as something of a surprise, particularly given the setting of the Credit River. In the southern reaches of the river the land is relatively flat, but then drops steeply through Savage once the river encounters the Minnesota River Valley bluff. In addition, there was a considerable amount of urban development in the watershed in the 1990s and early 2000s; typically, steeper rivers with urban development exhibit erosion and excess sediment. In fact, soil loss from construction sites can be many times that of other land uses.

Some of the Improvement likely resulted from managing this change from rural to urban. Savage, Credit River Township, and Scott County all have programs to regulate and control construction erosion, and require stormwater ponds to slow runoff and trap sediment. The transition from plowed fields to urban lawns with year-round vegetative cover also reduced soil erosion.

A number of water quality projects have also been completed. These include stream bank and stream side buffer (an area of native plants and trees) projects by residents along the river, as well as construction projects by Savage, the Scott Watershed Management Organization, and the Scott Soil and Water Conservation District. The Utica Ravine project completed by Savage in 2010, for example, reduced sediment delivery to the river by an estimated 50 tons per year.



City of Savage Utica Ravine Project (before and after) reduced sediment to the Credit River by 50 tons

Further, there is quite a bit of vegetation along the river and undeveloped land in the watershed (the area of land that drains to the river). Both Murphy-Hanrehan and Cleary Lake Regional Parks, operated by the Three Rivers Park District, are located in the watershed. In the southern reaches of the Credit River there are a number of large wetland complexes, and there is a vegetated streamside corridor along much of the river through the urban areas – particularly around Hidden Valley Park in Savage. In addition, the Legends Club golf course is considered environmentally friendly, and is one of only a handful of Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries in Minnesota.

The bottom line? There are many reasons why the Credit River is no longer impaired, all of which are cause for celebration. More importantly, it shows that water quality goals can be achieved: To date, only a handful of the state's water bodies have been removed from the impaired water list. To memorialize this accomplishment, the Scott Watershed Management Organization and the City of Savage are co-hosting an event on April 26 from 4 to 6 p.m. at Hidden Valley Park, 5000 132nd Street (sun), or the

McColl Ponds Environmental Learning Center 13500 Dakota Ave. S. (rain) to thank everyone for their stewardship of the river. Please consider joining us in this celebration! RSVPs are encouraged at 952.496.8653 by April 23.

CURE's Earth Day River Clean Up Seeks Volunteers

The 20th Annual CURE (Clean Up the River Environment) Spring River Clean Up will take place on Earth Day Sunday, April 22 from noon – 4 p.m. along the Minnesota River between Wegdahl and Granite Falls and between Waterman's Bridge and the Crossings Golf Course in Montevideo. Volunteers are asked to meet at the [Chippewa County Park](#) in Wegdahl at noon on Sunday where assignments will be given out to volunteers and where crews will be directed to clean-up areas. Refreshments will be served.

Families with children are being encouraged to get out and enjoy the spring weather and the company of other volunteers. Clean up participants should be prepared to get dirty. Gloves, boots, and old jeans are recommended. For more information, contact clean up organizer Patrick Moore at (320) 269-2984.

CURE is a non- government, non-profit organization founded in 1992 and funded by individual and business contributions and foundation grants. CURE's mission is to restore, protect and celebrate the Upper Minnesota River Watershed for the benefit of all generations. For more information visit: www.cureriver.org

Earth Day at the ReStore

The ReStore is hosting some fun activities for kids on Saturday, April 21 in honor of Earth Day. I've attached our poster- please share it with your connections.

Second, we'll be distributing information about environmental concerns in our area to the parents of the above mentioned kids, so if you have some materials you'd like us to share, please bring them to me prior to the 21st at the ReStore and we'll help share with the world.

<http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/earthdayrestore.pdf>

Earth Day Cleanup

Mankato Longboarders and Heart Skate Co. present: an Earth Day Cleanup at the downtown area of Mankato on April 22, 2012

- Meet at 2 PM at the Mankato Library (100 E Main St) parking lot under Veterans Bridge
- Put your name in the jar for FREE raffle prizes!
- Collect your trash bags, brooms, dustpans, gloves, etc.
- Leave at 2:30 PM for the Downtown Cleanup
- Skate/bike/walk Downtown collecting as much trash as possible!
- Dump trash bags in the dumpster behind Mr. Monogram
- Drawing for FREE raffle prizes!
- Food and drink at the Pub 500

Earth Day Celebration at Prairie Woods is coming up! - Toon into your Water

Come out to the Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center on Saturday, April 21, 8 am to 1 pm:

- 8 am to 10 am Pancakes (free-will)
- 10 am to 11 am Tricia and the Toonies "Enviroshow"
- 11 am to 12 pm "Contaminants of Emerging Concern," Dr. Heiko Schoenfuss
- 12 pm Youth Energy Summit (YES!) Awards

How do you get here? [Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center](#). What's going on? Free trees, renewable energy demos, climbing wall, archery, DNR fish tank, archaeology exhibits, and much more! Fun activities for all ages!

