

Our View: Begin river solutions with discussion

Mankato Free Press, December 8, 2011

The recent five-day series in The Free Press on the environmental threat of the Minnesota River offered one revelation right away: Groups affected by the river — and that is all of us — need to begin intelligent, civil conversations about what can be done.

Fortunately, some of that conversation has begun. But now that we have more information through the “Amber Waves to Muddy Waters” series, and understand the different perspectives of key stakeholders, we can move forward toward solutions that benefit all.

One group, Clean Up the River Environment, (CURE) has been working for two decades to raise awareness of environmental issues associated with the Minnesota River and its watershed. But recently, the group has invited farm organizations into dialogues and tours. They’ve organized “friendship tours” with farmers along the Minnesota River down to Lake Pepin. They’ve invited county commissioners from the Red Wing area to visit the Minnesota River watershed and see the farming. They’re doing a river float with members of the corn growers group.

For the entire article: [Editorial: Begin river solutions with discussion](#)

For the more information on the Special Report “From Amber Waves to Muddy Waters” in the Mankato Free Press - <http://mankatofreepress.com/amberwaves/x1331372364/Special-Report-Day-1-From-Amber-Waves-to-Muddy-Waters>

‘Dirt on Sediment’ packs the house, reveals new research (such as the ‘fire-hose’ effect)

From the Friends of the Mississippi River

The verdict: FMR’s first event at the Science Museum was a resounding success. Approximately 240 people packed the Science Museum of Minnesota auditorium November 17th to learn about one of the most important issues facing the river today: sediment pollution.

The main presenter was Dr. Dan Engstrom, Director of the St. Croix Watershed Research Station and Adjunct Professor of Geology & Geophysics, and Water Resource Science at the University of Minnesota. His presentation, “The Dirt on Sediment Pollution: Water Quality in the Mississippi River,” highlighted recent research that clearly connects agricultural landscape change and artificial drainage to the excessive sedimentation threatening to choke the life out of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers.

In particular, Engstrom highlighted ongoing research that links wetland losses and the use of agricultural drain tile and drainage ditches with increased runoff volumes or higher flows in nearby streams and rivers. These artificially high flows create a “fire-hose” effect — ripping out vegetation, eroding banks and bluffs, and carrying vast quantities of sediment into the Mississippi River and Lake Pepin. These excessive “non-field” sources have now overtaken traditional field erosion as the largest sediment contributor to the Mississippi River.

Following the presentation, Dr. Julia Frost Nerbonne hosted a lively conversation with Dr. Engstrom, FMR Watershed Program Director Trevor Russell and Rural Advantage President and founder Linda Meschke as they took on a variety of well-crafted water quality questions from the highly engaged audience.

Additionally, art from FMR’s Artist-in-Residence Peter L. Johnson was on display outside the auditorium. His collection, “A Sedimental Journey” further highlighted issues of sediment pollution in the Mississippi River and Lake Pepin.

Photos from the event are available at [FMR's Flickr site](#).

Thank you to our program partners the City of Saint Paul, Capitol Region Watershed District, the Science Museum of Minnesota and the National Park Service. Stay tuned to Mississippi Messages for news, events and action alerts related to this important issue.

Upcoming Event: Impaired Waters List and Major Watershed Plan Information Meeting

The Chippewa River Watershed Project in partnership with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency invites you to attend an upcoming public informational meeting introducing the draft 2012 TMDL List. Join us on Tuesday, January 24 at 2:00 pm-4:00 pm or 6:30-8:30 pm at McKinneys on Southside, 300 14th Street S, Benson MN.

The meeting will discuss the Agency's watershed approach and its 2012 draft list of stream segments, lakes and wetlands that have impaired designated uses. The federal Clean Water Act requires states to monitor and assess their water to determine if they meet water quality standards and therefore support their designated beneficial uses. States are then required to develop a list of impaired waters that require TMDL (Total Daily Maximum Load) studies and submit an updated list to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency every even numbered year for approval. Following the conclusion of the statewide public meetings, the formal 30-day Public Comment Period for the draft 2012 TMDL List will be open January 23, 2012-February 27, 2012.

