

### **Minnesota River Watershed Alliance Meeting – 2010 “Clean Up the Minnesota River” Focus**

Last night over thirty people came out for the quarterly meeting of the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance to choose a “Clean Up the Minnesota River” focus for the group to concentrate on in 2010. After a spirited and fun debate, the group picked a combination of initiatives: to officially launch the Minnesota River Paddler Program with a June paddle on the Blue Earth River, host a Minnesota River Basin Conservation Practices bus tour for Lake Pepin citizens, support the effort to produce a Minnesota River Documentary and advocate to have the Governor’s Fishing Opener held on the Minnesota River in the future. Look for more on this meeting in upcoming issues of the Minnesota River Weekly Update.

### **Minnesota Water Sustainability Framework Public Meetings**

Minnesotans will have the chance to voice their opinion in person on how the state should invest resources to protect clean water at statewide public meetings beginning January 19, 2010.

The meetings are part of the Minnesota Water Sustainability Framework, a project spearheaded by the Water Resources Center which was charged by the 2009 Minnesota State Legislature to develop a set of recommendations to protect and preserve Minnesota's lakes, streams, rivers and ground waters for the 21st century. The project's final report, due to the 2011 legislature, will integrate citizens' values and concerns and serve as a roadmap, with timelines and benchmarks for the investment of an estimated \$86 million a year earmarked for the protection of water as a result of Minnesota's Clean Water, Land and Legacy Act.

The public meetings, called "listening sessions" will be facilitated by staff from the Water Resources Center and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources and are a chance for people to voice their opinions on a range of water-related issues from boating and water recreation, to priorities for cleaning up polluted lakes and streams.

The meetings are scheduled as follows:

- Jan. 19 Holiday Inn and Suites, 75 S. 37th Ave, St. Cloud
- Jan. 21 Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, 3675 Arboretum Dr., Chaska
- Feb. 3 University of Minnesota, Crookston's University Youngquist Auditorium, 2900 University Ave., Crookston
- Feb. 4 Northland Auditorium, 14250 Conservation Dr., Baxter
- Feb. 10 Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Building, 525 S. Lake Ave., Duluth
- Feb. 11 Holiday Inn South, 1630 S. Broadway, Rochester
- Feb. 16 Best Western Marshall Inn, 1500 E. College Dr., Marshall
- Feb. 18 Thompson County Park Center's Dakota Lodge, 1200 Stassen Lane, West St. Paul

From 12:30-3:30 p.m. each meeting will focus on the concerns of professionals associated with local units of government, state and federal agencies and other water resource organizations. Citizens, community leaders and elected and appointed officials will have a chance to share their concerns from 4 to 6 p.m.

After the initial period of surveys and public meetings, citizens will also have the ability to comment on drafts of the Framework as they are produced.

### **Prairie Enthusiasts Meeting**

A local chapter of Prairie Enthusiasts is forming in South Central Minnesota. Counties included in this area are Nicollet, Brown, Watonwan, Blue Earth, Waseca, Martin and Faribault. Prairie Enthusiasts is a multi-state organization dedicated to protecting and restoring native prairies and woodlands.

As a member you can look forward to: educational events (a spring birding tour is planned for May), hands on projects (prairie rehabilitations, seed collections), leaving your environment in a better state and just plain having fun with other people who share your interests.

Please attend the chapter formation meeting at the Farm Service Agency conference room on Victory Drive (next to John Deere) in Mankato, February 25, 2010, 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Tell your friends. For further information contact Randy Schindle, DNR-Wildlife, 35365 800<sup>th</sup> Ave., Madelia, MN 56062; 507-642-8478 ext 242 [randy.schindle@state.mn.us](mailto:randy.schindle@state.mn.us) ,

### **Noted environmental author, Paul Hawken, to speak at Gustavus Adolphus College**

Environmentalist, entrepreneur, and author Paul Hawken will be speaking at Gustavus on Feb. 18 at 7:30 PM. This visit is sponsored by the Gustavus Environmental Studies Program, the Johnson Center for Environmental Innovation, the Gustavus Lecture Series, and the Center for Vocational Reflection. The speech is free of charge and open to the public. Student, faculty, and staff colleagues from other institutions are most welcome.