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

2012 Stream Health and Restoration Workshops

The **Stream Restoration** series of four workshops teach the basic functions and processes of rivers, the Rosgen method of stream classification, how to assess and monitor river health, and natural channel design river restoration. This series is designed for natural resource professionals whose work involves rivers directly or indirectly as well as those who are engaged in watershed-wide resource management issues. These weeklong workshops are hands on experiences and each one requires students to complete fieldwork, data analysis, and present their findings.

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

MPCA recognizes outstanding wastewater plant operators

St. Paul, Minn. -- The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) recently recognized 126 Minnesota wastewater treatment operators whose facilities maintained a perfect record of permit compliance during 2011.

MPCA Commissioner Paul Aasen had high praise for the award recipients: "These operators work hard every day to ensure that Minnesotans can enjoy clean water now and in the future. They are at the front line in protecting our streams and lakes, and ultimately, the health of people and businesses that depend on clean water."

The awards were presented at the 75th annual Wastewater Operations Conference in Brooklyn Park. Facilities were eligible for the award if they submitted all monitoring reports correctly and on time, demonstrated consistent compliance with their permit, and employed staff certified by the MPCA in wastewater operations.

The annual Wastewater Operations Conference brings together wastewater operators from Minnesota for training and professional education. There are about 1,700 wastewater treatment facilities in Minnesota, including municipal, industrial and some privately operated institutional facilities. The size of the community, institution or treatment plant was not a factor in awarding the certificates of excellence.

UMN Extension Announces Spring 2012 Woodland Webinar Series

The University of Minnesota Extension Forestry team is pleased to announce our [spring 2012 Woodland Webinar Series](#). Building on the growing popularity of the past two years' webinar series, these presentations offer a convenient way to connect with University faculty and representatives from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Presentations are designed primarily for family woodland owners but may be of interest to natural resource professionals as well. There is no cost to attend.

"Webinars" are online presentations that include live questions and answers. Anybody with an internet-connected computer and speakers can participate, although those with dial-up connections may want to tune in from a library or other location offering a higher-speed connection. The UMN Extension Forestry team has been offering webinars since 2010, and they've been getting more popular every year. Attendees appreciate the ability to get immediate answers to their questions from UMN faculty and other knowledgeable presenters. They also value the convenience and low cost of participation.

This year's series includes the following presentations, with more likely to be added:

- Phenology: Tracking Minnesota's Ever-Changing Forests
- The State of Minnesota's Forests
- Minnesota Forest Health Update: What to look for in your woods in 2012
- Property Tax and Incentive Payments

For details and registration information, visit <http://z.umn.edu/2012webinars>.

PCA will partner with University of Minnesota on wild rice sulfate study

St. Paul, Minn. — The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) will expand its knowledge of wild rice and sulfate interactions with the help of a University of Minnesota research team. This work, funded by the 2011 Minnesota Legislature from the Clean Water Fund, is designed to provide key information on the effects of sulfate on wild rice. The MPCA will use the results of this work and other information to further evaluate the existing sulfate standard to protect wild rice.

“This is a great example of the MPCA partnering with the U of M to leverage the research expertise to help us solve an environmental protection question,” Shannon Lotthammer, MPCA manager, said. “Wild rice is an important cultural, economic and ecological resource in Minnesota. This study will allow us to better understand an important aspect of protecting this vital resource.”

The university research will begin this spring and continue into fall 2013. Preliminary study plans include:

- field survey of lakes and streams that support healthy stands of wild rice and those that should support wild rice but do not,
- laboratory studies to gather additional information about how sulfate and sulfide affect wild rice plant growth, and
- outdoor experiments with container-grown wild rice.

When the study is complete, the MPCA will evaluate the new information, along with existing data and scientific literature, to determine whether any changes are needed to the current sulfate standard to protect wild rice and, if so, what those changes should be.

More information on this project can be found on the MPCA's website at www.pca.state.mn.us.

Important changes made to LAC QUI PARLE Earth Day Fun Runs

Fun Runs will be held in Canby and Dawson ONLY on Saturday, April 2. Registration will begin at 8:15 a.m. with a 9:00 a.m. start. You can register day of event. Again Fun Runs only being held in CANBY and DAWSON on Saturday, April 21.

