

### **Thirty-year research demonstrates that organic agriculture CAN feed the world**

By Sylvia Burgos, Daily Planet

Skeptics claim the world would starve if farmers were to depend on organic practices. Not so says a new report from [Rodale Institute](#), a name and force in organic agriculture and gardening for over 60 years. You may be familiar with a couple of its publications, *Organic Gardening* and *Prevention Magazine*.

The Institute recently released [the findings of a 30-year trial](#) that compared the yields, fuel requirements, emissions and profitability of organic vs. conventionally-farmed fields of corn and soybeans. Why these crops? Because 49% of America's cropland is devoted to these commodities. The results are nothing if not astounding:

- Organic yields match conventional yields
- Organic outperforms conventional in years of drought
- Organic farming systems build rather than deplete soil organic matter, making it a more sustainable system
- Organic farming uses 45% less energy and is more efficient
- Conventional systems produce 40% more greenhouse gases
- Organic farming systems are more profitable than conventional

In this [Deep Roots Radio](#) interview, Rodale Institute Executive Director Mark Smallwood explains the findings in greater detail and describes the Institute's research now and going forward. He invites farmers to consider these results and to contact Rodale with questions and for information about transitioning to organic farming practices.

Food lovers can consider this encouragement to ask for organically-produced and processed foods wherever you shop. Do you keep an organic garden in St. Paul or Minneapolis, Madison, WI, San Diego, Colorado, New Jersey, Staten Island or in the northern reaches of Alaska? I think this interview will strike familiar chords. I'd love to get your reactions.

For the audio portion: [Thirty-year research demonstrates that organic agriculture CAN feed the world](#)

### **MPCA wants to stop sediment from entering Minn. River**

by [Stephanie Hemphill](#), *Minnesota Public Radio*, February 21, 2012

St. Paul, Minn. — As much as 90 percent of the sediment going into the Minnesota River system must be stopped if the river is to meet government standards for water clarity, said Minnesota Pollution Control Agency officials.

Sediment from fields and river banks clouds the river's waters. Most of the sediment comes from sources that are not regulated by the Clean Water Act, such as agriculture.

The MPCA worked on a report on the river for several years, but it's only a start, said spokesman Forrest Peterson.

"It's a report on the current status, and the next big step is to work together with citizens, communities, landowners to figure out ways to start cleaning up the waterways. The MPCA is taking public comment through April.

### **Strong interest shown in state habitat conservation grants**

Nonprofit and other organizations have taken a strong interest in the latest round of grant money available for habitat conservation, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Jamie Gangaware, a DNR grants specialist, said the agency received 69 applications for \$3.5 million available through the state's Conservation Partners Legacy program. Requests totaled \$6.6 million.

"It was great to see such strong interest," said Gangaware. "It shows that many organizations throughout the state want to help restore, enhance and protect fish, game and wildlife habitat." She said the agency's newly improved online application process may have contributed to the strong application numbers, too.

The grant application deadline was Feb. 8. A technical panel comprised of experts from inside and outside the DNR will review the applications and make funding recommendations to DNR Commissioner Tom Landwehr. Grants will be awarded in April.

The Conservation Partners Legacy Program was recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) and enacted by the 2009 Minnesota Legislature. Funding has been provided annually from the Outdoor Heritage Fund, one of three conservation-related accounts funded through the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Constitutional Amendment.

Local, state and federal nonprofit organizations and governmental entities are eligible to apply for grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$400,000. To date, more than 100 grants totaling \$9.6 million have been awarded.

"Habitat conservation is an important mission of many organizations," said Gangaware. "This grant program helps those organizations accomplish their missions in a way that was not possible in the past."

A list of this year's applications can be found on the Conservation Partners Legacy website, under FY2012 Grant Information [http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/habitat/cpl/2012\\_info.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/habitat/cpl/2012_info.html).

A complete list of the prior grant recipients can be found at [http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/grants/habitat/lessard\\_sams/all-awarded-grants.pdf](http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/grants/habitat/lessard_sams/all-awarded-grants.pdf).