For groups attending together contact James Dontje [jdontje@gustavus](mailto:jdontje@gustavus). to facilitate your visit (parking for vans or buses, and for students, help in finding a place to stay overnight if necessary). Plans are for a post-speech reception and the more people who come to the sustainability party, the merrier.

If you are not familiar with Paul Hawken's work, see more at <http://www.paulhawken.com/>. He is co-author of *Natural Capitalism* and more recently the author of *Blessed Unrest*. As part of his visit to Minnesota, Hawken will also be speaking at a fund raiser for the Minnesota Renewable Energy Society in St. Paul on Feb. 19. For those who can and want to support the MRES, go to <http://www.mnrenewables.org/gala> for more details.

### **Meet with the Sierra Club!**

Have you ever wondered how people in our area could organize around environmental issues? Have you wished for outings to enjoy our natural environment as you learn more about it? Come share your interests at a Sierra Club gathering in western Minnesota!

A meeting is being organized at 10:00am Saturday, January 30 at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Willmar, 500 Southwest 5<sup>th</sup> Street. Staff and volunteers from the North Star Chapter of the Sierra Club will discuss local and state environmental issues with us. Children are welcome to use the adjacent playroom. After lunch, participants can either use the afternoon to view and discuss an environmental film, or car-pool to Sibley State Park to ski, snowshoe, or hike. Then we can share our experiences over pizza in the evening.

Margaret Levin, Director of the Minnesota North Star Chapter, said, "Sierra Club members share environmental values – To enjoy, explore, and protect our planet. The North Star Chapter looks forward to meeting more of our supporters in Western Minnesota and increasing our efforts to protect our state's environmental legacy."

To participate, email [duane.ninneman@gmail.com](mailto:duane.ninneman@gmail.com) or phone Dixie at 1-1-877-269-2873. Leave an email address so we can notify you if the weather forces rescheduling to February 6.

Whether you want to discuss an environmental problem or you just want to explore the outdoors with like-minded people, you will enjoy your day with the Sierra Club!

### **Community Wind Forum**

R9 Renewable Energy Task Force will be hosting a Community Wind Forum in Kiester on Monday, January 25<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at the Kiester Community Center. This Forum is open to any person interested in learning about creating a local community wind development project. The Forum highlights will include models of successful community wind projects and the legalities and economics of developing a community wind project.

Registration will begin at 5:30 p.m. with a lite supper served. There is no cost to attend, but registration will confirm supper. Please RSVP to Sarah at [sarah@rncd.org](mailto:sarah@rncd.org) or (507)389-8880.

R9 Renewable Energy Task Force is a partnership of small businesses, local units of government, educational institutions, non-profits and citizen leaders who have come together to focus on renewable energy development opportunities within the region.

Sponsored by Region Nine Development Commission, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, Kee Town and Country Centre and Gustavus Adolphus College. There will be a similar meeting in Mapleton on February 8.

### **Rural Advantage to Host Annual 3<sup>rd</sup> Crop Producer Meetings**

It is once again time for Rural Advantage's annual 3<sup>rd</sup> Crop Producer Meetings. If you would like to learn more about 3<sup>rd</sup> crops, the biomass crop assistance program, cover crops, grass-fed beef, processing biomass, improving soil health and much more, be sure to attend the 2010 3<sup>rd</sup> Crop Producer Meetings. All meetings will be held at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Fairmont, Minnesota.

- Monday, Feb. 8, 2010 "Biomass Establishment"
- Monday, Feb. 22, 2010 "3<sup>rd</sup> Crops: Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner"
- Monday, March 8, 2010 "Biomass Harvesting and Processing"
- Monday, March 22, 2010 "Improving Soil Health"

For full agenda go to: <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/producermeeting.pdf>

### **Job Announcements:**

#### **Program Director – Environment**

The McKnight Foundation is hiring a Program Director for their Environmental Program. The Program Director position provides content-specific expertise and manages one of the Foundation's program areas. The Program Director for the Environment Program reports directly to the VP of Programs and works with the VP and other Program Directors to ensure good stewardship of the Foundation's resources. This position oversees grantmaking, convening, and support for networks to further program goals in the environment program.