The draft 2012 list is the first to be developed under a refined approach to assessment that focuses on comprehensive assessment of water quality within major watersheds. The Chippewa River is included in this list and is looking at 46 possible new impairments. The Chippewa River Watershed Project is working on a Major Watershed Plan to develop a protection and restoration strategy that will direct implementation practices to address all impairments with guidance from the watershed residents. This will be another product of the MPCA's 10-year schedule.

Everyone is invited and we hope to have a good turnout at both events. Contact me with questions: Jennifer Hoffman; Chippewa River Watershed Project; Watershed Specialist; 629 North 11th Street, Suite 17; Montevideo, MN 56265; 320-269-2139 ext 120; www.chippewariver.com

Still Waters Run Dirty – But Not for Long. (Over \$16M in Clean Water Fund grant dollars awarded by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources)

Imagine your bathtub completely full of algae, those annoying blooms that choke lakes in the summer. You empty your tub and the next day it is full of algae again. Every day this winter you empty arm loads of that slimy, smelly goop from your tub – over 100 times each day for all of December, January, and February.

Got the picture in your mind? That's how much algae will be stopped from growing each year in McKusick Lake near the St. Croix River because of the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment Funds. ... And that's just one project.

Today, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) announced over \$16 million dollars in grants to 130 local governments for projects across Minnesota to achieve cleaner water.

The Brown's Creek Watershed District, a local conservation organization located near Stillwater, is one of the awardees for 2012. They'll work with partners to create a special sand filter to remove 118 pounds of phosphorus per year from the McKusick Lake area, ultimately benefiting the St. Croix River.

The Clean Water Legacy funds are targeting polluted and at-risk waters throughout the state. Some funded projects will create catchment areas to slow down water, allowing pollutants to filter out before reaching a lake or stream. Others will improve livestock waste management, filter water entering drainage systems, protect drinking water wells, and reduce soil erosion.

The need still outweighs available funds. According to John Jaschke, Executive Director of the BWSR, the state agency charged with coordinating and distributing Clean Water Funds. Nearly 250 applications requesting over \$48 million dollars were received for the \$16.8 million in available funds. "Thanks to the

newly awarded Legacy Funds, our water will get cleaner and our soil will stay where it should: on the land and out of the water”, Jaschke said. “BWSR continually strives to fund the most effective projects based on good science, sound planning and local commitment,” Jaschke explained.

See how the legacy funds are affecting the land and waters important to you. For a complete list of projects, including a Minnesota map of project areas, visit www.bwsr.state.mn.us.

Coalition Urges a Permanent Solution to Protect Minnesota’s Waters from Asian Carp - Sportsmen, environmentalists, and property owners support closing Lock #1 until preventative measures are in place to stop Asian carp

A broad coalition of sportsmen, environmentalists and property owners today are calling on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) and other state and federal agencies to begin the process of securing a permanent solution to stop the northward advance of Asian carp into Minnesota waters.

On December 5th, 2011 the locks on the upper Mississippi River closed for the winter months. This yearly routine winter closure provides an opportunity to create both a short and long-term way to keep Asian carp out of Minnesota waters. As an immediate, first solution, the coalition is asking that Lock #1 remain closed after ice-out 2012 until a modified lock operation plan can be put in place as an interim measure. Such a measure might include limited lock hours combined with effective preventative technology to reduce the northward advance of these invaders.

“Last week the locks were closed,” said Irene Jones, river corridor program director of Friends of the Mississippi River. “No carp are moving into the upper Mississippi River. The locks should remain closed until a plan is in place that continues to block the carp’s advance.”

Known to batter boaters and even knock them into the water at the sound of a passing motor, Asian carp are voracious filter feeders that can grow to more than 4 feet long, weigh up to 100 pounds and quickly dominate a body of water by gobbling up the same food that sustains native fish populations.

Earlier this summer, positive eDNA tests of Asian carp were detected in the Mississippi, Minnesota and St. Croix rivers near the Twin Cities. A silver carp was also caught in pool 9 this summer. Further elevating the urgency of this crisis, on December 8th, MN DNR officials announced that positive eDNA samples indicated that silver carp are above and below the Coon Rapids Dam.

“Needless to say we were very disappointed to hear about the eDNA findings that indicate silver carp above the Coon Rapids Dam,” said Gary Botzek, executive director of the Minnesota Conservation Federation. “These new findings just put a capitol ‘E’ in Emergency in terms of closing the lock at St. Anthony and testing and treating the waters above Minneapolis for a long time,” he added.