### **Notes on the Opposition to the Proposed Quarry less than 1,500' from Ortonville, MN**

*By Annette and Kay Fernholz, Earthrise Farm*

Earthrise Farm has already sent out information about Strata Corporation's plan to quarry the granite outcroppings visible from US Highway 75 on the way to Ortonville. Following this example of democracy on a local level is sometimes difficult with the many twists and turns, legal jargon, back-room planning and all of the other mumbo-jumbo you would expect to take place only on the national stage. It is surprising to see such tomfoolery so close to home. There is a citizen's movement to stop this plan and everyone seems to have their own passionate reasons why Strata should head back to North Dakota.

On **Sunday, February 26 at Noon** individuals interested in preserving this space for whatever reason should plan to attend a pot luck planning meeting at the **Clinton Memorial Building** in Clinton, MN. If you are having trouble following this saga of extractive economy meets under-the-table deal-making, don't worry -- you are not alone and there will be a brief discussion of "where we are now" followed by a breakout session to plan presentations on different topics for what will be the last public hearing before the commissioners vote to approve or disapprove Strata's conditional use permit. The aforementioned public hearing was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, March 13 at 10am. Earthrise Farm will send out additional information when further plans are solidified. For the meeting this Sunday, we will car-pool from Earthrise Farm, leaving around 10:30am.

The staff of Earthrise Farm are also writing letters to the editors of the local newspapers. More letter writers would be appreciated. If you have ever appreciated the granite outcroppings while traveling to and from Ortonville, please consider joining us in this letter writing campaign. Contact Louis West ([truths.forsaken@gmail.com](mailto:truths.forsaken@gmail.com)) for more information.

### **Announcing the South Central MN Corn and Soybean Day, March 5<sup>th</sup> in Fairmont**

*By Lizabeth Stahl, Extension Educator in Crops*

How are present and future weather trends expected to affect crop production? What should farmers know about drainage effects on water quality? What do crop budgets look like for 2012 and what are the latest strategies in weed management? How can I decide which cover crops are best suited for my field? Hear these questions addressed and more at the "South Central MN Corn and Soybean Day" on March 5<sup>th</sup> at the Knights of Columbus in Fairmont. Registration will start at 9:00 and the program will run from 9:30 to 4:00. U of MN Extension and Rural Advantage are sponsoring this program, with support from AgStar.

This year's highlighted speaker is Mark Seeley, University of MN Extension Climatologist and Meteorologist. Mark publishes the weekly "Weather Talk" newsletter, and he can be heard each Friday morning on Minnesota Public Radio's Morning Edition. Dr. Seeley will be looking at past, present and predicted weather conditions and anticipated effects on crop production. Other speakers from the U of MN include Dave Bau, Extension Educator in Farm Business Management, who will discuss Crop Budgets in 2012; Liz Stahl, Extension Educator in Crops, who will discuss "Taking Control" of your weed and pest management; Jill Sackett, Conservation Agronomist, who will talk about the Minnesota Cover Crop Decision Tool; and Brad Carlson, Extension Educator in Crops, who will talk about water quality and what farmers should know about the Clean Water Act.

Nicki Miranowski (FSA), Carissa Spencer (NRCS) and Kathy Smith (SWCD) will provide a program update. Martin County Commissioner Jack Potter and Deb Mosloski, Martin County Ditch Administrator, will discuss Public Drainage System Redetermination, and Agricultural Wetland Mitigation Banking will be discussed by Jeremy Maul (BWSR).

A registration fee will be collected at the door to help cover program costs and 3.5 CEUs have been applied for. For further details about the program, check out the program flyer at: <http://z.umn.edu/scmncsbday2012>.

Please contact Liz Stahl at 507-372-3900/ [stah0012@umn.edu](mailto:stah0012@umn.edu) or Jill Sackett (507-238-5449/ [sacke032@umn.edu](mailto:sacke032@umn.edu)) if you have any questions about the program. In case of inclement weather, please check with the Farm Information Line (1-800-232-9077) for weather related updates.

### **MPCA invites comments on pollution report for South Metro Mississippi**

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has completed a draft pollution-reduction report for the stretch of the Mississippi River that runs from St. Paul to Red Wing. The public is invited to comment on the report through April 27. The agency also encourages those interested in the project to attend an open house March 29, from noon to 9 p.m., at the St. James Hotel in Red Wing.