Both Fun Runs will begin with registration at 8:15 a.m. and the Run/Walk will start at 9:00 a.m. Families are encouraged to attend. Pre-registration for the event by April 11 will help with the coordination of the two Fun Runs. Registration Forms are available at local businesses and online at www.lqpybwatershed.org or by emailing mary.homan@lqpc.com or calling Mary Homan at 320-815-1521. Earth Day T-shirts are available for the first 150 registered participants. This event is being coordinated by the Lac qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed District, Lac qui Parle SWCD, Big Stone Therapies in Madison, Johnson Memorial Health Services in Dawson, Sanford Health in Canby and the Hendricks Parent Teacher Organization.

Registration Form, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/funrunregistrationform.pdf>

Job Opportunities:

Ecologist/Project Manager

Great River Greening is a conservation nonprofit that restores the land, builds community partnerships, and inspires stewardship. Great River Greening has grown significantly in its geographic scope in the last few years, but the staff remains small and works collaboratively as a friendly and committed team. We maintain a workplace culture that recognizes the value of work-life balance.

The Ecologist/Project Manager joins a team of other ecologists, each of whom executes and manages individual projects, as well as collaborates on larger projects and events. Guided by our mission, campaigns, and the particular interests and goals of the ecologist, projects may include bank and slope stabilization, natural areas restoration, ecological inventories, and restoration planning. While many backgrounds are possible, we would prefer someone with experience in stream restoration. As project manager, the ecologist may execute field supervision, cost estimates, and

specifications. The ecologist will conduct independent field and site reviews and must have access to a car.

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

Human Rights Campaign, and Environment America Internships

The Fund for the Public Interest is a national non-profit organization that works to build support for progressive organizations across the country. We run campaigns for the Human Rights Campaign, USPIRG, and Environment America. This summer we will be in over 50 cities, working and lobbying to help win environmental and social justice campaigns.

Last summer our staff helped ban off-shore drilling to protect our coasts, repeal Don't Ask Don't Tell, and increase food safety standards to make school lunches safer- all while building valuable leadership skills.

Currently, we have paid positions open on our campaign staff in each of our locations. We require that interested candidates are hard workers and have excellent communication skills.

As a member of our staff, you will fundraise, build membership for our partner groups, and educate and activate citizens on pressing issues. You will also have the opportunity to organize press conferences and build coalitions with other non-profit organizations. While on staff, you gain knowledge of pressing concerns our country is facing, learn how to effectively generate public support, and obtain a firm understanding of the political process.

To apply, please visit www.jobsgoodcauses.org or call 800-75-EARTH (753-2784). Or fill out this form to receive more information:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/gform?key=0AtxCavEptIKzdHM2UkF3U0ZkLUVkQkNWZTJCanBMZIE&gridId=0#edit>

New UMN Regional Educator Position in MN

The University of Minnesota Extension is hiring a Regional Educator position in Crookston to work on Extension Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences programs. This full-time Extension Educator-Crops position will be housed at the Crookston, MN Extension Regional Office. The EE-Crops (Cropping Systems Nutrient Management emphasis) will apply his or her expertise of innovative nutrient management in crop production to water quality issues through the development of Extension programs and priorities. The EE will employ multiple delivery systems to educate producers and other agricultural professionals via seminars, workshops or non-credit courses. He or she will conduct collaborative applied research with university faculty and other research professionals. The EE is responsible for program development and delivery, use of scholarly/scientific research, effective partnerships, use of technology and continuing professional development. This position is accountable to the Program Leader in Crops for program direction, performance evaluation and personnel actions.

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

Trail Staff, Internships and Urban Wilderness Boat Captains

Wilderness Inquiry is now accepting applications for Trail Staff, Internships, and Urban Wilderness Boat Captains for summer 2012. We're looking for people with outstanding leadership and decision-making skills, high energy, and a willingness to work hard.

If you know of someone who would be good and interested, could you please send them our way? They can apply for the positions by going to: www.wildernessinquiry.org/jobs

Please distribute the following announcement flyers as you see fit:

Trail Staff Flyer: <http://fmp.wildernessinquiry.org/doclib.php?doc=3028>

Internship Flyer: <http://fmp.wildernessinquiry.org/doclib.php?doc=5343>

Events:

April 24th (Tuesday) is the **Minnesota River Watershed Alliance Quarterly Meeting** in Room 141 Ridgewater College, Hutchinson MN starting at 6:00 p.m. with a social hour and food. The formal meeting starts at 7 p.m. and we will wrap up the discussion by 9 o'clock. We will be focusing on planning a Mayor's Fishing Opener.