[In a letter dated November 16th](#), the coalition asked Governor Dayton to make it a goal of his administration to prevent the introduction and spread of Asian carp in Minnesota waters and beyond to the Dakotas and Canada. Governor Dayton asked a task force of governmental agencies and a coalition of non-governmental organizations to put forth recommendations aimed at meeting this goal. “These fish are threatening Minnesota’s lake districts up to the Red River and Canada.” said Jeff Forrester, executive director of Minnesota Seasonal Recreation Property Owners. “The potential cost in loss of recreation and property values is almost incalculable.”

“Asian carp represent a clear and present danger to Minnesota’s waters and our way of life.” said Marc Smith, senior policy manager with National Wildlife Federation. “We strongly encourage state and federal officials to immediately develop and implement action plans designed to stop carp from further spreading north.”

“This is our chance to show the nation that we can be successful in stopping these invaders.” said Dave Zentner with the Izaak Walton League.

The coalition plans to present a more detailed action plan to Governor Dayton on December 20th. This plan calls for a permanent solution to this crisis and establishes short-term priorities to be enacted before ice-out 2012, mid-term priorities to be completed over the next six to 18 months, and long term priorities for over 18 months.

"The waters of Minnesota could be forever changed but we have the opportunity to put a stop to it now." said Darrell Gerber, program coordinator at Clean Water Action Minnesota. "It will take resolve but we can't let failure be an option."

Coalition Members: Anglers for Habitat, Audubon Minnesota – National Audubon Society, Clean Water Action, F-M Walleyes Unlimited, Fish and Wildlife Alliance, Friends of the Mississippi River, Izaak Walton League of Minnesota, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, Minnesota Coalition of Lake Associations, Minnesota Conservation Federation, Minnesota Seasonal Recreation Property Owners, Mississippi River Fund, National Parks and Conservation Association, National Wildlife Federation, New Ulm Area Sport Fishermen, St. Croix River Association, and Minnesota Trout Unlimited.

For Love of Lakes book by Darby Nelson

I have been working on a lake project to support the efforts of those concerned about our lakes. It is a book, *For Love of Lakes*. My goal for the book is to help people better understand their lakes, thereby enhancing lake stewardship.

Let me introduce myself. I am an aquatic ecologist and taught biology and environmental science to college students for 35 years. I have a long history of conservation work and am currently a board member of Conservation Minnesota and the Freshwater Society.

We love our lakes yet we not only allow, but participate in their deterioration. That puzzle led me to write the book, *For Love of Lakes*, seeking to better understand the relationship between lakes and people.

The book has received excellent reviews. In fact, I was asked to participate in Minnesota Public Radio's Midday program December 2nd to talk about the book and lake issues generally. You may have heard it.

The book also has attracted a number of organizations and community groups who have asked me to be a guest speaker on lake issues and I am happy to do so.

I have just established a website at www.darbynelson.com and have begun an educational effort on lake issues with my blog. My goal for the site is to draw in folks who have an interest in lakes and would be inclined to learn more.

My purpose in contacting you, a professional in aquatic issues, is to give you a heads up about the blog and *For Love of Lakes* and to welcome any thoughts and insights you may have on how we can collectively increase lake stewardship.

I thought you might be interested in meteorologist, Paul Douglas's December 9th blog: "Great Stocking-Stuffer Suggestion: *For Love of Lakes*. If you love Minnesota's lakes as much as I do, then you need to run out and buy this book. Author Darby Nelson manages to capture the magic of lake culture - it reads like poetry."

Soil Health Workshop – Burleigh County SWCD (North Dakota)

Dear Chippewa Team Members, Farmer Advisors, Project Partners & Supporters, I extend to you a formal invitation to take part in the "road trip" that I am organizing to the [Burleigh County Soil Conservation District's annual Soil Health Workshop on Wednesday January 18, 2012 in Bismarck, North Dakota](#).

The [Chippewa 10% Project](#) is providing transportation and lodging (double occupancy) for up to 30 people. Attached is the agenda for this year's workshop, which typically draws 350-450 attendees, the majority of whom are producers. This year's theme is "It's Not Just Dirt Anymore."