The agency's goal is for water in this stretch of the river, called the "South Metro Mississippi," to become clear enough to grow aquatic plants that benefit fish and wildlife. The South Metro Mississippi is much healthier than in past decades due to improvements in treating wastewater and rainwater runoff. However, the Mississippi remains severely impaired by suspended soil particles that prevent sunlight from penetrating the water. This inhibits the growth of aquatic plants and reduces the quality of habitat for fish and wildlife.

With extensive input from citizens and scientists, the MPCA has conducted this project, called a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). This refers to the amount of a pollutant — in this case, sediment — that the river can accept and still meet state water-quality standards. The TMDL is part of a nationwide effort under the federal Clean Water Act to identify and clean up pollution in streams, rivers and lakes.

Although the South Metro Mississippi is only about 64 miles long, its drainage area is immense: about 50,000 square miles, or half of Minnesota, drain to this stretch of the Mississippi. Based on more than 20 years of monitoring and more than 20 studies by agencies and universities, the MPCA recommends reductions in total suspended solids from river systems that drain to the Mississippi, including the Upper Mississippi River, the Minnesota River, and the Cannon River, as well as smaller streams that drain directly to the Mississippi. In addition, municipalities will need to reduce sediment in their stormwater and wastewater discharges.

"This project has been a big undertaking for the MPCA. We are talking about a high-profile and highly valued resource," said Bob Finley, regional manager for the MPCA. "We are looking at changes needed across half of Minnesota – the area of land that drains to the Mississippi – to achieve clearer water in the river and upstream waters. For this project, we have intensely studied the sources of sediment coming into the river and how that erosion is happening. We have a much better understanding now of these river systems. While more research is needed, we know enough to move ahead."

The draft report is available on the MPCA's [South Metro Mississippi TMDL Turbidity Impairment](#) webpage. The deadline for comments, which must be in writing, is 4:30 p.m. on April 27. Submit comments to Bob Finley, 12 Civic Center Dr., Ste. 2165, Mankato, MN 56001 (fax 507-389-5422, email [robert.finley@state.mn.us](mailto:robert.finley@state.mn.us)). Finley can be reached by phone at 507-344-5247 or 800-657-3864. Written comments must include a statement of your interest in the report; a statement of the action you wish the MPCA to take, including specific references to sections of the draft report you believe should be changed; and specific reasons for your position.

The MPCA also invites comments on the pollution-reduction report for the Minnesota River, which has been shown to contribute a majority of the sediment flowing into the South Metro Mississippi.

After receiving public comments, the MPCA will revise the draft reports and submit them to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for approval. Following EPA approval, the MPCA will develop a plan to reduce the amount of sediment entering the rivers and upstream waters.

### **March 12 Third Crop Producer Meeting on Marketing 3<sup>rd</sup> Crops**

Taking that step from hobby to small business can be scary. If you have been thinking about starting a small business around your 3<sup>rd</sup> crops or value-added products or need some tips for the small business you already have, the upcoming Third Crop Producer Meeting is for you. Join University of Minnesota Extension and Rural Advantage on March 12, 2012, for a workshop on "Marketing 3<sup>rd</sup> Crops." This workshop will be held at the Knights of Columbus (920 East 10<sup>th</sup> Street) in Fairmont, Minnesota. Registration begins at 9:30am. The morning session will be from 10:00am - 12:00pm and the afternoon session will be from 1:00pm - 3:00pm.

The morning session will begin with a presentation on financial risk management by Dave Bau, University of Minnesota Extension. Bau will discuss the financial information you need to know before deciding to start a small business. The second presenter, also with University of Minnesota Extension, will be Bruce Schwartau. Schwartau will be talking about how to utilize different aspects of the Internet to benefit your business operation. The last speaker of the morning session will be Nicki Miranowski, Farm Service Agency – Faribault and Martin Counties, who will be sharing information about the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP).

