

Watershed wide, Citizen-Led, Water Quality Conversation Scheduled for Feb 2 in Owatonna

The public is invited to attend a watershed wide, citizen-led conversation on water quality issues facing the Straight, Cannon, Le Sueur and Mississippi Rivers to be held on Thursday, February 2nd at the Holiday Inn & Suites 2365 43rd St NW Owatonna, MN from 5 to 8 p.m. The event is free, but advanced registration is required.

The conversation is being sponsored by a wide range of grassroots citizen groups, farm groups, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and InCommons. The purpose of the meeting is to explore how citizens, businesses and government can share leadership by collaborating to restore water quality in the four river systems.

The meeting will feature a meal and round table discussions facilitated by InCommons - a community-based initiative that connects Minnesotans to share tools, knowledge and resources to address complicated problems.

The Owatonna dialogue will be patterned after a similar round table discussion held in Mankato on December 6, 2011. More than 130 people attended the discussion that featured farmers, environmental advocates, government agency workers and recreational users of the river all sitting at the same table to discuss the issues and seek common ground.

The public is invited welcome to attend. Farmers and landowners are especially encouraged to participate. To register for the meal and dialogue or for more information, call [1-877-269-2873](tel:1-877-269-2873) by January 25, 2012. Seating is available for 80 people on a first come, first served basis. Organizers are expecting a full house, so don't delay.

For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/owatonna-meeting.pdf>

Minnesota River Watershed Alliance meeting on January 17th in Hutchinson

Join the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance (Watershed Alliance) for its quarterly meeting on January 17th (Tuesday) from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Ridgewater College in Hutchinson. This is a great chance for the public to hear what is happening in the Minnesota River Basin.

Those attending the meeting will have a chance to choose a "Clean Up the Minnesota River" project to work on in 2012. In the past years, the Watershed Alliance has strived to enroll critically sensitive land into permanent conservation easements, develop a friendship tour between citizens in the MN River Basin and Lake Pepin, and supported the effort to produce a film documentary on the Minnesota River.

The January quarterly meeting is being sponsored by the Friends of the Minnesota Valley (Friends). This nonprofit organization formed in 1982 to support the Minnesota River Valley National Wildlife Refuge through citizen action and advocacy.

One of the Friends more successful outreach programs is their "Community Cleanups for Water Quality," which helps individuals, organizations and local governments improve water quality and river aesthetics. The clean-ups keep leaves, dirt and other junk from getting into storm water systems and reduce the amount of excessive phosphorus in the waterways. For more information on Friends, <http://www.friendsofminnvalley.org/>

This quarterly meeting goes from 6 to 9 p.m. at Ridgewater College (room 141) in Hutchinson. Ridgewater College is located at 2nd Century Avenue SE on the south end of Hutchinson. The Watershed Alliance encourages landowners and recreational users to be part of this effort to improve and protect the Minnesota River Basin.

We begin at 6 p.m. with a social hour and food to give participants time to interact with each other and share stories and concerns about what is happening in their part of the Minnesota River Watershed. At 7 p.m. the formal part of the meeting starts, with the group striving to wrap up all discussion by 9 o'clock.

The Watershed Alliance is an organized network of citizens, public agencies and private organizations dedicated to communicating the benefits of an ecologically healthy Minnesota River Watershed to others and are actively working toward its improvement and protection.

Our goal is to meet four times a year as we strive to communicate what is happening in the Minnesota River Watershed through many formats including the internet and print media.

Public meetings on updating list of impaired waters slated for January

St. Paul, Minn. — The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) will hold a series of public meetings throughout the state in January to discuss the more than 500 impairments that are proposed to be added to the draft list of the state's impaired lakes and stream segments.

The meetings will be held:

- Wednesday, Jan. 11, 1-3 p.m., MPCA Office, 714 Lake Ave., Detroit Lakes
- Thursday, Jan. 12, 1-3 p.m., MPCA Office, 520 Lafayette Road N., St. Paul
- Wednesday, Jan. 18, 1- 3 p.m., MPCA Office 7678 College Road, Baxter
- Thursday, Jan. 19, 1-3 p.m., MPCA Office, 525 Lake Ave., Duluth
- Tuesday, Jan. 24, 2-4 p.m., McKinneys on Southside, 300 14th St. S., Benson
- Wednesday, Jan. 25, 1-3 p.m. Blue Earth County Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mankato

Updated every two years, the draft 2012 list contains 2,171 impairments that require Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) "cleanup" studies. The inventory of all impaired waters now totals 3,638, which includes impairments in need of TMDLs, those with completed TMDLs that have not yet been restored, and impairments due to natural sources. Water bodies can be listed for more than one pollutant or segment.

