

Friendship Tour Project wins Statewide Collaboration Contest

A project designed to foster friendly relationships between up-streamers in the Minnesota River Watershed with down-streamers from the Mississippi River and Lake Pepin area has received the most votes in a statewide on-line contest to promote collaboration.

The Bush Foundation launched the InCommons Collaboration Challenge in November 2010. More than 800 non-profit organizations were invited to send in written descriptions of their unique collaborative projects to a new web site created by the Foundation. 223 entries were received and placed in the running for the \$25,000 first prize. The field was narrowed down to 20 semi-finalist projects and then to 3 finalist projects by a panel of judges.

Short 4-minute video explanations of the 3 finalist projects were made and then posted to the Internet where the public was invited to vote over a 10-day period for their favorite collaboration. During that time, more than 3,000 on-line votes were cast. It has not been released how many votes were received by each project, but the Friendship Tour project received the most votes. More than 1,350 views of the Friendship Tour on-line video were recorded on You Tube during the voting period.

The idea of the Friendship Tour was conceived and organized by Clean Up the River Environment (CURE) based in Montevideo. CURE worked with the Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance, based in Red Wing and the Minnesota Ag Water Resources Coalition (a statewide coalition of agricultural organizations), the Minnesota River Board, the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance and the Cannon River Watershed Partnership to sponsor the tours in August and September of 2010.

As the convening organization that launched the collaboration, CURE will receive a \$25,000 grant to help continue the collaboration. "We are indebted to all the organizations in the Friendship Tour collaboration who made this happen and we are grateful for all the people from throughout the state who voted for us," stated Patrick Moore, CURE Executive Director.

"It is evident that people want to see us all working together and with this boost of support, we'll do our best to carry the collaboration forward."

For more information on the Friendship Tour and to watch the winning video, visit: www.cureriver.org.

Launch Party for This Perennial Land

Please join the authors, photographers, and others involved in the book at a Launch Party for This Perennial Land

When: Wednesday, January 12th, 2011

5:30pm Reception

6:00pm Program

Book Signing & Photo Exhibition

Where: Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Stevens Ave Building, Conference Room
2104 Stevens Ave South, Minneapolis, MN 55404

RSVP at <https://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?formkey=dHc2ZjctRTJ6UXNjckZJNU5BQ2QwZWc6MQ>

Along the rivers and streams, among the nooks and crannies, between the fields of corn and soybeans, a quiet revolution is underway that is changing the face of Midwest agriculture. A new kind of farming that incorporates perennial "third" crops into the standard two-crop system of corn and soybeans, is adding

value to the farming landscape—and returning that land to ecological health. And that's good for the soil, water, wildlife, rural communities, and all of us interested in leaving a healthy and productive land for future generations.

Lansing Shepard and Paula Westmoreland spent three years traveling the length and breadth of one iconic Midwest watershed — the greater Blue Earth River basin in south-central Minnesota and north-central Iowa to discover who was driving that change and what impact they were having. Along with professional photographers Meg Ojala and Chris Faust, among others, they documented the work of farmers, scientists, recreationists, conservationists, policymakers, and field level state and federal agency staff.

What they discovered they brought together in *This Perennial Land*. Through essays and photographs the authors trace the natural and cultural history of the land and share stories of a new breed of pioneering farmers who are working the land with nature in mind. Organized around a unique, multilayered GIS map of the landscape, they've put together a vision of an agriculture that could be — a truly restorative agriculture and a possible way to get there.

For more information, contact Emily, ebarker@iatp.org or call 612.870.3454.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT COMPLETED FOR PROPOSED GRANITE FALLS ETHANOL PLANT EXPANSION

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has completed an Environmental Assessment Worksheet for a proposed expansion of the Granite Falls Energy ethanol facility at Granite Falls, Minn. The EAW will be available for the public to comment December 27th through January 26th, 2011.

Granite Falls Energy, LLC proposes to expand its existing fuel-ethanol production facility by increasing its permitted capacity to produce un-denatured ethanol from 49.9 million gallons per year (MMGY) to 70 MMGY. The expansion would be achieved by adding additional equipment to support ethanol production. The additional equipment will be located within the facility's current property boundary. The primary fuel for the facility will be natural gas.