To kick-off the afternoon session, Kent Janssen, Farm Business Management instructor with Minnesota West College, will be sharing techniques for successful record keeping for your farm or small business. A change of schedule will then bring two new topics to the day. Jill Sackett with University of Minnesota Extension will share tips on using Facebook to reach clients and others interested in your products. Jeff Jensen, Rural Advantage, will follow with information on marketing woody decorative florals. To wrap up the day, a local small business owner will share his experiences from the trenches. Gordy Toupal, owner/operator of Center Creek Orchard, will discuss the highs and lows of starting his business only a few short years ago.

The 2012 Third Crop Producer Meetings are free of charge and no pre-registration is needed. Feel free to attend those topics that your schedule allows or stay for the entire day.

For a full agenda, check out the UMN Extension – Conservation Agronomy Facebook page or find event details at: <http://www.facebook.com/events/301336833220934/>

For weather related cancellations, contact the University of Minnesota Extension Farm Information Line at

1-800-232-9077.

Contact for this event: Jill Sackett, UMN Extension / Rural Advantage, 507-238-5449 or [sacke032@umn.edu](mailto:sacke032@umn.edu)

### **Job Announcements:**

#### **CRWP Summer Intern**

The Chippewa River Watershed Project (CRWP) is accepting applications for a summer intern. The CRWP is a grant based partnership with goals of improving water quality in the Chippewa River and its tributaries in western Minnesota. The Chippewa River Watershed Project works towards this goal through civic engagement, monitoring and best management practices implementation activities.

Internship responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Stream transparency data collection
- Collecting water grab samples for lab analysis
- Operating basic water quality monitoring equipment
- Taking stream flow measurements
- Assisting with water quality data collection, entry and analysis
- Macroinvertebrate sampling and identification
- Assisting with best management practices as needed
- Preparing newsletters and brochures
- Attending/Participating in meetings, workshops, events through the education/outreach program of the CRWP

Seeking individuals pursuing degrees in Environmental Studies/Science, Biology, Hydrology, Soil and Water Conservation or related fields. Coursework in biology, chemistry, or hydrology recommended. Preference will be given to candidates who have completed their sophomore year of post-secondary education. Individuals must be responsible, highly motivated and able to work independently as well as with a team. The ability to accurately collect and record data is essential. Applicant will be expected to work outdoors, sometimes in adverse conditions and perform duties that require some physical labor. Applicant must possess a current valid driver's license.

This is a temporary, seasonal environmental internship for approximately 12 weeks in the summer of 2012. Interns will work approximately 40 hours a week. Flexible start date in May 2012 and end date in August 2012. Wage: \$10.00/hr.

For more information contact Jennifer at 320-269-2139 x120 or email [jennifer.hoffman@chippewariver.org](mailto:jennifer.hoffman@chippewariver.org)

To apply, send resume including cover letter to: Chippewa River Watershed Project; 629 N 11th Street, Suite 17; Montevideo, MN 56265. APPLICATION DEADLINE: Must be postmarked by FRIDAY, MARCH 16th, 2012.

#### **Prairie Island Internship**

The Prairie Island Indian Community is hiring an Environmental Water Resource Intern for 32 to 40 hours a week at \$12.00 per hour.

The Environmental Water Resource Intern will assist the Water Resource Specialist in collecting water quality and biological data from area lakes, rivers, and wetlands throughout the summer of 2012.

#### **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Collect water quality and biological samples from area lakes, rivers and wetlands.
- Complete habitat surveys and descriptions of area aquatic resources
- Calibrate and maintain sampling equipment.
- Utilize GIS/GPS software to assist in preparing area maps and reports.

- Enter data into the PIIC Environmental Database.
- Perform analytical procedures in laboratory setting.

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

### **National Trout Center Internship**

Four internships are being offered by the National Trout Center in Preston, Minnesota from mid-May to August. The NTC is an environmental learning center created in 2009 and dedicated to educating the public about the coldwater fishery resources of the unglaciated region of the upper Midwest, comprising southeastern Minnesota, northeastern Iowa, southwestern Wisconsin and northeastern Illinois. Interns will assist in developing educational programs, exhibits, displays, clinics, workshops, and writing for print and multi-media dissemination. Subject matter will include basic geology, biology, natural history and fisheries of the region with special emphasis on aquatic ecology, entomology, trout and their habitat requirements. Audiences will include persons of all ages and abilities, from individuals to families, and small and large groups. Interns will participate in programs for schools, 4-H groups, scouts, community recreation groups, senior citizens and prospective sponsors of the NTC. They will maintain records of visitations to the center and requests for information, and will construct and maintain exhibits and compile information from library, Internet, and professional resources in the region. If desired, interns can do an intern project for credit in consultation with their advisor in their educational institution.

