Minnesota River Weekly Update January 18, 2012

Marsh Lake Ecosystem Restoration Proposal
A proposed project by the Minnesota DNR and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would restore more than 5,000 acres of the Marsh Lake area, as well as the historic channel of the Pomme de Terre River.

To view a YouTube video on the proposal: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1uHwNiugt0

For information on the Minnesota River, Marsh Lake Ecosystem Restoration Project Report: http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/marshlakecorpsreport.pdf

Corps chief recommends authorization of Marsh Lake ecosystem restoration project
The proposed ecosystem restoration project for Marsh Lake in the upper reaches of the Lac qui Parle reservoir in Lac qui Parle, Swift and Big Stone counties, cleared another hurdle Dec. 30 when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Chief of Engineers signed the Chief's Report endorsing the Corps' final feasibility report and environmental assessment on this project.

By signing the report, Maj. Gen. Merideth (Bo) Temple is recommending the ecosystem restoration project be authorized as described in the final report prepared by the Corps for the Marsh Lake ecosystem restoration project. Next, the signed report and study will be submitted to Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy, who will coordinate with the Office of Management and Budget before transmitting a formal, final recommendation to Congress.

The proposed project would involve a series of measures designed to restore the natural Marsh Lake ecosystem and area water resources by increasing the diversity of conditions within Marsh Lake and the Pomme de Terre River. Overall, it would restore the function to more than 5,000 acres of the Marsh Lake area, as well as the restore flows to the historic channel of the Pomme de Terre River.

The Chief's Report and study are posted at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District website http://www.mvp.usace.army.mil/environment/default.asp?pageid=22.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, serves the American public in the areas of environmental enhancement, navigation, flood damage reduction, water and wetlands regulation, recreation sites and disaster response. It contributes around $175 million to the five-state district economy. The 700 employees work at more than 40 sites in five upper-Midwest states. For more information, see www.mvp.usace.army.mil

My View: For farmers, conservation is key
By David Craigmile, Mankato Free Press (January 10, 2012)

My home farm in west central Minnesota is water challenged, and has been for as long I can remember.

When I was a kid on the farm, my dad originally tried to raise livestock. But due to a quirk in the geology of the earth beneath us, we couldn't pump enough water from our aquifer to support a livestock operation. Our well provided enough water for the family, was of good taste and quality, but was not sufficient for a herd of always thirsty livestock.

My father had numerous wells drilled, but all to no avail. So we adapted, switching from livestock to small grain, corn and soybean production. The transition has been a success. Usually, we receive enough rain to raise a good crop, although my father always commented that we lived too close to "then dry" South Dakota.

Some years, we receive too much rain, but we have managed to adapt to that with good land management practices.

I became fascinated by the physics of soil and water, pursued its study in college, and served as a Twin Cities area physical and earth science public school educator until moving back to the family farm after my father had a heart attack.

For the rest of the article, http://mankatofreepress.com/letters/x2145130755/My-View-For-farmers-conservation-is-key

West Beaver Creek selected for USGS study
The U.S. Geological Survey Environmental Effects of Agricultural Conservation (USGS EEAC) Research Team has selected the West Fork Beaver Creek (Renville County) for a study aimed at gaining a better understanding of how land retirement from crop production affects nutrient concentrations in streams over time.

BWSR and the Hawk Creek Watershed Project (HCWP) are partners in the study. Water quality monitoring data collected by HCWP and USGS on the West Fork of Beaver Creek over the past decade will be a key component in analyzing nutrient concentration trends over the past decade. The study will examine paired watersheds of approximately 5 square miles each. One watershed has no land in retirement, while the other watershed has Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) filter strips along the entire length of the ditch draining the watershed. Soil, sediment, biological community, and water quality samples were taken in September and October of 2011. The bulk of the data analysis will occur in 2012.

The research will build on the findings of BWSR/USGS joint projects conducted 2005 – 2009 to further address the linkages between riparian buffer extent, age, and continuity, and stream water and biotic quality-with a specific emphasis on sediment and phosphorous.

