

If It Looks Like A Duck – Conservation Minnesota

In 2008, Minnesota voters overwhelmingly approved an historic constitutional amendment to increase the state's investment in cleaning up lakes and rivers, protecting wildlife habitat, and improving parks and trails. The Legacy Amendment spells out that the newly dedicated funds "must supplement traditional sources of funding for these purposes and may not be used as a substitute." Today, the legal meaning of this prohibition against substitution is at the center of ongoing debate at the Capitol. While our analysis does not seek to answer this legal question, common sense tells us that Minnesotans who voted to tax themselves expect to see more money spent in these important areas.

Three years after the passage of the Legacy Amendment, repeated state budget deficits have tested the Legislature's ability to stick to the voter's intent. There are increasingly frequent instances where the Legislature has used Legacy funds to backfill budget cuts, raising concerns that the intended benefits of Legacy funds may erode over time. While politicians may continue to argue over whether these budget practices violate the legal standard, voters recognize this backfilling as exactly the kind of substitution prohibited by the Amendment. As the old saying goes, if it looks like a duck, swims like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it probably is a duck.

View the [Executive Summary](#)

View the [full January 2012 report](#)

Conservation Minnesota - <http://www.conservationminnesota.org/>

Holistic Mgt. Financial Planning Course Feb. 7-8 in Mankato

the Land Stewardship Project is sponsoring a "Planning for Profit" course Feb. 7-8 at School Sisters of Notre Dame in Mankato, Minn. (170 Good Counsel Drive). This course focuses on using financial planning using the Holistic Management® principles and processes to support the quality of life you desire. Anyone who has to manage finances — farmers, ranchers, non-ag business owners and managers, agency personnel, families and individuals — can gain from this course.

The fee for this course is \$250 per family/farm unit (limit two people), and \$100 for each additional person. Lunch is included. (If you took the introductory course this past December, deduct \$50 from your total.) *To register or for more information, contact LSP's Richard Ness at 320-269-2105 or ness@landstewardshipproject.org.*

Practical tools and processes for a wide array of financial management aspects will be covered in this course: how to develop a financial plan, how to analyze different enterprises (or products or jobs), how to decide what to invest in and when, how to monitor your finances through the right kind of record keeping, and more.

"Too often many of us wait until we are in financial trouble before we take a Holistic Management Financial Planning course and start applying what we learn," says Ness, who is organizing the course.

Case in point: Ness recently met members of a farm family who, in 1995, were effectively broke. "Having nothing else to lose, they learned about Holistic Management and started applying its financial and production principles and processes," says Ness. "Now, 17 years later, the parents are in their early 50s and have been able to afford to bring their son into the operation. In fact, mom and dad could retire from a financial standpoint but won't because they are having too much fun."

According to Ness, regardless of where they start from, this course gives people the tools to get on track and moving forward in a positive direction toward their financial and quality of life goals.

Course instructor Joshua Dukart, a Holistic Management Certified Educator from Bismarck, N. Dak., comes from a farming and ranching background. His family's ranch consists of cow-calf, equine, stocker and forage crop enterprises that focus on regenerative land management through the enhancement of soil health. Dukart is also a technician with the Burleigh County Soil Conservation District, which works with producers on biologically diverse cropping and livestock management to advance soil health.

"Good financial planning is key to making your personal, production and resource improvement goals work for the whole operation," says Dukart.

For more information on the Feb. 7-8 course and to register, contact: Richard Ness, 320-269-2105 or rness@landstewardshipproject.org.

Remember to help wildlife during tax season

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Nongame Wildlife Program is urging Minnesotans to remember to help wildlife by donating to the Wildlife Checkoff Fund on their tax forms. Every dollar donated helps ensure the future of wildlife in Minnesota.

"The tough economy has affected our budget, and donations are down by more than 10 percent," said Carrol Henderson, DNR Nongame Wildlife Program supervisor. "It is critical to the survival of the Nongame Program that donations maintain or increase."

Eighty percent of funding for the Nongame Wildlife Program comes from donations to the Wildlife Checkoff Fund. It is unlike other government programs that depend primarily on general tax dollars or license fees for funding.

"Every year, the number of people donating to the checkoff decreases, with fewer than one person in 35 households remembering wildlife at tax time," Henderson said. "While we appreciate those who currently donate to our program, we need help from more Minnesotans."