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

### **Homegrown Minneapolis Consultant**

Part-time consultant to coordinate the work of Homegrown Minneapolis (HGM) to improve the local food environment, both as an economic development tool and a means to improve access to healthy foods for city residents. This position will coordinate the implementation of HGM recommendations/projects in partnership with other city departments, community-based organizations and other stakeholders, and will staff the Minneapolis Food Council. This position will identify funding opportunities and participate in writing grant proposals to fund HGM projects. Services are to be provided between April 1 and December 31, 2012 at a cost not to exceed \$50,000. Paper proposals due February 28 noon.

[www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@health/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-087126.pdf](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@health/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-087126.pdf)

### **Agricultural Marketing Specialist**

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture has posted a vacancy for an agricultural marketing specialist to work with the Minnesota Grown program. Here are some of the duty highlights: *conduct consumer research for Minnesota apple orchards, berry farms, and farmers markets; assist with editing and distributing the annual Minnesota Grown Directory and promotional materials; assist in updating the Minnesota Grown Facebook page and website; communicate with Minnesota Grown members; and coordinate a booth at the Minnesota State Fair along with other various events and trade shows on behalf of the Minnesota Grown Program.*

This is a temporary position that is funded until February 2013. Applications must be received by February 21, 2012.

You will find the full posting, application instructions, and contact info for questions you may have at: <https://statejobs.doer.state.mn.us/JobPosting/491e7753e997f9b9483a7381ac3ebb1e/View>

### **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](http://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:**

February 29<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday) is **Learn to Make Self-watering Grow Boxes** starting at 6:00 p.m. at the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry (170 Good Counsel Drive, Mankato). Donations \$5-\$15 (more if you can, less if you can't). For more information contact Lisa Coons at 507-389-4272 or [lcoons@ssndmankato.org](mailto:lcoons@ssndmankato.org)

March 1<sup>st</sup> (Thursday) is a lecture in St. Paul on **Corporate Sustainability** by Mindy Lubber, president of a Boston nonprofit that leads and pressures corporations to become sustainable in the carbon they emit and the water they use. Sponsored by the Freshwater Society and the University of Minnesota College of Biological Sciences. To learn more and register: [www.freshwater.org](http://www.freshwater.org).

March 3<sup>rd</sup> (Saturday) is the **Snow Folk** at Earthrise Farm from 6:00 p.m. to whenever p.m. A gathering to celebrate Winter awakenings and homegrown harmonies. Music from The Strollers, Homemade Jam, Colleen and Emily, Carol Ford, Louis West, Jazz a' la Darwin and Jazz a' la Richard. Earthrise Farm is located at 2580 250<sup>th</sup> and for more information, 320-752-1700 or [erfarm@hotmail.com](mailto:erfarm@hotmail.com)

March 3<sup>rd</sup> (Saturday) is a **Nongame Wildlife in MN presentation** by Laurinda Brown of the DNR at 1:00 p.m. in the Gander Mountain Lodge Mankato store. Her presentation will include info on Snakes, Turtles, Dragonfly's, Birds etc. Bring the kids she has lots of posters and literature. Laurinda also will inform us how to document sightings for the MN County Biological Survey of rare and threatened species.

March 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> (Sunday – Wednesday) is the **Upper Midwest Stream Restoration Symposium at the Holiday Inn Metrodome in Minneapolis** sponsored by the Partnership for River Restoration and Science in the Upper Midwest. To register and for more information, <http://prsum.org/content/registration>. The registration deadline in January 27, 2012.

March 17<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) is **Kids Day** at Earthrise Farm & Education Center from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Join us for some Fun on the farm. Activities include Self-guided Farm Tours, Grow-Your-Own Green Clover (in recycled containers), DIY Sock Puppets and Seasonal Snacks. Earthrise Farm is located at 2580 250<sup>th</sup> and for more information, 320-752-1700 or [erfarm@hotmail.com](mailto:erfarm@hotmail.com).