The expansion requires modification of the facility's wastewater permit (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System/State Disposal System) and air emission permit. The draft modified permits will be placed on public notice on or shortly after the start of the public comment period for the EAW, and will remain open for comment for 30 days.

A public information meeting will be held January 10, 2011, at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium of the Minnesota West Technical and Community College in Granite Falls. MPCA staff will also be available for one hour before the meeting to answer questions in an open-house format. The purpose of the open house and public information meeting is to answer questions and accept written comments related to the EAW as well as the draft NPDES/SDS and air permits.

The EAW is a review of how a proposed project could potentially affect the environment. The EAW also helps the MPCA determine if an Environmental Impact Statement, a more in-depth environmental review, is needed. The EAW must be completed before the MPCA can issue final permits for the project. The MPCA may make changes to the draft permits based on input received during the EAW public comment period and/or on new information gathered as part of the agency's own review of the project.

Written comments on the GFE expansion project EAW must be received by 4:30 p.m. January 26th, 2011. Comments should be sent to Steve Sommer, MPCA, 520 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155-4194.

Copies of the EAW are available for review on the MPCA's website at www.pca.state.mn.us/news/eaw/index.html <<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/news/eaw/index.html>>, as well as the following locations:

MPCA Marshall regional office, 1420 E. College Drive, # 900

MPCA St. Paul office, 520 Lafayette Road North

To request a copy of the EAW, contact Steve Sommer at the MPCA, 651-757-2746 or steve.sommer@state.mn.us. Additional information on the environmental review process is available on the web at www.pca.state.mn.us/news/eaw/index.html <<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/news/eaw/index.html>>.

\$10 million in Legacy Amendment grants awarded by BWSR for projects to protect and restore water quality

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) has approved more than \$10 million in state dollars for projects that will protect and restore streams, rivers, lakes and groundwater. Funding for the grants came from the Minnesota Clean Water Fund (one of four funds from the Legacy Amendment). As part of the same competitive grant application process, the interagency team also reviewed and ranked applications for \$2.2 million in low-interest loans for agricultural best management practices (Ag BMP loans), and BWSR sent those recommendations to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

"All of these projects have been identified as high priorities in local water management plans, and will be accomplished via locally-led partnerships," said John Jaschke, BWSR Executive Director. "Most of these projects will use local contractors and materials, thus generating multiple benefits for water quality and also helping the economy."

BWSR received 159 grant applications from eligible local government units requesting more than \$28 million for projects that address impaired waters, such as water pollution caused by surface water runoff, or for projects that protect high-quality streams, rivers, lakes and groundwater resources from becoming impaired. Most of the projects will involve installing conservation practices on privately owned lands. The applications were reviewed and ranked by an interagency team that included BWSR, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

The 20-member board approved the grants at its Dec. 15 regular meeting. The complete list of funded project is available on the BWSR website, www.bwsr.state.mn.us.

Eligible grant applicants were cities, counties, soil and water conservation districts, watershed districts, metropolitan watershed management organizations, and joint powers organizations of those local government units.

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources consists of 20 members, including representatives of local government units that deliver conservation programs, state agencies, and citizens. Board members are appointed by the governor to four-year terms. The board is the state's administrative agency for soil and water conservation districts, watershed districts, metropolitan watershed management organizations, and county water managers.

The BWSR mission: Improve and protect Minnesota's water and soil resources by working in partnership with local organizations and private landowners.

DISCHARGES FROM MEAT PROCESSING PLANT IN DAWSON BRING \$20,000 PENALTY

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and Noah's Ark Processors LLC, have reached an agreement that resolves alleged violations of water quality laws and rules at its meat processing plant and animal hide storage building in Dawson. The company was given a \$20,000 civil penalty and is required to complete a number of corrective actions.

An inspection Aug. 25, 2009 documented blood-contaminated water and untreated manure discharging from the facility to the ground, and discharges of animal hide salting leachate discharging from the hide building. The company has stopped the discharges and worked to recover contamination, applied for permits, and submitted reports on recovery work and plans to prevent future discharges.