Specific Responsibilities for this position include: Manage the environment program team in reviewing letters of inquiry and grant proposals and making funding recommendations to the Foundation's board of directors; Develop and manage the environment program budget and payout schedules; Monitor the progress of grantee organizations and integrate knowledge from grantmaking experience back into program activities; Participate in grants administration by composing and processing grant-related documents and correspondence in a timely fashion; Represent the Foundation locally, nationally, and internationally on environmental issues; Supervise a program officer and a program assistant at The McKnight Foundation office; and ensure compliance with grantmaking standards and legal requirements.

For more information, <http://www.mcknight.org/about/jobs.aspx>

#### **Grassroots Coordinator**

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) is seeking candidates for the Grassroots Coordinator position. This position works closely with the Association's Legislative Affairs staff to convey policy messages to NACD's membership and grassroots network. The candidate will assist in drafting testimony, policy position papers and newsletter articles for all natural resource policy areas. A bachelor's degree is required and Capitol Hill experience in natural resource or environmental policy is preferred.

Duties include: Primary point of contact for the NACD Grassroots Network of Principal Legislative Contacts (PLCs); Manages information flow to PLCs and requests from PLCs, State Executives and

others and tracks responses to action alerts. Works to obtain information/examples from states and districts on NACD priority policy issues; Responsible for ensuring that NACD's public policy efforts, both legislative and regulatory, are conveyed to NACD members and correlations are provided to public policy efforts and NACD policy positions.

To view the full job description to <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/grassrootscoordinator.pdf>. Interested candidates should send a cover letter and resume to [jobs@email.nacdnet.org](mailto:jobs@email.nacdnet.org)

### **Events:**

January 20, 2010 (Wednesday) is **Perspectives on Water in our Changing World: From Climate to Culture** from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Breck School (123 Ottawa Avenue North) in Golden Valley. This event promotes World Savvy's free online global affairs publication, the World Savvy Monitor ([monitor.worldsavvy.org](http://monitor.worldsavvy.org)), *Perspectives on Water in our Changing World* will feature diverse viewpoints on water issues locally, nationally and globally from:

- Mark Seeley; Climatologist, University of Minnesota
- Deborah L. Swackhamer; Director, Water Resources Center
- Joan Nephew; Executive Director, Freshwater Society

For more information <http://www.worldsavvy.org/minneapolis>

February 3<sup>rd</sup> (Wednesday) is the **Hawk Creek Watershed Project Annual Meeting** starting at 8:30 a.m. with registration and going to 12:30 with a meal for those who send a RSVP email to [hawkcreeksteph@redred.com](mailto:hawkcreeksteph@redred.com) before January 29<sup>th</sup>. The annual meeting will be held at the Kandi Entertainment Center (500 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue) in Willmar. For more information <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/hawkcreekannualmeeting.pdf>

February 18<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) is **Nutrients in Our Environment: Past, Present, and Beyond Conference** from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Verizon Civic Center in downtown Mankato. To register please call 651-201-6141. A \$10 registration fee includes lunch and refreshments. For additional information go to <http://www.upstreamheroes.org/nutmgmtconf.php>

February 20<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) is the **Clean Up the River Environment (CURE) Annual Meeting** starting at 6:00 p.m. at the Hollywood Theater in Montevideo. For more information <http://www.cureriver.org/events.html>

March 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> (Thursday and Friday) is the **Minnesota Erosion Control Association's Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Conference & Trade Show** at the Holiday Inn & Suites in St. Cloud. Network with stormwater and erosion control professionals from around the Midwest and learn about cutting edge projects, innovative designs and products. For more information: <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/mecaannuaconf.pdf>

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

### **Water Quality Articles:**

[Educator describes passive house](#) (New Ulm Journal). On Tuesday at the New Ulm Public library, a nature and environmental educator at Concordia Language Village in Bemidji described in detail how the super-insulated, energy efficient Waldsee BioHaus was built there.