The proposed new listings are dominated by impaired biological communities (44 percent of new listings) and bacteria impairments (23 percent of new listings). Also new to the draft 2012 list is the first-ever listing of chlorpyrifos, a broad-spectrum insecticide used on food and non-food crops, with greenhouse and turf applications.

Four impairments are proposed to be removed from the list as a result of water-quality-improvement activities in the watershed.

The draft 2012 list is the first developed under a refined approach to assessment that focuses on comprehensive assessment of water quality within major watersheds. For the 2012 list, the assessed watersheds are: Buffalo, Cedar, Chippewa, Le Sueur, Little Fork, Mississippi (Red Wing), Mississippi (St. Cloud), North Fork Crow, Pomme de Terre, Red River of the North (Headwaters), Root, St. Croix (Stillwater), St. Louis, Sauk, Shell Rock, and Tamarac (Red River of the North).

Including the draft 2012 List, the MPCA has assessed 21 percent of Minnesota's 81 major watersheds. Monitoring is completed or under way on an additional 22 percent of watersheds. The state is on track to monitor and assess all of the state's watersheds on a 10-year schedule.

"Monitoring the state's waters and determining their health is an involved process," Shannon Lotthammer, MPCA manager, said. "We first gather the monitoring data, including data from local partners, which can take two years, then analyze those data to determine if the waters meet state and federal standards for swimming, boating and fishing. If they don't, the waters are listed as impaired and undergo further study to determine how they can be restored to a healthy condition."

The draft list is developed by the MPCA, and then sent to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for approval following an extensive public comment process. The proposed 2012 Impaired Waters list and methodology for listing will be available on the MPCA's [Impaired Waters List webpage](#) before the first public meeting. The list will be formally on public notice from Jan. 23 through Feb. 27, 2012. Submit

questions, comments, or requests for additional information to Howard Markus at MPCA, 520 Lafayette Road N., Saint Paul, MN 55155, call Markus at 651-757-2551, or email him at howard.markus@state.mn.us.

DNR launches new prevention efforts in 2012 to slow spread of aquatic invasive species

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) announced today its new strategies to fight the spread of aquatic invasive species across the state in 2012.

The efforts take a two-pronged approach: to increase inspections and decontamination of boats at and near water bodies, especially those infested with aquatic invasive species; and to increase awareness that the public must do its part not to spread invasive species.

"The DNR cannot be at every boat ramp this summer, making sure boaters, anglers and other water users are not bringing zebra mussels and other invasive species to public waters," said DNR Commissioner Tom Landwehr. "Our message is these waters belong to everyone – so everyone needs to be responsible for not moving these invaders."

More information about responsibilities for boaters and other watercraft operators is available at www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/preventspread.html.

In 2012, the DNR will institute new invasive species check stations, hire more watercraft inspectors, deploy more decontamination units and increase its public awareness efforts – all to stop the spread of zebra mussels and other aquatic invaders.

Here is an overview:

ROAD CHECK STATIONS

A new state law gives DNR authority to operate check stations that require motorists transporting boats, trailers and other marine equipment to be inspected for aquatic invasive species.

The check stations, which will begin this year, will route motorists pulling boats or other marine equipment into staging areas, where they will be greeted, and a brief conversation will take place prior to their boats and other water-related equipment being inspected. Among other questions, inspectors will ask where the boat is coming from and how long it has been in the water.

If the boat or water-related equipment fails the inspection, or inspectors believe the boat may be carrying aquatic invasive species, the motorist and boat water related equipment will be directed to an area where high-pressure and hot water will be used to decontaminate the equipment. Conservation officers may also take enforcement action if the motorist or boat owner has not complied with laws prohibiting the transportation of aquatic invasive species.

MORE DECONTAMINATION UNITS

The DNR will purchase 20 high-pressure, hot-water decontamination units that will be operated at zebra mussel infested waters, high-use destination lakes and at DNR Enforcement check points.

These new units will be in addition to the three units purchased and deployed last fall around Detroit Lakes, Alexandria, Brainerd (including Mille Lacs), and the Twin Cities at high-use accesses on zebra mussel infested waters.

ADDITIONAL STAFF

The DNR will hire 150 new authorized watercraft inspectors who will be deployed around the state. Three additional invasive species specialists will also be hired to work with lake associations, local units of government and individuals on local prevention and management efforts.