The tax deductible, voluntary donations fund more than 80 conservation projects, including monitoring of loon populations; surveys of wood turtles, ospreys, timber rattlesnakes and dragonflies; frog and toad research, habitat restoration and protection; monitoring of heron rookeries; and protection and management of important wildlife habitat for bald eagles, piping plovers, peregrine falcons and other wildlife at risk.

Recoveries of the bald eagle, trumpeter swan, peregrine falcon and other species were made possible in part by the donations to the Nongame Wildlife Checkoff Fund on state income and property tax forms.

The opportunity to donate to help wildlife first appeared on state tax forms in 1981 to provide funding for the protection of nongame wildlife in Minnesota.

Henderson suggested that people tell their tax preparer they would like to personally help Minnesota's wildlife by donating to the Nongame Wildlife Checkoff fund on their tax forms. Donations can also be made online any time of the year at www.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/nongame/checkoff.html

MDA invites farmers to February 15 nutrient management conference in Morton

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) invites farmers, water planners, scientists and others to hear about the latest research and techniques at the Nutrient Efficiency and Management Conference set for Wednesday, February 15, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Jackpot Junction Casino Hotel in Morton.

The conference will bring together agricultural supply and service consultants, growers, university extension specialists, crop advisers, researchers, and local, state and federal government officials. Continuing education credits will also be available for Certified Crop Advisers.

Nutrient efficiency will be the focus of this year's conference. With volatile fertilizer prices and increased commodity prices, this will be an excellent opportunity to hear from the experts and network with others interested in maximizing productivity while minimizing cost and risk.

Topics will include basics of soil phosphorous, soil test interpretation, evaluation of fertilizer additives, drainage technology research, nutrient and water quality research, high production efficiency, limits on banded fertilizer, and Discovery Farm outcomes. A farmer and crop consultant panel will provide discussion about innovative on farm nutrient management. A variety of other topics and information will be made available through a poster session.

Sponsors for the event include the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, the Minnesota Ag Water Resource Center, University of Minnesota Extension, Minnesota Crop Production Retailers, Minnesota Independent Crop Consultants, Minnesota Corn Growers, Minnesota Soybean Growers, Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative, Agrium, Mosaic and Nutra-Flo.

There are no fees to attend and lunch will be provided to register participants. Pre-registration is encouraged, and can be done online at <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/nutrientconference.aspx> or by calling 507-752-7036. For more information contact the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Brian Williams at 507-665-6806.

New incentive available in 2012 for Certified Crop Advisers:

For a limited time, Certified Crop Advisers can receive a payment bonus to put in their own pocketbooks for enrolling and assisting farmers with either the [Nutrient Management Initiative \(NMI\)](#) or the [BMP Challenge](#) programs. For the first **80 sites** enrolled in these programs, the respective Certified Crop Adviser who assists farmers with these programs will receive an up-front payment of **\$400**.

The bonus payments for CCAs are being made possible through a grant received by the [Minnesota Agricultural Water Resources Center](#) to enhance nutrient management by specifically targeting CCAs working with either the NMI or the BMP Challenge programs. These programs assist farmers in evaluating their nutrient management economic outcomes.

The deadline for the sign-up is March 31st or until the first 80 sites are enrolled. For the Nutrient Management Initiative, farmers must complete a producer agreement and submit to the local USDA-NRCS Service Center, along with signing an EQIP contract. Farmers enrolled in the NMI program in 2012 will receive \$1,400 once all program requirements are met. A portion of this payment is also intended to go toward the CCA's services.

The BMP Challenge program is another excellent opportunity for farmers, especially those working with manure applications. This program minimizes risk to the producer when proper rates are applied, but nutrient availability may be limiting. The farmer receives a payment if yields are inadequate when compared to a higher application strip within the field.

2011 NMI results are now complete and posted on the web. Results over the past five years show that additional nitrogen applications on "corn following soybean" sites produced a higher yield 77% of the time. However, when considering the additional cost for the nitrogen to attain that extra yield, only 48% of the sites were breakeven or better. "Corn following corn" sites resulted in additional yields 66% of the time. However, considering the cost of the additional nitrogen, only 43% of the sites were it breakeven or better.

Both of these programs provide a great opportunity to evaluate and maximize nutrient management efficiencies. Improving economic viability and environmental performance can be realized by using these on farm evaluation methods.