The primary question of concern is "How does land retirement from crop production effect nutrient concentrations in streams over time?" The effectiveness of the nutrient reducing characteristics of retired land over time will also be analyzed.

Read more about the study in the USGS Minnesota Water Science Center newsletter from fall 2011.

Administrator Jackson, Secretary Vilsack Sign Historic Agreement with State of Minnesota Encouraging Farmers to Protect Rivers, Streams and Lakes
U.S. EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that EPA and USDA have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the state of Minnesota to develop a new state program for farmers designed to increase the voluntary adoption of conservation practices that protect local rivers, streams and other waters by reducing fertilizer run-off and soil erosion. Through this partnership producers, who undertake a substantial level of conservation activities to reduce nutrient run-off and erosion, will receive assurance from the state that their farms will meet Minnesota's water quality standards and goals during the life of the agreement. Vilsack, Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson signed the MOU during a ceremony in the Minnesota Capitol.

"Establishment of this program will protect our water resources by providing assurances and incentives to participating farmers that their good deeds – their strong commitment to conservation – will be recognized," Vilsack said. "Farmers will know the rules of the game while the state, EPA and the public will know that this program will lead to cleaner water."

"Clean, healthy waters are essential to the health of our people and to our nation's farmers," said EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson. "I believe that local conservation efforts, like those supported through this MOU, are among the most effective means for improving water quality in our nation."

"Water and food are two of society's essential resources," Governor Mark Dayton said. "Today, we are taking a bold step for a program which keeps agriculture a cornerstone of our economy and also protects the health of our rivers, lakes and streams. It is vital that we have both. I also want to thank President

Obama, Secretary Vilsack, and Administrator Jackson for their outstanding leadership in advancing this initiative. We look forward to a strong working partnership."

USDA and EPA will offer support to Minnesota in developing its certainty process for water quality improvements on private agricultural lands and eligible tribal lands in high priority watersheds. While this idea is new to protection of water quality, "certainty agreements" have been successful for encouraging private landowners to conserve wildlife habitat. For example, USDA already has helped 11 Western states establish a certainty process to protect the sage-grouse, a candidate species for the Endangered Species List. The sage-grouse effort has been successfully, resulting in an increase of the bird's habitat on ranch land in the West.
Eventually, USDA and its partners hope to duplicate this success in addressing water quality on agricultural lands across the nation.

The MOU signing is the first step toward developing the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (AWQCP), designed to increase the adoption of recommended conservation practices to improve water quality on agricultural land. The MOU signing formalizes the state-federal partnership and confirms a joint commitment to developing and implementing the program.

After the MOU signing, Minnesota and its partners will establish a Technical Advisory Committee to develop the certification program that will support the state's water quality standards and goals. The committee will solicit input from stakeholders in designing criteria to provide certainty for producers who have voluntarily attained or maintained a certain level of water quality improvements on their agricultural land. Minnesota will test the program in several pilot watersheds.

The Minnesota AWQCP is a state-federal partnership that includes USDA, EPA, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

For more information about USDA's conservation programs that improve water quality, please visit http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs.

EPA: Power plants main source of greenhouse gases
By Dina Cappiello, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) -- The most detailed data yet on emissions of heat-trapping gases show that U.S. power plants are responsible for the bulk of the pollution blamed for global warming.

Power plants released 72 percent of the greenhouse gases reported to the Environmental Protection Agency for 2010. The data include more than 6,700 of the largest sources of greenhouse gases, or about 80 percent of total U.S. emissions.

According to an Associated Press analysis of the data, 20 power plants in 14 states account for the top-releasing sites.

The largest greenhouse gas polluter is the Scherer power plant in Juliette, Ga., which is owned by Southern Company.

That coal-fired power plant reported releasing nearly 23 million metric tons of carbon dioxide, the chief greenhouse gas, in 2010.

EPA Creates Website To ID Biggest Emitters Of Greenhouse Gases (Minnesota Public Radio). Ever wondered who the big greenhouse-gas emitters are in your neck of the woods? The answer is now just a click away.