FISHING TOURNAMENTS

DNR fisheries biologists will team up with the agency's Aquatic Invasive Species Program to conduct watercraft inspection and decontamination demonstrations at five to seven large fishing contests being held on zebra-mussel-infested lakes. The goal is to teach tournament organizers how to lead and

implement inspections and decontamination programs at their tournaments and promote prevention efforts among tournaments anglers.

NEW DECAL

The DNR has created a new decal explaining invasive species laws and procedures boaters should use to not spread the invaders. The decal contains an additional "Check the Drain Plug" decal that can be cut off and placed on the trailer to remind boaters to replace their plug before launching.

Decals will be distributed through boat dealers, DNR offices and state parks and watercraft licensing outlets. Visitors to boating and sports shows can get them from DNR staff starting in mid-January.

NEW EDUCATIONAL VIDEO

With new funding received from the 2011 Legislature, the DNR awarded a \$50,000 grant to a local media firm to produce a documentary on aquatic invasive species. The video's purpose is to highlight the threat of invasive species, the laws boaters and water users must follow and what boaters and anglers can do to help prevent their spread. One-thousand DVDs will be available for distribution to the media, lakeshore organizations and other outlets. The video will be posted on the DNR website this spring.

MORE INFORMATION ON DNR WEBSITE

The DNR's invasive species web page has been revamped to make it easier to access information on aquatic invasive species. Key categories of information include DNR contacts, news and announcements; identification and management of individual species: how the public can help stop the spread of the invaders.

New pages include information for lake service providers and invasive species management. There is also new link on the DNR homepage under "find it fast."

Go to www.mndnr.gov/invasives.

Job Announcements:

DNR Internship Opportunities – Shallow Lakes (Lacustrine wetlands)

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Wildlife Management Section's Shallow Lakes Program is hiring 12 student interns for the 2012 summer field season. Positions will be located at DNR offices in Detroit Lakes (2), Eveleth (2), Glenwood (2), Madelia (2), Marshall (2), and Sauk Rapids (2), Minnesota. Work will occur region-wide.

The primary responsibility of the summer interns is to conduct habitat surveys on shallow lakes throughout Minnesota. Job duties include preparing survey maps; identifying aquatic plants, waterfowl, and wetland wildlife; operating motorboats and canoes and backing in trailers; writing lake survey reports; and maintaining equipment. Additional responsibilities may include data entry and miscellaneous office tasks. The pay is \$12 per hour.

Please note that there is a separate job posting for each of the 6 locations. If you are interested in more than one location, you must apply separately to each. Applications must be submitted through the State of Minnesota jobs website. The links below will connect you directly to the job posting for each location:

- Detroit Lakes – https://statejobs.doer.state.mn.us/JobPosting/View?_posting=119010000041
- Eveleth – https://statejobs.doer.state.mn.us/JobPosting/View?_posting=119010000043
- Glenwood – https://statejobs.doer.state.mn.us/JobPosting/View?_posting=119010000044
- Madelia – https://statejobs.doer.state.mn.us/JobPosting/View?_posting=119010000051
- Marshall – https://statejobs.doer.state.mn.us/JobPosting/View?_posting=119010000049
- Sauk Rapids – https://statejobs.doer.state.mn.us/JobPosting/View?_posting=119010000050

Or you can navigate to the State of Minnesota jobs website:

<https://statejobs.doer.state.mn.us/JobPosting>. Select "Natural Resources Dept" in the "Department" window, and select "Intern/Student Worker" in the "Position Type" window, then click the search button at

the bottom of the page. All internships with the DNR, including the Shallow Lakes Program internships, will be listed.

The application deadline is Monday February 6th, 2012.

Water Plan Technician

The Benton Soil & Water Conservation District is now accepting applications for a Water Plan Technician. This is a full time regular position. The deadline for applications is January 30th. This position coordinates the implementation of the Comprehensive Local Water Management Plan for Benton County, provides assistance under policies established by the Benton Soil and Water Conservation District and performs Wetland Conservation Act duties required by the district. The Local Water Management Plan can be viewed at the Benton SWCD website at <http://www.soilandwater.org/Document%20PDFs/DRAFT2011Wate%20PlanAmendments.pdf>. The position responsibilities are expected to change over time as water plan priorities change. A diverse background in watershed management and an understanding of water quality principles is desired.

Application materials can be found on the Benton SWCD website at www.soilandwater.org.