March 13<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday) join the **Scott Clean Water Education Program for a free presentation about Blue Thumb, Planting for Clean Water** at 6:15 pm the McColl Pond Environmental Learning Center in Savage. Become inspired to create landscaping features that work to keep our waters clean. See photos of past projects and learn about the benefits of creating a raingarden and stabilizing your lakeshore with native plants. After attending the presentation, you will be able to receive design and installation assistance with creating your beautiful Blue Thumb, Planting for Clean Water raingarden or native shoreline. Some residents may qualify for a grant to help offset the costs of the Blue Thumb project. Registration encouraged. Contact Dan at 952-492-5424 or [dmiller@co.scott.mn.us](mailto:dmiller@co.scott.mn.us) to reserve your spot today!

March 15<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) join the **Scott Clean Water Education Program for a free presentation about Blue Thumb, Planting for Clean Water** at 6:15 pm at the Spring Lake Township Hall in Prior Lake. Become inspired to create landscaping features that work to keep our waters clean. See photos of past projects and learn about the benefits of creating a rain garden and stabilizing your lakeshore with native plants. After attending the presentation, you will be able to receive design and installation assistance with creating your beautiful Blue Thumb, Planting for Clean Water rain garden or native shoreline. Some residents may qualify for a grant to help offset the costs of the Blue Thumb project. Registration encouraged. Contact Dan at 952-492-5424 or [dmiller@co.scott.mn.us](mailto:dmiller@co.scott.mn.us) to reserve your spot today!

March 17<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) is the **Watershed Solutions Summit** 2012 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Normandale Community College in the Auditorium of the Fine Arts Wing (9700 France Ave S) in Bloomington sponsored by the Minnesota Division Izaak Walton League of America and Minnesota Conservation Federation. How do we get more Watershed Solutions on the ground for clean water, habitat and ag production? Can Stakeholders and Policy merge to overcome barriers and find opportunities to get to solutions? Do the Great Water Quality Agreement, Great Lakes...[Read More](#)

March 19<sup>th</sup> (Monday) is the **Minnesota River Board Meeting** from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon at the **Knights of Columbus Hall (920 East 10<sup>th</sup> Street)** in Fairmont. For information: 507-389-5491 or [karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu](mailto:karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu)

March 21<sup>st</sup> – April 25<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday) is **Hungry for Change: Food, Ethics and Sustainability** – a six week discussion course sponsored by the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry (170 Good Counsel Drive) to be held on Wednesdays starting at 6:00 p.m. Space in this course is limited and is expected to fill. Please register to participate and receive your book before class begins. Participants in this course will: Explore the interconnected nature of food systems and our relationship to them; Examine the impact our food choices have on our health, the health of others and the health of the planet; Consider the ethical and political implications of our current food system and our personal food choices. Cost is \$30-\$50 (More if you can, less if you can't) This fee includes the cost of the course book which has thought-provoking readings, discussion questions, and goal setting and for each session. For more information and to register contact Lisa Coons at 507-389-4272 or [lcoons@ssndmankato.org](mailto:lcoons@ssndmankato.org)

March 27<sup>h</sup> (Tuesday) is the **Green Fire showing** at 7:00 p.m. at Belgrade Avenue United Methodist Church (325 Sherman Street) in North Mankato. This is a biographical film about seminal environmentalist Aldo Leopold. The program is sponsored by the Many Rivers Chapter of the Prairie Enthusiasts and the Mankato Paddling and Outings Club. For more information, contact Peggy at [peggyk@hickorytech.net](mailto:peggyk@hickorytech.net)

March 29<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) is a **Conference on Precision Conservation**, the science and philosophy of putting conservation practices at the places on the landscape where they will do the most good in preventing erosion and improving water quality. NRCS Chief Dave White is keynote speaker. Sponsored by the Freshwater Society and a number of partners. To learn more and register: [www.freshwater.org](http://www.freshwater.org).