You may be asking: "Why on earth would I want to go to North Dakota in January?!?" Well, here's why I am going to North Dakota in January: I truly believe that agriculture can be practiced in ways that benefit you, me, your neighbors, my neighbors, the communities we live in, the Natural world around us and the ecosystem processes that support us all. I gain tremendous inspiration when I meet others who believe this too and who are actually figuring out **how** to do it and make it **real!**

And when I'm inspired, I want to spread that inspiration and help expand the pool of people who also believe that agriculture can be an activity that supports the whole of all our lives and are inspired to work with each other to make it so.

Since the 1990s Burleigh County Soil Conservation staff and members of the board of supervisors have been very intentional about figuring out not only how to conserve their soil resources, but how to build them - on both cropland and rangeland. Their mission is "Advancing Soil Health." Now, soil health is starting to crop up as topic of interest at various agricultural conferences around the Midwest. And that's a really good thing.

The reason to go to the Burleigh County workshop is because the folks in North Dakota have been at this for so long, they're literally ahead of the curve on this topic, *especially as it applies to cropland and at a landscape level.* (See their list of Soil Health resources at <http://www.bcsd.com/?id=23>.)

As Richard Ness and I reported in an article we wrote for the latest [Land Stewardship Letter](#), what's happening in North Dakota is some of the most exciting work in agriculture that we've seen in a couple of decades. (See <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/burleighcountystory.pdf>)

And it's exciting because they're taking Albert Einstein's advice literally – "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them." They purposely try to think outside the box when it comes to figuring out profitable, low cost crop production practices and systems that

- maintain or even increase crop yields, especially under adverse weather conditions
- dramatically improve soil structure, biological health and fertility
- virtually eliminate soil erosion and nutrient loss
- significantly reduce input costs for fuel, fertilizer and pesticides
- profitably integrate crops and livestock
- create realizable and affordable opportunities for the next generation of farmers

In other words, they are figuring out cropping systems that actually are "advancing soil health" and they have got the biological evidence to prove it - along with the economic and quality of life proofs of the benefits. The bottom line: *They're having fun doing the right thing for the Land and for their communities and are making good money doing it!*

Wouldn't you like to see this kind of innovative, profit-resulting, community supportive, land stewarding thinking take root within the Chippewa River watershed? I sure would! Wouldn't it be exciting to see how much progress we could make toward improving the clarity and purity of the water in the lakes, streams and rivers within the Chippewa River watershed if advancing soil health was at the heart of our cropping practices? I sure think so!

So let's be the catalysts for this vision. The January 18th workshop is an opportunity to help us step out of the box of what we consider possible here in the Chippewa River watershed. It's also a way to make sure we're all working not only from the same page, but from the same book.

Let me know if you would like to take part in this road trip and I will reserve your spot. And, if you'd like to invite a neighbor or a colleague, please do so and have them contact me directly. **Please RSVP by or before Friday, January 13th.**

Peace and Blessings to you the Holiday Season, Julia

P.S.: We will be heading to Bismarck from Montevideo around 1:00 p.m. on the afternoon of Tuesday, January 17th and weather permitting, return to Montevideo late on the evening of the 18th.

Trends in Suspended-Sediment Loads and Concentrations in the Mississippi River Basin, 1950–2009

By David C. Heimann, Lori A. Sprague, and Dale W. Blevins

Trends in loads and concentrations of suspended sediment and suspended sand generally were downward for stations within the Mississippi River Basin during the 60-, 34-, and 12-year periods analyzed. Sediment transport in the lower Mississippi River has historically been, and continues to be, most closely correlative to sediment contributions from the Missouri River, which generally carried the largest annual suspended-sediment load of the major Mississippi River subbasins.

The closure of Fort Randall Dam in the upper Missouri River in 1952 was the single largest event in the recorded historical decline of suspended-sediment loads in the Mississippi River Basin. Impoundments on tributaries and sediment reductions as a result of implementation of agricultural conservation practices throughout the basin likely account for much of the remaining Mississippi River sediment transport decline. Scour of the main-stem channel downstream from the upper Missouri River impoundments is likely the largest source of suspended sand in the lower Missouri River.

The Ohio River was second to the Missouri River in terms of sediment contributions, followed by the upper Mississippi and Arkansas Rivers. Declines in sediment loads and concentrations continued through the most recent analysis period (1998–2009) at available Mississippi River Basin stations. Analyses of flow-adjusted concentrations of suspended sediment indicate the recent downward temporal changes generally can be explained by corresponding decreases in streamflows.