DNR survey shows fewest fish houses on south-central Minnesota lakes in 35 years

Warm weather, eroding ice conditions, and changing technology may be responsible for the lowest numbers of fish houses on south-central Minnesota lakes in 35 years, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Since 1977, personnel from the DNR's Hutchinson Fisheries Management Area have conducted fish house counts on up to 59 lakes each year across five and more recently seven counties. "The surveys get us out on our area lakes during the winter," according to Lee Sundmark, area fisheries supervisor. "Even better, it gives us a chance to talk to anglers and find out what they're thinking and answer questions."

Counts are conducted the first two weeks of January during daylight hours. This provides consistency when comparing data over a period of years. As each lake is visited, the number of fish houses, permanent and portable, are counted and recorded.
Over the past 35 years, there has been an average of 14.25 fish houses counted per lake surveyed. This year the average was only 1.9.

A grand total of 111 fish houses were counted on 59 lakes during this year's survey period. This compares to an average total of 734 fish houses counted per survey period since 1977.

Sundmark sees a couple of possible explanations for the dramatic dip in numbers. "Obviously our warm weather and eroding ice conditions have been an issue with anglers getting fish houses out on lakes this year," Sundmark said. "We've had record-setting temperatures and treacherous ice. It stands to reason that fewer fish houses will be out."

Another trend impacting survey numbers is changing technology with ice fishing anglers. Sundmark said that through the years there has been a dramatic shift from anglers using permanent fish houses to anglers fishing in portable ones.

"When we're out doing our counts during the day, we know we're missing many anglers that don't come out until after work," Sundmark said. "They pop up their house, fish for a few hours and then pack up and head home."

He said it is easier than ever for anglers to ice fish for short periods of time and switch from one lake to another. Proof of that is evident when fish are biting on a certain lake. "Cell phones spread the news fast. We can go from a couple fish houses on a lake to a dozen or more in hours," Sundmark said.

The forecast of cooler temperatures should improve ice conditions and bring more anglers out on lakes, but Sundmark advises caution. "Make sure you know your lake and check ice thickness," he said.

For more information on ice fishing, visit www.mndnr.gov/fishing/fin/ice_fishing.html

Peat fires are unique and challenging in Minnesota winters
Peat fires can be a common occurrence during a dry Minnesota summer. They are normally rare in the middle of the winter, but this season may be an exception.

The winter peat fire Dec. 26 near the town of Gully in Polk County, which was ignited by a surface fire in grass and brush, is an example of the increased challenges faced by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and local fire fighters. They battled cold, wintery conditions to control the fire before ultimately putting it out.

"It's unusual for us to be battling a peat fire at this time of year," said Brian Pisarek, DNR Northeast Region program forester and peat fire expert. "The lack of precipitation this fall made conditions just right for something like this to happen."

There have been several other wildfires that resulted in peat ignition in northwestern Minnesota from fall through early January. That's a testament to the unusual weather conditions in Minnesota recently.

Flooding the burning peat, or using peat nozzles attached to a hose, are the most efficient and effective ways to extinguish a fire, and the least disruptive to the area soils and vegetation. Flooding consists of building a dike around the fire and using large irrigation pipes to completely cover the ground in water. Peat nozzles, designed much like a metal garden wand, are inserted under the peat to shoot high-pressure streams of water into areas where the peat is burning underground.

Battling winter peat fires by flooding or with peat nozzles can be difficult. That's because accessing nearby water and keeping water pumping equipment from freezing before and during delivery of the water to the fire can be challenging. Water doesn't flow well when air temperatures are in the teens or single digits.

"Normally, we can find a nearby water source in a ditch or neighboring pond or lake," explained Dana Carlson, Warroad area forest supervisor. "But in the winter, and with the drought conditions, it can be difficult to access available local water sources. That can cost us fire-fighting time, and require a greater amount of manpower and resources to haul water from greater distances."

Other common tools used to extinguish peat fires are excavators and dozers. Heavy equipment is used to mix burning peat with deeper layers of soil that still contain moisture. The equipment breaks up the burning particles, mixing, cooling and sealing the peat off from oxygen so it is no longer able to burn. Tillage equipment can also mix surface snow or applied water to help extinguish burning peat.