Alleged violations include operating without appropriate industrial stormwater, wastewater and industrial by-product permits, failure to notify the agency of the discharges and provide requested information and lack of a stormwater pollution prevention plan.

A stipulation agreement is one of the tools 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 www.pca.state.mn.us/newscenter/enforcement.html.

Symposium on Stream Restoration

The 2011 Upper Midwest Stream Restoration Symposium brings together leading national and regional stream restoration practitioners for presentations and discussion on important stream and river topics. This event runs February 27 to March 2 at Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. Symposium topics will include:

- Restoration in the Built Environment: Urban Stream Restoration
- Rural Stream Restoration: Balancing Agricultural Production and Stream Health
- Dam Removal in the Midwest: The Past and the Future
- Restoration of Large Rivers
- Longitudinal Stream Connectivity
- Impact of Climate Change on Midwest Streams and Rivers: Surviving Extreme Events

For more information and to register go to: <http://www.prrsum.org/content/umrsr-symposium-2011>

Job Opportunities:

Mussel Research Internship – 2011

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources may be filling up to 9 student intern positions to assist with mussel surveys, monitoring, host identification, and propagation of endangered species. Positions will be based in St. Paul or Lake City, Minnesota, but will travel statewide. Start date is somewhat flexible, but is expected to begin by May 16 or soon thereafter, and continue to at least August 26 (POSSIBLY extending through mid October).

Duties include (but are not limited to):

- Diving in large rivers such as the Mississippi and St. Croix
- Sample mussels in streams, rivers and lakes while snorkeling or diving
- Quantitatively sample mussel beds to establish long-term monitoring stations
- Assist with endangered mussel propagation and reintroduction activities
- Assist with mussel host identification studies.
- Collect and maintain live native fishes
- Operate GPS receiver and light microscope
- Maintain and organize field and SCUBA equipment
- Prepare and label voucher specimens
- Operate state vehicle; tow and launch boat

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

Wilderness Inquiry Trail Staff and Intern Positions for 2011

Wilderness Inquiry is currently hiring trail staff and interns for 2011. We are looking for people with outstanding leadership and decision-making skills, high energy, and a desire to work hard for the mission of WI. To learn more, see job descriptions and to apply see Wilderness Inquiry's website: www.wildernessinquiry.org

Each year, Wilderness inquiry operates hundreds of Canoeing, Kayaking and Hiking trips to destinations in Minnesota, across the United States, and around the world for people of all ages, backgrounds, and

abilities. Trail staff leads inclusive outdoor adventures, leads single-day events and multi-day expeditions, navigates, cooks, tells stories and teaches outdoor skills along with other responsibilities.

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

National Organic Program (NOP) Position

The NOP is looking for students who recently completed a graduate degree and have the interest and potential to contribute to our high-performing team.

Applicants should have...

- Excellent technical writing skills
- Technical background or training in one or more of the following:
 - animal or agricultural science with focus on livestock production systems
 - administrative law and rulemaking
 - compliance and enforcement
 - auditing and accreditation procedures

(Examples of qualifications for the above include, but are not limited to, holding a graduate degree in one of these areas or having prior experience in organic production systems or policy.) The deadline for applying is Jan. 3, 2011.

This position is available under the Federal Career Intern Program, with a focus on the development and enforcement of regulations that govern the NOP.

Candidates can gain invaluable career experience while earning competitive pay and benefits. They receive hands-on training and, upon completion of the program, are eligible for conversion to a career or career conditional appointment in the permanent civil service.

Candidates must be pursuing a graduate or professional degree, enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a degree-seeking student, and taking at least a half-time academic course load.

The position will be filled at the GS-9 level, depending on qualifications. Candidates may also receive vacation, sick, and holiday leave; health insurance; possible tuition assistance; and participation in a retirement plan.