For more information about both of these programs go to: www.mda.state.mn.us/nmi or http://www.bmpchallenge.org/Nutrient_BMP_CHALLENGE.htm

Please contact Brian Williams if you have additional questions about these programs or if you would like to receive a 2011 results booklet at brian.c.williams@state.mn.us or call 507-665-6806.

MnDOT seeks public input for 20-year Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan

Revised date—Mankato open house changed to Feb. 13

The public, transportation stakeholders and local government officials are invited to provide input for Minnesota's 20-year Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan at one of nine upcoming open houses statewide.

- **Jan. 30** in **Duluth**—ARDC Office, 221 First St. W., Duluth, Minn.
- **Jan. 31** in **Crookston**—MnDOT Crookston Office, 1320 Sunflower St., Crookston, Minn.
- **Feb. 1** in **Moorhead**—Hjemkomst Center, 202 First Ave. N., Moorhead, Minn.
- **Feb. 2** in **St. Cloud**—MnDOT St. Cloud Office, 3725 12th St. N., St. Cloud, Minn.
- **Feb. 8** in **Minneapolis**—University of Minnesota Urban Research & Outreach-Engagement Center, 2001 Plymouth Ave. N., Minneapolis, Minn.
- **Feb. 9** in **Maplewood**—Maplewood Community Center, 2100 White Bear Ave., Maplewood, Minn.
- **Feb. 13** in **Mankato**—MnDOT Mankato Office, 2151 Bassett Drive, Mankato, Minn.
- **Feb. 15** in **Marshall**—Marshall Library, 201 C St., Marshall, Minn.
- **Feb. 16** in **Rochester**—Rochester Public Library, 101 Second St. SE, Rochester, Minn.

All meetings will take place from 4 to 7 p.m. A brief presentation will be given at 4:30 p.m. and repeated at 6 p.m. Attendees may come and go at any time.

Those unable to attend in-person can participate in an online webinar via Adobe Connect Feb. 6, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. For details, visit www.minnesotagoplan.org/participate.html.

Topics covered will include the recently adopted Minnesota GO vision for transportation, current transportation system, future challenges and opportunities facing transportation, draft plan objectives and strategies and how the plan will be used.

Minnesota's 20-year Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan establishes overarching guidance and priorities for making state transportation decisions across all modes of transportation. The open houses will provide Minnesotans with an opportunity to learn about the current multimodal system, the challenges we will face in the future, and how we can address those challenges. The public is also invited to provide feedback on draft transportation objectives and planning strategies.

To request an interpreter (ASL or other language) or other reasonable accommodation, call Janet Miller at 651-366-4720 or 1-800-657-3774 (Greater Minnesota); 711 or 1-800-627-3529 (Minnesota Relay). Alternatively, send an email to janet.rae.miller@state.mn.us. Please request at least one week in advance.

Gathering input for the 20-year Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan is an important next step in turning Minnesota GO, the recently adopted 50-year transportation vision, into reality. Minnesota GO aims to better align the state's transportation system with what Minnesotans expect for their quality of life, economy and natural environment.

In addition to the public open houses, there will be a public comment period and a public hearing in March or April after the draft plan is available. The final plan is scheduled for adoption this spring. Updates to state plans for highways, rail, aviation, transit, freight and non-motorized transportation will follow.

For more information on the project, visit www.minnesotagoplan.org

For more information, contact Kirby Becker, MnDOT Office of Statewide Multimodal Planning, at 651-366-3740 or kirby.becker@state.mn.us.

[State to revise rules for certifying operators of water supply systems, wastewater-treatment plants](#)

[The Minnesota Department of Health \(MDH\) and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency \(MPCA\) jointly published a notice in the Jan. 23, 2012, State Register that announces the agencies' intentions to revise the state rules for certifying operators of water supply systems and wastewater-treatment facilities.](#)

[The anticipated changes would allow experienced operators to continue working while being trained to operate upgraded facilities.](#)

[MPCA Assistant Commissioner Rebecca Flood said, "These operators are the front line in protecting Minnesota's environment, but there's a looming shortage of qualified operators due to an aging workforce eligible for retirement. The change will allow existing operators to keep working while they gain the experience and training required for a regular certificate. Our aim is really to preserve jobs and the environment."](#)

[The revisions respond to needs that the Advisory Council on Water Supply Systems and Wastewater Treatment Facilities identified. The proposed rules would allow the respective agencies to grant conditional certificates to operators when a system or facility has been reclassified to a higher class due to its having been altered or when a when a system or facility has been reclassified with no alterations.](#)

Operators could qualify for the conditional certificates if they meet criteria specified in the proposed rule, which include:

- a) The operator is a current operator with direct responsibility;
- b) The operator has worked as the operator with direct responsibility at the same system or facility at least 12 consecutive months before applying for the conditional certificate; and
- c) The applicant passes all exams required for the higher class in sequence (D,C, B and A) and before startup of any system or facility upgrades that are related to the change in class.