Areas of peat are found throughout Minnesota. Peat is an accumulation of partially decayed plant material, often found in wetlands or areas that had been wetlands at one time. It can accumulate to a depth of from 20-30 inches to several feet in deep bogs. Peat soil generally absorbs moisture, but unusually dry conditions, such as those Minnesota is experiencing this winter, can desiccate the upper peat layers and increase the potential for peat soils to burn. Ironically, when peat is extremely dry it becomes hydrophobic, meaning it actually repels water.

Peat fires pose are dangerous to extinguish because the fire smolders beneath the ground as a glowing combustion rather than as an open flame. Windy conditions can cause peat embers to pop up to the surface and ignite surrounding frozen, dry vegetation. Firefighters are at risk of severe burns on their feet and legs if they fall into subsurface pockets of burning peat. The heavy, dense peat fire smoke can lead to respiratory problems in people and livestock. It also has caused vehicle crashes in low-visibility driving conditions.

The Dec. 26 peat fire has been extinguished, but the area is being monitored by DNR foresters. Unchecked, peat fires have the potential to last for years during cyclic dry periods.

With little fall precipitation, warm winter temperatures and scarce snow cover, an unusual winter fire season is upon us, and spring may come in "like a lion" in a few months.

According to the Minnesota climatology office, "without ample, widespread precipitation in the late winter and early spring, the state will face deficient soil moisture supplies and low water levels in wetlands, lakes and rivers." Additionally, areas with a hard deep frost and lack of snow cover will experience increased runoff in the spring, resulting in less groundwater recovery. It is anticipated this will contribute to control problems if fire ignitions do occur.

"It would be extremely helpful to get much needed winter moisture followed by a nice slow melt," Pisarek said. "We firefighters would all sleep better at nights – at least through the next few winter months."

Job Announcements:

Executive Director
The U of M Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships and the West Central/Southwest Regional Partnership board is hiring an Executive Director. The Executive Director supports the WC/SW

Partnership's Board of Directors and its research, education, and outreach projects. The Executive Director must have an understanding of university-based research, education, and outreach processes; a basic knowledge of agriculture, natural resources, tourism and/or sustainable development; an ability to lead a process of shared decision-making between local citizens and University faculty; and community engagement skills that build partnerships. This person must also have excellent communication skills and the managerial skills needed to oversee several projects at one time. The Director must be a catalyst and team builder who supports the University's community engagement mission. The primary geographic area served is the West Central and Southwest region of Minnesota.

Duties/Responsibilities:

- Foster teamwork that builds a partnership between the Board, citizens of West Central and Southwest Minnesota, and the University of Minnesota. Work as a team member with the Extension Regional Directors in Southwest Minnesota to build programmatic and community based synergies in research, education, and outreach. This includes working with the UM Morris campus, the Research and Outreach Centers and other U of M units located within the region.
- Builds Extension and UM campus relationship, including connecting students and faculty to community based projects and groups. Work with the citizen-faculty Board, businesses, organizations, and agencies to convene and identify issues and opportunities to improve the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of West Central and Southwest Minnesota's agriculture, natural resources, and tourism resources, currently focusing on local foods, energy and water resources.
  Work with local stakeholders and University faculty to strategically design, implement and evaluate sustainable development research, education and outreach projects.
- Identify and recruit University faculty, system-wide, and other expertise to conduct research, education, and outreach projects recommended by the Board and workgroups.
- Provide administrative support to carry out the Partnership's work: supervise students and staff, develop contracts, monitor funds, provide oversight of funded projects to insure they accomplish goals and meet deadlines, provide staff support for meetings and other Partnership work.

For more information, http://employment.umn.edu/applicants/Central?quickFind=100211

Native Mussel Research Internship – 2012
The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Stream Habitat Program may be filling up to 8 student intern positions to assist with mussel surveys, monitoring, host identification, and propagation of endangered species. Positions will be based in St. Paul or Lake City, Minnesota but will travel statewide. Start is somewhat flexible, but is expected to begin by May 16, or soon thereafter, and continue to at least August 26 (POSSIBLY extending through mid-October). Applications must be completed online by February 5, 2012.