[Studying animal, bird and fish fatalities can offer early warnings for all of us](#) (MinnPost). One of the places I keep tabs on as a journalist working on environmental issues also counts things – animal, bird and fish fatalities – and can be an important source of information in an avian flu-worried world.

[Minneapolis might buy riverfront industrial site to convert to park](#) (Finance and Commerce). In an example of how opportunity is sometimes born of misfortune, the swoon in the Twin Cities construction industry may soon lead to a major expansion of the Minneapolis parks system.

[Rain water won't go to waste at the new Twins stadium](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Pentair Inc. is building and donating a sophisticated system to collect, filter, and re-use rain water at the new Twins stadium.

[Group's sewage claims fail smell test](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). A conservation group claimed that 500 septic pipes were dumping sewage into the Sunrise River. No way, say Chisago County officials.

[Bill aims to tighten rules on utility rate hikes](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Minnesota's Attorney General and some lawmakers seek more accountability from utilities.

[Ethanol production hurting some grassland bird populations, study finds](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). Government incentives for corn-based ethanol have prompted farmers to convert land for corn production, hurting some grassland bird populations in the prairie pothole region of the Upper Midwest, a University of Michigan study says.

[North Dakota vs. Minn.: Dust-up over carbon](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). North Dakota is none too pleased with Minnesota as a deadline nears for what North Dakota claims will be a tax on coal-fired electricity.

[First-ever trends report tells a mixed story of Minnesota River Basin](#) (Jordan Independent). The Minnesota River Basin is a complex system, but the first-ever trends report provides a snapshot of what's happening in the watershed. It tells a mixed story with research showing some indicators of the river's health improving, some declining, and some static.

[Target Field sets 'environmental standard in sports'](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The Twins' new playing field will be kept lush and green with lots of recycled rainwater.

[State says atrazine rules are adequate](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). The Minnesota Agriculture Department says state regulations controlling the use of a popular agricultural weedkiller are doing their job.

[L-SOHC pitches projects as debate rages](#) (Minnesota Outdoor News). The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council last week recommended to the Legislature about \$56.2 million in projects for the second round of funding from the constitutional amendment voters approved in 2008.

[Holsten announces new strategy to improve duck hunting in state](#) (Minnesota Outdoor News). At the end of the DNR Roundtable last weekend, Commissioner Mark Holsten gathered outdoor writers attending to make an announcement.

[Committee's bill would realign Minn. environmental departments](#) (Minnesota Public Radio).

[Green jobs grow slowly](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Federal funding for energy-saving projects has been slowed by a bureaucratic thicket.

[Deal reached for Lake Vermilion park](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Minnesota has struck a deal with U.S. Steel to buy 3,000 acres for \$18 million that will become Lake Vermilion State Park.

[Researchers offer a new idea for ditches](#) (Associated Press). When was the last time you saw a ditch look any different than, well, a ditch?

[Editorial: Good work — the river is healthier](#) (Mankato Free Press). In many ways, the ongoing restoration of the Minnesota River Basin is a story of success. The water is less polluted, animals and aquatic organisms are seeing an encouraging rebound and appreciation for the value of the river continues to grow.

[Signs of life in Minnesota River](#) (Mankato Free Press). The Minnesota River contains less phosphorus, a whole lot more fish, less sediment and is seeing a rebound in the otter population.

*Forests, lakes, and rivers, clouds and winds, stars and flowers, stupendous glaciers and crystal snowflakes – every form of animate or inanimate existence, leaves its impress upon the soul of man. – Orison Swett Marden*

**The Minnesota River Watershed Alliance (Watershed Alliance) is an organized network of citizens, public agencies, and private organizations dedicated to communicating the benefits of an ecology healthy Minnesota River Watershed to others and are actively working towards its improvement and protection. We meet four times a year and encourage landowners and recreational users of the river to be part of the effort. For more information on the Watershed Alliance:**

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

Please register at the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance's bulletin board at <http://mail.mnsu.edu/mailman/listinfo/mrwa> to receive regular updates on what is happening in the Minnesota River Watershed.

Thanks,

Scott

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