[In addition, the conditional certificate would be facility specific, thus, only valid at the system or facility for which the conditional certificate is issued, but must be renewed as if it were not conditional. This would allow the system or facility operator time to gain the experience required for a regular certificate. Once the operator has met those experience requirements, the agency would issue the operator a regular certificate.](#)

[Operators could also qualify for the conditional certificate without examination if the system or facility were reclassified with no alterations. In addition, the proposed language addresses revocation of the conditional certificate in the context of existing statutes.](#)

[The MDH and MPCA will consider formal comments on the proposed revisions that the public submits following the directions specified in the notice. The agencies encourage interested and affected parties to participate in the rulemaking process. Copies of the notice, proposed rule revisions, and the Statement of Need and Reasonableness are available on the MPCA's Public Notices webpage.](#)

[Persons who have questions about the proposed changes to the state rules can contact Dianne Navratil at 651-757-2599 for MPCA-regulated wastewater-treatment facilities and Mark Sloan at 651-201-4652 for MDH-regulated water supply systems.](#)

Cover Crops to Open the 2012 Third Crop Producer Meetings

Join University of Minnesota Extension and Rural Advantage for the 8th annual Third Crop Producer Meetings. "Cover Crops Research and Experiences" will kick-off the 2012 series and will be held at the Knights of Columbus in Fairmont, Minnesota on February 6th. 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.

"Cover Crops Research and Experiences" will begin with a presentation on the Minnesota Cover Crops Decision Tool. This web-based tool is meant to be used by farmers and other ag professionals to choose cover crop species that will fit into their operation and geographical placement in Minnesota. Jill Sackett, University of Minnesota Extension Educator, was part of the planning committee and will be explaining how to use the Decision Tool.

The remainder of the morning will be led by researchers from the University of Minnesota. Miriam Gieske will be sharing the research she has been conducting around the popular tillage radish. She has been using her research plots to learn more about the agronomics and chemical make-up of this member of the Brassica family. Adam Herges will then discuss the research he has been doing in southeast Minnesota on winter rye as a cover crop. Herges is specifically looking to see if winter rye can reduce the amount of sediment and nutrients that are getting into surface waters. Both research projects have been obtaining useful information for Minnesota farmers.

The afternoon session will open with Dr. Michael Lehman with the USDA-ARS out of Brookings, South Dakota. Dr. Lehman and colleagues have been looking at different aspects of cover crop use in our area of the Midwest. He will specifically be discussing how the use of cover crops affects the make-up of the soil, both from a nutrient and microbial point of view.

Minnesota farmer Carmen Fernholz has been using cover crops for a number of years. He has recently begun working with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to see if the use of cover crops and alfalfa mulch positively affect nitrogen levels in the soil. The idea is to be able to grow your own nitrogen fertilizer on your farm.

To end the day, a Grower Panel has been put together. It consists of farmers from southern Minnesota who have been using cover crops in their rotation. Audience members will have the chance to ask the farmers questions about cover crops in order to gain useful tips and techniques for using them in their own fields or gardens. The panel will include: Carmen Fernholz, an organic grain producer from Madison; Bill Yock, a beef and grain producer from St. James; Ray Yokiell, an organic producer and pilot from Wells; and Jerry Ackermann, a grain and alfalfa producer from Lakefield.

There is no cost to attend Rural Advantage's 2012 Third Crop Producer Meetings. Pre-registration is not necessary. For those interested in attending from the metro area, carpooling is possible from the University of Minnesota St. Paul Campus if there is enough interest. If you would like to carpool, contact Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA) – misamail@umn.edu 800-909-6472 or 612-625-8235.

For weather related cancellations, contact the University of Minnesota Extension Farm Information Line at 1-800-232-9077.

Directions: Knights of Columbus Hall – 920 East 10th Street Fairmont, MN 56031 - From the South State Hwy. 15: After the railroad tracks, take the first left at Militello Motors (East 10th Street). The Knights of Columbus Hall is one block west and is on the south side of the street.