March 29<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) is the **Minnesota Soil and Water Conservation Society's annual meeting** in conjunction with the Freshwater Society's day-long conference: "Precision Conservation: Technology Redefining Local Water Quality Practices." Precision conservation effectively and efficiently targets scarce resources to the spots on the landscape where they will do the most good. Learn about the latest technology -- much of it based on LiDAR scanning – that pinpoints "sweet spots" where runoff, erosion and pollution are disproportionately severe and the potential for improvement is disproportionately great. Speakers include NRCS Chief Dave White; Dr. David Mulla, University Soil Scientist and a pioneer in employing modern LiDAR-based technology in the service of conservation; Dr. Gerald Van Amburg, president of the Buffalo-Red River Watershed Board; and several other Minnesota expert conservationists sharing rural and urban examples. The event will be at Silverwood Park in St. Anthony, MN. Visit the Freshwater Society web site (<http://freshwater.org/>) for a current agenda and registration information. The Chapter annual meeting will follow the conference .

April 12<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) is the **Second Annual Ice Out/Loon In Fundraising Event** sponsored by the Minnesota Freshwater Society from 5:30 to 8:30 at the Lafayette Club in Minnetonka Beach. The event will include Exciting silent auction items Including...Twins Suite behind home plate for 14 guests with food and drink; kayaking around Split Rock Lighthouse; silver loon pendant on a silver chain; a sightseeing cruise on Lake Minnetonka; a week at a resort near Steamboat Springs and much more! Emcee is Paul Huttner, MPR Meteorologist and there will also be a raffle, hilarious loon calling contest, great music, food and beverages. For more information click [here](#), or contact Diane Lynch at 952-314-8134 or [dlynch@freshwater.org](mailto:dlynch@freshwater.org)



[May 21<sup>st</sup> \(Monday\) 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 \[karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu\]\(mailto:karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu\)](#)

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

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

[November 19<sup>th</sup> \(Monday\) 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 \[karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu\]\(mailto:karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu\)](#)

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

### **[Environmental/Conservation Articles:](#)**

[Coal's changing economics trigger new view of future](#) (The Energy Collective). We've long known about the hidden health and environmental costs associated with burning coal, but until very recently, no one questioned that it was a cheap source of electricity for utility customers.

[Smaller, renewable energy projects setting roots across west central Minnesota](#) (Wes Central Tribune). It's hard to miss the development of renewable energy at the University of Minnesota campus in Morris.

[Pheasant hunters: USDA announces habitat initiative](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced a new habitat-preservation initiative as part of its Conservation Reserve Program, which pays farmers to plant natural habitat instead of crops.

[Lookouts needed for invasive pests](#) (Alexandria Echo Press). Minnesota is looking for volunteers to join the hundreds of citizens who already have stepped up to help keep an eye out for new infestations of emerald ash borer and other destructive invasive pests.

[Should locals have power to stall controversial projects?](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Bill would limit citizens' ability to delay controversial projects. Legislation would limit the power of local activists to stall big projects.

[We should tear down more dams](#) (TC Daily Planet). Unfortunately, the U.S. has been a dam-building nation since the beginning. Perhaps a thousand have been removed.

[Gardener puts up stink, Minneapolis considers changing composting law](#) (MinnPost). In an ancient greenhouse behind a bar in Maplewood, the Mother of All Compost Piles is waiting for spring.

[Minnesota's moose population continues to fall](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). In the face of a declining moose population, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources says it will reconsider having a moose hunt in the fall.

[Feds spend \\$50 million on Great Lakes carp fight](#) (Associated Press). The Obama administration will spend about \$50 million this year to shield the Great Lakes from greedy Asian carp, including first-time water sampling to determine whether the destructive fish have established a foothold in Lakes Michigan and Erie.

[Darby Nelson: A modern-day Thoreau](#) (MinnPost). Nelson has written a book with the title “For Love of Lakes.” It is a finalist for the Minnesota Book Award.

[Women. Young. Older. Farmers. Everywhere.](#) (TC Daily Planet). The poetry slam session was well underway when I gathered up my coat and quietly made my way out of the ballroom.

[Nonprofit’s model should be emulated, not criticized](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune).

*We let a river shower its banks with a spirit that invades the people living there, and we protect that river, knowing that without its blessings the people have no source of soul – Thomas Moore*

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,](#)

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