Duties include:

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

For more information and how to apply, http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/musselresearchinternship.pdf

Mussel Research Lab-Tech Internship
The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources may be filling 1 part-time (26 hours/week) student intern position to assist with laboratory studies on the life history of native freshwater mussels. Up to 7 days a

week, exact hours are flexible but more hours are anticipated on Mondays and Thursdays. Position will be at the DNR Central Office in St. Paul, Minnesota. Start date is somewhat flexible, but is expected to begin by May 1, or soon thereafter, and continue to at least August 31 (POSSIBLY extending through mid October). Deadline to apply is February 8, 2012

Assist with laboratory studies on the life history of native freshwater mussels. Duties will include Fish husbandry, maintenance of more than 20 aquaria. This will include monitoring water quality and cleaning filters. Monitoring fish health, including treatment of sick fish and a proper feeding schedule. This internship will also include assisting with mussel host suitability studies, recording daily lab activities and trial data along with field collection of native fishes. Up to 7 days a week, exact hours are flexible but most hours are anticipated on Mondays and Thursdays. Field collection of native fishes.

For more information and how to apply, http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/musselresearchlabtech.pdf

Stream Internship Announcement – 2012
The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will be filling up to 4 student intern positions. The primary responsibility will be to assist in the collection of biological and physical data on streams. Duties include fish identification, collection of voucher specimens, and use of wading rods with current meters, electrofishing equipment, purse seine, boats, GPS, and outboard motors. Additional duties may include organizing, checking and repairing equipment data entry, topographic surveying, geomorphologic monitoring and other duties as necessary.

This is a statewide program, so overnight travel is required. When traveling, lodging and transportation are provided and the cost of meals will be reimbursed. Positions are based in St. Paul, Minnesota. Interns are responsible for their own housing and living expenses on their off time (i.e. nights not in travel status and weekends). Salary is $11.50/hr. Start and end dates are somewhat flexible, but the preferred dates are from May 14th to August 31st. The position could possibly extend through October.

For more information and how to apply, http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/streaminternship.pdf

Voss Farms Internships
We are a third generation family farm in central Minnesota. The farm runs about 500 acres of certified organic crop land, has 100 head of beef and a small milking herd. A newly opened farm store will be fully operational by summer.

Intern opportunities may include large equipment operation (tractors, swathers, payloaders) and field work, organic vegetable production and sales, and small (and large) animal management, including poultry and cattle.

Topics of interest include but are not limited to: organic crop production, organic livestock production, marketing, organic produce/gardening. A variety of opportunities, depending on interests are available. Prior experience is not required. Interest in sustainable agriculture and food production is required along with a positive attitude and good work ethic.

Internship activities also include various off farm visits including other farms, processors, and more. Off farm room and board provided. Please visit our website for more information about the farm: www.vossfarms.com

To apply, please send resume and letter of interest to dougvoss@clearwire.net

Grant Announcements:

Lottery-funded grant applications due April 6
The Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR), which recommends projects to the Legislature for funding derived from the state lottery, issued its 2012-2013 Request for Proposal (RFP) on Dec. 12. This RFP is for funds to become available on July 1, 2013. Proposals are due by 4:30

p.m. on Friday, April 6, 2012. Visit the M.L. 2013 Proposal & Funding Process page for more information or for updates on activities and schedules.

The LCCMR makes recommendations to the Legislature for project funding appropriations of up to 5.5 percent per year of the existing value of the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF). This trust fund includes an annual contribution from the Minnesota Lottery along with investment income. As of Oct. 31 this year, the fund's value totaled $555 million.

Through this RFP the LCCMR intends to make funding recommendations to the 2013 Minnesota Legislature. This RFP is part of an annual cycle and the next RFP is expected to be issued in January 2013 for funds available July 1, 2014.

Events:

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 8th (Wednesday) is the **Hawk Creek Watershed Project Information and Appreciation Public Meeting** from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm at the Kandi Entertainment Center (500 19th Avenue SE) in Willmar.