Conservation and Development Director

Todd County is hiring a Conservation and Development Director to be responsible for facilitating policy development with both the County and the Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors, with a liaison committee established to ensure good communications between both Boards. On a day to day basis, the Director will be accountable. The area of policy authority for the Board of Supervisors is defined as "natural resources protection," while the area of policy authority for the County Board is "land use controls and enforcement." The Boards are both committed to positive relationships and working together for the betterment of Todd County.

The Soil, Water, Conservation and Development division consists of the Soil and Water Conservation, Planning and Zoning and Geographic Information Systems units. The leadership of the division is structured with a Director and three unit coordinators. The Director may serve as a unit coordinator. There are generalist staff who serve as the primary line of customer service at the county offices, and provide administrative support for the field staff. Field staff are multi disciplinary and work fluidly between all units. The total budget of the division is about \$1,000,000 and total staffing of about 11.

The candidate selected for this position will have the responsibility to continue the work of the current director in establishing the consolidated division. While many steps have been taken to ensure that the new Director is successful, there will still be many opportunities for customization, and for selecting leadership, and designing internal systems to ensure the Director can effectively manage. The Director will be a senior leader in the organization, and will be looked upon as such. The Director should expect to spend as nearly equal amount of time in and out of the office, working with the public, working with the Boards, and working with the Variance Board and Planning Commission as well. There will be a large amount of autonomy in this position, with expected periodic reports on the activities of the Division to the County Administrator and the Boards. There will also be a lot of support of this position from the Boards, the County Administrator, Staff, and other Leadership Team members, who are all committed to doing their part to reach the County's vision.

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

Grant Opportunities:

Conservation Partners Legacy Grant

The current application cycle for the Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) Grant Program is coming to a close. The deadline is February 8, 2012 at 5pm CST, which means there are 4 weeks remaining to submit applications. Grant funds can be requested from \$5,000- \$400,000 and are available to enhance, restore, or protect the forests, wetlands, prairies, and habitat for fish, game, or wildlife in Minnesota. A total of \$3.48 million is available for this cycle.

The application system is completely online and can be found on the CPL grant website, [How to Apply page](#). Program requirements and guidelines can also be found online, on the [FY2012 Grant Information page](#). Please contact CPL staff for more information or with any questions or check out the website at: www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/habitat/cpl

Events:

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/>

January 17th (Tuesday) is a **presentation, “Based on a True Story: Researching a Controversial History to Create Fiction”** by Thomas Maltman from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Linnaeus Arboretum on the Gustavus Adolphus College campus. Thomas Maltman's essays, poetry, and fiction have recently been published in *Georgetown Review*, *Great River Review*, and *Main Channel Voices*, among other journals. He has a BA from Eastern Washington University and an MFA from Minnesota State University/Mankato. His debut novel, *The Night Birds*, was released by Soho Press in August of 2008 and won an Alex Award from the American Library Association. He is currently the Visiting Artist in Creative Writing at Normandale Community College. Thomas Maltman's forthcoming second novel, *Little Wolves*, is a contemporary mystery that takes place in the same prairie country as *The Night Birds*.

January 19th (Thursday) is the **Agricultural Wetland Mitigation Banking meeting** from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Best Western Plus (1111 Range Street) in North Mankato. This meeting is to provide the background needed for an individual or group to make lands available for agricultural wetland mitigation banks. The meeting is step one in a process, and continued assistance will be available to fulfill the desire of having quality wetlands to mitigate the loss of farmed wetlands throughout Minnesota. Audience: Individuals, organizations, those interested in forming an organization for the purpose of identifying potential wetland mitigation sites, acquiring the land rights needed to offer the property for mitigation, and conducting wetland restoration needed to provide high value wetlands that are available for agricultural mitigation. To register, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/mitigation.pdf>

January 23rd (Monday) is the **Minnesota River Board Meeting** from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon at the Redwood Area Community Center, Room 2 (901 Cook Street). For information: 507-389-5491 or karnell.johnson@mnsu.edu

January 24th (Tuesday) is the **presentation, “From the Acton Incident to the Internment Camp: Examining the aftermath in light of the war and its beginnings”** by Corinne Marz from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Linnaeus Arboretum on the Gustavus Adolphus College campus. Researcher and author Corinne Monjeau-Marz has devoted her latest efforts to exploring the extraordinarily challenging and culturally catastrophic transition the Dakota people experienced during the time of early European settlement in Minnesota. Marz will share her recent research and discuss her work on “Alexander Ramsey’s Words of War” from the first issue of *Minnesota’s Heritage* magazine. She will also discuss her book, *The Dakota Indian Internment at Fort Snelling, 1862-1864*, as well as her contributions to *Trail of Tears: Minnesota’s Dakota Indian Exile Begins*.