From the North – State Hwy. 15: Starting at the Interstate 90 overpass, travel south through two stoplights. Take the next right at Militello Motors (East 10th Street). The Knights of Columbus Hall is one block west and is on the south side of the street.

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

Job Announcements:

Program Manager (Water Monitoring)

The Cannon River Watershed Partnership (CRWP) is hiring a full-time Program Manager in charge of water monitoring. The primary focus of this position will be to carry out CRWP's water monitoring program needs and to help develop the next phase of water monitoring work at CRWP.

ESSENTIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- [Collection, shipment, and data entry of water samples \(grab samples and automated using an Isco sampler\).](#)
- [Collect flow data using Isco AV flow probes](#)
- [Calculate FLUX loading for Rice Creek trout study](#)
- [Stream habitat assessment/possible BEHI scoring for Rice Creek trout study](#)
- [Measure stream flow for Belle Creek and Rice Creek](#)
- [Maintain edge of field monitoring station and collect samples for MDA project](#)
- [Complete reporting as required by grants and contracts](#)
- [Coordinate and train citizen volunteers as water quality monitors](#)
- [Provide reports on results to volunteers.](#)
- [Provide project updates for the CRWP website and newsletter](#)

[To apply for this position please submit a resume and cover letter to Beth Kallestad at beth@crwp.net by February 10th. Start date for the position will be March 12th or as soon as possible.](#)

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

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>

Grant Opportunities:

Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) 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 just 2 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 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.

January 28th (Saturday) is **Storytime/ART on the Farm** at Earthrise Farm from 10:00 am to 11:00 am. Art Activity is Make Your Own Earth-Friendly Finger Paints. Join us to discover how to make your own fun finger paints, Mother Nature - approved. We'll talk about the Color Wheel and why colors are "cool-cold" or "warm-hot". We'll then use our paints to create "Masterpieces from Music" on recycled paper, becoming inspired by a variety of musical styles. Bring a CD to share if you like! Snack will be homemade oatmeal-raisin-chocolate chip cookies and apple juice. No pre-registration required. Programs are free. Contact erfarm@hotmail.com with any questions or suggestions.

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 7th (Tuesday) is the **AIS Training for Lake Service Providers** from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. at AmericInn In Mankato. This is mandatory statewide AIS training and permitting for people who install and remove water recreation equipment as required by new state laws passed in 2011. Please find training directions, additional details and all of the statewide training dates/locations on the [Minnesota Waters' website](#).

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.curemriver.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://prsum.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://mrdbc.mnsu.edu/calendar>

Environmental/Conservation Articles:

Commentary: New effort with farmers will improve water quality (Echo Press). Minnesota is a headwaters state for three major watersheds – the Mississippi River, the Red River and Great Lakes. That means a rain drop that falls on a Minnesota farm field can end up in the Gulf of Mexico, Hudson Bay or the Gulf of St. Lawrence. It also means that decisions made in management of Minnesota land – whether urban, suburban or rural – can make a difference thousands of miles away.

Dayton says Arden Hills site needs cleanup, with or without stadium (Minneapolis Star Tribune). If the Minnesota Vikings don't end up building at the Ramsey County former ammunitions plant site, the state should spend \$30 million to fix up the site, the governor says.

Program aims to work with farmers on water quality (Echo Press). Governor Mark Dayton this week joined U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) committing the state and federal government to develop a new program that will enhance Minnesota's water quality by accelerating farmers' voluntary adoption of on-farm conservation practices.

[Poet gets new partner in \\$250 million cellulosic ethanol plant in Iowa](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). Poet LLC, a Sioux Falls, S.D. ethanol giant with several plants in Minnesota, today announced a joint venture with a Dutch biotech company to build a \$250 million ethanol plant that it hopes will pave the way for the next generation of renewable biofuels.

[Grass sings, grass whispers. Ashes to ashes, dust to grass. But real grass, not the stuff that we trim and poison to an acid green mat, not clipped never allowed to go to seed, not this humanly engineered lawn substance as synthetic as a carpet. Every city should have a grass park, devoted to grass, long grass, for city children haven't the sense of grass as anything but scarp on a boulevard. – 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.

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,](#)

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[Scott](#)

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[Scott Kudelka](#)
[Watershed Assessment Specialist](#)
[Water Resources Center](#)
[184 Trafton Science Center S](#)
[Mankato, MN 56001](#)
[507-389-2304](#)