The USDA NOP is located at 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC at the Smithsonian Metro stop. Visit the following vacancy announcements:

- [CIPNOP-2011-0002](#)
- [CIPNOP-2011-0003](#)
- [CIPNOP-2011-0004](#)

The NOP facilitates trade and ensures integrity of organic agricultural products by consistently implementing organic standards and enforcing compliance with the regulations throughout the world.

[Learn more.](#)

Local Foods Coordinator

The Minnesota Project is looking for an energetic and hardworking person to fill our position of Local Foods Coordinator a ¾ time contract position who will primarily be working on our new program designed to develop markets for Hmong farmers amongst East Metro schools, restaurants and caterers.

The job description is included below and it has been listed on the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits jobs listing: http://www.mncn.org/jobs/user_detail.asp?jobID=40452 .

Events:

January 27th (Thursday) is **Electrofishing in the MN River** starting at 7pm at the Chippewa County Courthouse in Montevideo, MN. Brad Koenen, MN DNR Fisheries Biologist from the Hutchinson Area

Office will tell us about what the MN DNR is finding with their electro fishing surveys of the Minnesota River. Prepare to be surprised and to see awesome footage of hibernating catfish!

February 12th (Saturday) is the **Cure 19th Annual Meeting** from 6-10pm at the Hollywood on Main Street Montevideo. **Invited Guest Speakers: John Hickman & Jon Carlson** will tell us about their past year making a documentary about the growing movement to clean up the Minnesota River. Come hear the stories of all the fantastic people they met along the way and get a sneak preview of portions of the documentary! For more information visit <http://www.cureriver.org/events.html>

April 16th (Saturday) is the presentation **"Waterfalls and the River Warren"** by Professor Bob Douglas starting at 9:30 a.m. at the Linnaeus Arboretum at Gustavus Adolphus College. Professor Bob Douglas will talk about waterfalls in the Minnesota River including many discovered by him. A tour of the waterfalls will follow the presentation.

May 7th (Saturday) is **Twin Valley Council 4th annual fun shoot** at the River Ridge Gun Club in Courtland, MN starting at 8am. For more information call (507) 359-5770.

May 21st (Saturday) is the **"Caring for God's Creation"** with Jim Gilbert, Minnesota's most well-known naturalist and former director of the Linnaeus Arboretum starting at 9:30 a.m. at the Arboretum at Gustavus Adolphus College. Bring your walking shoes.

[Bird counters mix science, hobby](#) (Mankato Free Press). Mankato takes part in nationwide survey of birds.

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

Environmental/Conservational Articles:

[Easement protects Minnesota's wilderness for the ages](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). More of the North Woods is now open to the public under conservation easements.

[Pheasants after the storm: Now what?](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The blizzard hurt, but Minnesota's pheasants are resilient. Some hunters don't want to give up on the ringneck season yet.

[Solar powerhouse](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). A doctor's passion for sustainability inspired him to build what may be the most energy-efficient home in the Midwest.

[Atrazine regulations won't change following review](#) (AgriNews). The Minnesota Department of Agriculture has announced a registration review of atrazine is complete. It will not at this time change regulations for use of the agricultural herbicide.

[MN DNR releases Strategic Conservation Agenda 2009-2013](#) (Outdoor News). A new plan, which sets strategic direction for natural resources and measures conservation results, has just been released by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

[Gov't plans stepped-up fight against Asian carp](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). The Obama administration is expanding its campaign to keep Asian carp out of the Great Lakes.

[Minn. agencies push 'green chemistry'](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Minnesota should encourage industry to move toward "green chemistry," according to a report released Wednesday from the Pollution Control Agency and the Department of Health.

MPCA taken to task over fines for polluters

<http://www.startribune.com/local/112193849.html?elr=KArks:DCiUHc3E7_V_nDaycUiD3aPc: Yyc:aULPQL7PQLanchO7DiUr> (Minneapolis Star Tribune).

The richness I achieve comes from Nature, the source of my inspiration. – Claude Monet

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
Watershed Assessment Specialist
Water Resources Center
184 Trafton Science Center S
Mankato, MN 56001
507-389-2304
scott.kudelka@mnsu.edu
<http://watershedalliance.blogspot.com>