Report location: <http://pubs.usgs.gov/sir/2011/5200/pdf/sir2011-5200.pdf>

DNR commissioner appoints 25 citizens to Game and Fish Fund oversight committees

The commissioner of natural resources has announced appointees to two newly created citizen oversight committees that monitor fish and wildlife spending by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

The new committees, the Wildlife Oversight Committee (WOC) and the Fisheries Oversight Committee (FOC), are the result of recent legislation aimed at streamlining and improving the efficiency of long-standing citizen Game and Fish Fund oversight committees created in 1994.

The 25 citizen appointees are responsible for reviewing the agency's annual Game and Fish Fund report. After discussions with agency leaders and others, the citizen committees write a report on their findings of this review. The FOC and the WOC begin work soon after the mid-December publication of the DNR's Game and Fish Report for Fiscal Year 2011.

"We look forward to working with these citizen volunteers," said Bob Meier, DNR policy and government relations director. "By sharing budget information and getting input from citizens, we increase transparency of our funding decisions. It's a process that assures license buyers and legislators that these funds are targeted at fish and wildlife programs, and we're pleased about that."

The DNR's Game and Fish Fund is the fiscal foundation for much of the state's natural resource management. The \$90 million fund gets its revenue from the sales of hunting and fishing licenses and fish and wildlife stamps; a sales tax on lottery tickets; a reimbursement based on a federal excise tax on hunting, fishing and boating equipment; and other sources.

The fund pays for the fish, wildlife, enforcement and ecological management that support 54,000 jobs in Minnesota's outdoor recreation and hospitality business.

Four representatives from each committee will be selected to serve on an umbrella Budgetary Oversight Committee (BOC) chaired by John Hunt, vice chair with Minnesota Trout Unlimited.

The BOC will develop recommendations for a biennial budget plan and an overall report on expenditures for game and fish activities. Those recommendations will be forwarded for further consideration to the DNR commissioner and to legislative committees with jurisdiction over natural resources financing.

Meier said some committee members have previous budget oversight experience. Others don't.

"However, all have a strong interest in ensuring that hunting and fishing license dollars are spent wisely," he said. More than 50 people applied for oversight committee positions. Factors in choosing the new appointees included a mix of hunting and angling interests, geographic distribution, and past experience with oversight of the Game and Fish Fund.

Appointed by DNR Commissioner Tom Landwehr are:

Fisheries Oversight Committee (FOC)

John Christian, Apple Valley; Lance Frank, Albert Lea; Marj Hart, St. Michael; Jeff Johnson, New London; John Lenczewski, Eden Prairie; Craig Pagel, Duluth; Peter Perovich, Ramsey; Charles Prokop, Hugo; Ryan Saulsbury, Baxter; John Schneider, Roseville; George Selcke, Minnetonka; Dave Thompson, Battle Lake; Pao Yang, St. Paul.

Wildlife Oversight Committee (WOC)

Kevin Bigalke, Lakeville; Jeff Byrne, Victoria; William Faber, Brainerd; Mark Jeffrey Flen, Lakeville; Cody Fox, Austin; Chuck Kartak, North Branch; Jerome Roehl, Walker; Deb Luzinski, Woodbury; Steve Okins, Willmar; Paul Spyhalski, Austin; Kong siab Thao, Little Canada; Robert Theobald, Owatonna.

Past Game and Fish Fund reports and oversight reports are available at www.dnr.state.mn.us/gamefishoversight/reports.html.

The Prairie Enthusiasts' Winter Prairie Promoter Newsletter

This private organization is committed to the protection and management of native prairie and savanna of the Upper Midwest and are a grass roots organization run mainly by volunteers. The Prairie Enthusiasts (TPE) differ from other conservation groups in its sole dedication to the preservation of the last remaining pieces of the once vast, now endangered, prairies and savannas of the Upper Midwest through land protection and management. From its beginnings in the mid-1970s, TPE evolved from small prairie preservation organizations to 11 chapters in Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

For TPE's latest newsletter: <http://www.theprairieenthusiasts.org/newsletters/PPwinter2011.pdf>

Grant Opportunities:

Round 2 now open for Conservation Partners Legacy Grants, \$3.48 million available

Organizations and governments now can apply for fish and wildlife habitat improvement grants. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is accepting Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) grant applications for projects ranging from \$5,000 to \$400,000.