Presentations relating to Water Quality and Water Management will be discussed. Presentations are: "Hawk Creek Watershed Project Update," "Whose Problem Is It Anyway? An Upstream and Downstream Conversation About Water," "More Erosive Rivers: Consequences and Drivers," and "Biological Implications of Contaminants of Emerging Concern: Implications for Wildlife & Human Health." Continuing Education Credits for Certified Crop Advisors are Pending.

A Free Noon Meal will be provided to those who reserve their spot by February 3rd by calling 320-523-3666.

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 4th – 7th (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://prrsum.org/content/registration. The registration deadline in January 27, 2012.

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://mrbdc.mnsu.edu/calendar

Environmental/Conservation Articles:

February 8th ((Wednesday) is the **Hawk Creek Watershed Information & Appreciation Meeting** starting at 9:00 at the Kandi Entertainment Center (500 19th Avenue SE) in Willmar with a lunch served at 12:15. There will be three presentations including a Hawk Creek Watershed Project Update by Coordinator Cory Netland. The three presentations are:

- "Whose Problem Is It Anyway? An Upstream and Downstream Conversation About Water" by Bruce Tiffany, Redwood County Agricultural Producer;

- "More Erosive Rivers: Consequences and Drivers" by Shawn Schottler, St. Croix Watershed Research Station, Science Museum of Minnesota; and
- "Biological & Regulatory Implications of Contaminants of Emerging Concern Implications for Wildlife & Human Health" by Heiko Schoenfuss, St. Cloud State University.

Please call Hawk Creek Watershed Project at 320-523-3666 by February 3rd to reserve your meal.

Climate B.S. of the Year Awards: And the winners are... (MinnPost). Dr. Peter Gleick doesn't like B.S. He's one of the world's leading hydro-climatologists, a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the founder and president of the Pacific Institute.

Frederickson frustrated over Thornton firing debacle (New Ulm Journal). Former State Sen. Dennis Frederickson, who served for 20 years on the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR), said he is confused and frustrated by the current debacle surrounding the firing and un-firing of LCCMR Director Susan Thornton.

Clumsy power play (New Ulm Journal). Has it been that long since House Republicans have been in the majority in the Minnesota Legislature? Apparently they have forgotten how to effectively used their power.

Congress tells Americans: Commute by car, not transit (MinnPost). The federal tax code is riddled with questionable provisions designed to encourage or reward certain kinds of behavior.

Ikea's rooftop solar array will be the largest in Minnesota (Minneapolis Star Tribune). A solar array that retailer Ikea says will be installed on the roof of its Bloomington store will be the state's largest generator of electricity from the sun.

Wolves claw way back from extinction (Austin Daily Herald). Wolves have significantly extended their range and their numbers.

New battle plan for fighting zebra mussels (Alexandria Echo Press). The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is ramping up efforts to fight the spread of aquatic invasive species across the state in 2012.

Minnesota's list of impaired waters grows by 500 (Associated Press). Minnesota has added another 500 lakes and stretches of river to its list of impaired waters, raising the state's total to more than 3,600.

EPA chief to speak at University of Minnesota Tuesday (MinnPost). Lisa P. Jackson, administrator of the US EPA, will speak at the University of Minnesota's Coffman Memorial Union.

The lure of manure (Minnesota 2020). Dairy farms in both Minnesota and Wisconsin are picking up on a technology that is moving out of the labs and onto the land: anaerobic digesters that turn animal manure into electricity and cash for farmers.

Area communities ask state for help with sewer systems (Mankato Free Press). Gov. Mark Dayton will release his list of proposed bonding projects today, and the state House and Senate will develop their alternative statewide construction plans in coming months.

Sibley County bonding bill request would continue work on railroad, lake (Mankato Free Press). In Gaylord, a detailed study of the sources of pollution in Lake Titloe has been completed but the city is hoping to replace an aging dam before tackling the clean-up.

Minnesota launches Mississippi River cleanup effort (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Project will offer farmers incentives to clean up runoff, but critics say voluntary efforts haven't worked.

Wetlands have a poor public image . . . Yet they are among the earth's greatest natural assets . . . mankind's waterlogged wealth. – Edward Maltby

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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