January 26th (Thursday) is the **presentation, “We are still Here”** by Dr. Gwen Westerman-Wasicuna from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Linnaeus Arboretum on the Gustavus Adolphus College campus. Gwen Westerman-Wasicuna is an English professor at Minnesota State University-Mankato specializing in multi-cultural and Native American literature. Her lecture, “We Are Still Here,” will focus on the lives of modern Dakota and their special place in Minnesota today.

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.curemnriver.org/events.html#annual_meeting

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

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

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

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

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

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

Environmental/Conservation Articles:

[Green jobs — hope beyond the hype](#) (Marshall Independent). Green jobs constitute only about 2 percent of Minnesota jobs, but a study shows that 11 percent of those are in the southwest corner of the state.

[Minn. wind farm plans becalmed by lack of buyer for power](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). A wind farm that was to be the first such large-scale operation in central Minnesota is about a year behind schedule because, its developer says, it can't find a utility company willing to buy its electricity.

[Big Blue Wind Farm starts to rise](#) (Fairmont Sentinel). The Big Blue Wind Farm will have 18 turbines between Guckeen and Blue Earth, north of County Road 16.

[Don Shelby: What Minnesota can learn from Vermont's renewable-energy plans](#) (MinnPost). Vermont may one day be known for more than its glorious autumns.

[Commentary: Firing of environmental leader was wrongheaded](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). A thoughtful process for shaping public policy gets hijacked by politics.

[Urban lakes absorb much more mercury than rural waters](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). A new study says lakes in urban areas absorb as much as four-times as much mercury as lakes in remote areas.

[Demand for 'green' jobs is small, but steady in Minnesota](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). A new state analysis shows modest but steady demand for "green" jobs in the Minnesota's economy.

[Anderson: How are we doing with those Legacy dollars?](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Citizens and conservation leaders gathered to hear – and often cheer – what Legacy funds are achieving.

[U of M economist measures nature's benefits with dollars](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Scientists in Minnesota are trying to do something that may be impossible: put a dollar value on nature.

[Swath of natural area joins national refuge](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The Black Dog Preserve will change hands, with a surprising benefit for prairie lands many miles away.

[Firing of environmental oversight group's chief is a mystery](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Canceled meeting and finger-pointing add to drama over dismissal of Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources director.

[Ag Expo features activist, biologically aware farmer](#) (New Ulm Journal). A western Iowa farmer who prefers a biologically-aware approach to conventional agriculture and a central Nebraska rancher, writer and radio host will speak at the 2012 Minnesota Ag Expo Jan. 23-24 at the Verizon Wireless Center.

[Conservation groups: Is clean water Legacy money making a difference?](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Ensuring water projects funded through the state's Legacy Amendment are making a difference — and proving it to the public — is a major challenge, conservationists and those who oversee Legacy money acknowledged.

[Blog: How do zebra mussels affect fishing?](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). Zebra mussels are bad right? They're non-native invaders that explode in numbers when introduced into our waters, crowding out native mussels.

[State GOP 'suspends' firing of LCCMR director Thornton](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The decision to undo the firing of the head of the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources leaves questions, and raw feelings.

[Editorial: Mystery surrounds GOP's power play](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Sudden reversal of Susan Thornton firing raises more questions.

[Let there be ... less light pollution](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). When light pollution first was raised as an issue, it seemed a jest, an effete-tree-hugger crusade. All that artificial lights isn't toxic . . . is it?

[Green building group to start in Mankato](#) (Mankato Free Press). The group behind the standards for environmentally friendly construction has started a Mankato branch to train area professionals and advocate for more efficient and less-polluting buildings.

[Drought or glut? Health of water resources depends on how deep you look](#) (MinnPost). Fascinating new views of Earth popped up over the holidays, drawing on advanced satellite sensing to visualize the state of groundwater resources around the globe.

It was big grass. Original prairie grass – bluestem and Indian grass, side oats grama. The green fringe gave me the comforting assurance that all else planted and tended and set down by humans was somehow temporary. Only grass is eternal. Grass is always waiting in the wings.- Louise Erdrich

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.

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<http://www.watershedalliance.blogspot.com>

Thanks,

Scott

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