Funds must be used to enhance, restore, or protect the forests, wetlands, prairies, and habitat for fish, game, or wildlife in Minnesota. A total of \$3.48 million of funding is available. Application deadline is Wednesday, Feb. 8, 2012 at 5pm CST.

"Grant funds can make a good idea a reality," said Jamie Gangaware, conservation program grants specialist. "They are a way to leave a legacy in your local community."

Gangaware said the online application system and the process underwent a major overhaul this past August. The improvements made it easier for groups to complete an application. There is also a new streamlined application for grant requests less than \$25,000.

Brad Nylin, executive director of the Minnesota Waterfowl Association, is among those who has used the new application process. "As a person who has applied for CPL Grants in previous rounds, I am very pleased with this most recent application process," said Nylin. "It's noticeably simpler and quicker to complete."

The Feb. 8 deadline gives applicants eight weeks to complete an application. Applications can be started and saved at any point, allowing the opportunity to work on it at any time from any computer.

The request for proposals is available on the CPL grants web page at mndnr.gov/habitat/cpl. Follow the [FY2012 Grant Information](#) link on the left-hand side. This document explains the program, including requirements and eligibility.

Awards for this second round of grants are expected to be announced in early April. The CPL program is an outgrowth of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, which recommended its creation to the state Legislature. Grant funds are provided annually from the Outdoor Heritage Fund, which is a portion of the revenue generated by the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Constitutional Amendment sales tax. The program is now in its fourth funding cycle, and has awarded more than 100 grants totaling \$9.7 million.

For more information on the CPL grant program, please [visit our website](#). Contact CPL staff at LSCPLgrants.DNR@state.mn.us with questions.

Job Announcements:

Conservation Agronomist

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is hiring a Conservation Agronomist in St. Paul. This position assists area resource, and district conservationists, technical service providers, and partner employees in coordinating the agronomic phase of the soil and water conservation program with other technical phases. Initiates the development of technical standards and specifications in the agronomic phase of soil and conservation. Furnishes technical guidance on the conservation planning process. Designs, supervises and evaluates field trials in the agronomic phase of the program. Prepares and distributes written reports on findings and recommendations. Maintain working relationships with agronomy representatives of state and federal agencies.

For more information, <http://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/305345700>

Watershed Grants Coordinator (High Island and Rush River)

Sibley County is hiring a coordinator for the High Island Creek and Rush River watershed projects. This position will be responsible for managing restoration and protection projects in the High Island Creek and Rush River watersheds. The position is funded primarily through state and federal grants including but not limited to Clean Water Partnership (CWP), Section 319, Clean Water Fund (CWF) and through the development of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) reports, TMDL implementation plans, restoration activities, environmental monitoring and watershed planning. Deadline is January 6, 2012 or open until successfully filled.

For more information, <http://www.co.sibley.mn.us/>

Events:

January 5th (Thursday) is the **Showing of the documentary: Okie Noodling** at the Treaty Site History Center in St. Peter. For centuries, a unique breed of fishermen has been catching monster catfish with their bare hands in the rivers and lakes of Oklahoma. Today, the tradition of "noodling" still has Okie anglers hooked. Admission is free. Sponsored by St. Peter Public Schools, Nicollet County Historical Society, River Rock Coffee and St. Peter Food Co-op. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/documentaryfilmseries.pdf>. Please contact 507-934-2160 or jessica@nchsmn.org for details.

January 5th (Thursday) is the **Showing of the documentary; Green Fire** at the New Ulm Library (17 North Broadway Street) at 7:00 p.m. *Green Fire* is the first full-length, high definition documentary film ever made about legendary conservationist Aldo Leopold. The film explores Aldo Leopold's life in the early part of the twentieth century and the many ways his land ethic idea continues to be applied all over the world today. Admission is free. Sponsored by the Many Rivers Chapter of The Prairie Enthusiast, Center for Rural Ministry and Earth Spirituality, and the Water Resources Center at Minnesota State University Mankato. For more information contact Kris Wiley, Assistant Director New Ulm Public Library, 507-359-8334 or kwiley@tds.lib.mn.us