April 28th (Saturday) is the **Ney Nature Center Spring Fling – Benefit Dinner & Silent Auction** starting at 5:30 at the Montgomery American Legion Post 79 (102 Elm Avenue SW0 in Montgomery. Featured guest speaker is Don Shelby, an environmental journalist, nature lover, one of the most decorated and honored local television journalists in the country, and recently WCCO-TV News Anchor. For more information call or email Becky at the Ney Nature Center – 507-248-3474 or info@neycenter.org

May 21st (Monday) is the **Minnesota River Board Meeting** from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon. Place and location to be announced. For information: 507-389-5491 or karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu

July 16th (Monday) is the **Minnesota River Board Meeting** from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon at the St. Peter Community Center, Room 219 (600 South 5th Street). For information: 507-389-5491 or karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu

September 17th (Monday) is the **Minnesota River Board Meeting** from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon at the Health & Human Services Building Multipurpose Room (2200 23rd Street NE) in Willmar. For information: 507-389-5491 or karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu

November 19th (Monday) is the **Minnesota River Board Meeting** from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon. Place and location to be announced. For information: 507-389-5491 or karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu

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

Environmental/Conservation Articles:

[Can ag feed the world without destroying it? Looking for the Minnesota answer](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). If you've heard Jon Foley on MPR News talk shows or seen him give presentations at the University of Minnesota or elsewhere, you've seen him work pretty hard at looking for a middle ground.

[Gardening growing in Twin Cities: Four hundred show up for resource fair in St. Paul](#) (TC Daily Planet). Urban farming and community gardening, once thought of as passing fads, have now become a large national movement addressing the health and vitality of citizens and neighborhoods.

[God, GOP and climate change: are beekeepers poisoning their hives?](#) (MinnPost). It's not every day, and certainly not every Holy Week, that you hear the carbon cycle described as a cornerstone of Creation.

[Your Green Life: "Handmade Soaps"](#) (Northland's News Center). Diana Miller has been hand making soaps for about three years now, but it's what she uses to make it that is special.

[Nuisance factor rising from zebra mussels in Lake Minnetonka](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Invasive creatures have fouled lawn-sprinkler systems. Fire departments are on the alert.

[Petitioners want review of 3M waste plan](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). A community group in Cottage Grove says it has collected more than 400 signatures on a petition asking for a detailed environmental review for 3M's plan to bring hazardous waste to its incinerator.

[Waste disposal poses pollution threat to Northsiders](#) (Twin Cities Daily Planet). Proposals are currently under consideration to significantly increase emissions from Minneapolis polluters that have a disproportionate impact on low-income communities of color such as those in Phillips and on the North Side.

[Commentary: Gas prices are nothing to complain about](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). It's time to be indignant about indignation. Each time gas prices rise, shrieks are heard in the land as if somewhere in the Constitution there's a right to cheap and plentiful fossil fuels.

[Judge hears N.D. arguments against Minn. energy law](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). A federal judge heard arguments Thursday in North Dakota's lawsuit against Minnesota's Next Generation Energy Act.

[South Dakota ranks No. 1 in wind power](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Minnesota slips to fourth place in rankings compiled by the American Wind Energy Association.

[Putting pressure on mussels](#) (Alexandria Echo Press). Douglas County commissioners added an extra tool to the county's arsenal of zebra mussel weaponry at Tuesday's board meeting. Land and Resource Director Dave Rush's request to purchase a decontamination unit from Mobile Washer in Alexandria was approved.

[River Chat](#) (Minnesota 2020). On Thursday, March 29th, I had an opportunity to attend the third of three Water Quality Dialogues held around the state. Hosted by the non-profit Rivervoice at the St. James Hotel in Red Wing, attendees appropriately had a panoramic view of the river.

[Farm runoff costly for small towns to clean up](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Some Minnesota towns face high costs to clean up their drinking water because of pollution runoff from farms, according to a report today from an environmental group.

[Interest in farm to school builds as documentary is shown across Minnesota](#) (Alexandria Echo Press). A new documentary titled "Farm to School: Growing Our Future" showcases Minnesota success stories, as well as challenges that stunt the growth of farm to school.

[Legislature list is heavy on matters of outdoors](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Over two weeks, the fishing opener, donated venison, land sales, fee increases and more will be considered quickly.

[the carbon cost of reading on newsprint](#) (MinnPost). Oregon researchers published what they call the first research definitively linking the ocean's rising acidity to big problems in the oyster beds.

[How green is St. Paul?](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). The mayor believes the city has a role in moving cleaner industry into the future.

Environments are not just containers, but are processes that change the content totally. – Marshall McLuhan

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 Basin.

Thanks,

Scott

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