January 17th (Tuesday) is the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance Quarterly Meeting from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Ridgewater College (2 Century Avenue SE) in Hutchinson. Sponsored by the Friends of the Minnesota Valley, the meeting begins at 6 p.m. with a social hour to give participants time to interact with each other along with sharing stories and concerns about what is happening in their part of the Minnesota River Basin. At 7 p.m., the formal part of the meeting starts, with the group striving to wrap up all discussion by 9 o'clock. For more information, <http://watershedalliance.blogspot.com/>

February 2nd (Thursday) is a **Showing of the documentary: River Revival – Working Together to Save the Minnesota River** at 7:00 p.m. at the New Ulm Public Library (17 North Broadway Street). "River Revival" tells the story of the Minnesota River Basin from its geological origins to the present day. Through the seasons and throughout the basin, the documentary examines the river's many pollution problems and highlights the efforts of people from all walks of life – academics, farmers, natural resource professionals, anglers, homeowners, students, paddlers, politicians and citizen activists – to restore the river. John Hickman, Executive Producer of River Revival will be on hand to share his insights of making the documentary and answer questions. For more information contact Kris Wiley at 507-359-8334 or kwiley@tds.lib.mn.us

February 11th (Saturday) is the **Clean Up the River Environment (CURE) Annual Meeting** at the Hollywood Theater (Main Street) in Montevideo from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. (meal served at 6:30 p.m.). Speakers include Scott Sparlin, founder of the clean up the Minnesota River movement; Dennis Frederickson, DNR Region 4 Commissioner; and Jon Olson, Board of the directors of the Mississippi Market Food Co-Op in St. Paul. Malena Handeen will be joined by artists and musicians from throughout the state to put on a special show. Cost of the meeting is \$25 per person if you register by February 7th (includes local foods banquet, door prizes and entertainment). Cost of registration after February 7th will be \$30. To reserve a spot, mail in your reservations (117 South 1st Street; Montevideo, MN 56265), call Dixie Tilden at 1-877-269-2873 or email cure@cureriver.org. For more information, http://www.curemriver.org/events.html#annual_meeting

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

Environmental/Conservation Articles:

[Outdoors group finalizes recommendations for Legacy-funded projects](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). The advisory group charged with recommending how to invest Legacy Amendment money for the outdoors has come up with their list for next year's Legislature to consider.

[Newsmaker video: Talking Minnesota's Legacy Amendment with watchdog Jim Nobles](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). Legislative Auditor Jim Nobles just completed the most comprehensive study of Minnesota's still-new Legacy Amendment to date.

[Minnesota needs clean energy, and it needs jobs; it can have both](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). With Minnesotans using more energy than ever, we must think about where all that energy comes from.

[Days may be numbered for some coal power plants](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). As pollution rules kick in, state utilities face a costly decision: retrofit or retire.

[U of M researcher: Physical barriers won't stop Asian carp](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Physical barriers will not be effective enough to stop invasive species from damaging Minnesota waters, according to a University of Minnesota researcher.

[Sell or swap? DNR considers Boundary Waters land exchange](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Officials with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will unveil a plan Friday in hopes of fixing a long-standing problem involving state land inside the Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

[Commentary: Hmong Farmers Stepping Up to Help Build a Local Food System](#) (TC Daily Planet). All farmers juggle risk - weather extremes, rising production costs and the uncertainty of market prices all affect the bottom line. Hmong farmers have additional hurdles to enter the marketplace; instability from renting rather than owning land, and lack of capital and credit to secure financial resources for farm improvements or expansion.

[Opinion: Legacy funds need better tracking](#) (St. Cloud Times). Almost exactly three years after Minnesotans voted to pay more in sales tax by approving the so-called Legacy Amendment, residents learned last month that this money, while helping intended targets, is not easily tracked.

[U of M prof. initiative to nudge consumers toward sustainability practices](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). A sustainability initiative by a University of Minnesota professor aims to teach businesses and government agencies how to encourage consumer behavior that's good for the environment.

[Commentary: A voice for wildlife](#) (TC Daily Planet). How does one put into words a plea for wildlife, living in an era when "collateral damage" is used to sanitize the butchery of war?

[Letter: Water quality issues can be solved together](#) (Mankato Free Press). In this day and age of 10-second sound bites, Internet tweets, and blog postings, I applaud The Free Press for devoting an entire series to examining water quality issues on the Minnesota River. As a lifelong farmer, I'm personally invested in the environment.

We could have saved the Earth, but we were too damned cheap. – Kurt Vonnegut Jr.

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.

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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