

15th Anniversary Celebration of the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry

The Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry will celebrate 15 years of service with an open house, tours, music and more on July 23rd (Saturday) from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the School Sisters of Notre Dame (170 Good Counsel Drive) in Mankato.

Best known for the 2-acre Community Garden which has grown to include 130 families and individuals, the Center for Earth Spirituality also offers workshops, re-skilling events, an annual Earth Conference and a new Canning and Food Preservation Tool Library. The public is invited to tour our new library as well as the community gardens.

Schedule of events:

- 1-2 pm – Open House with Guided tours and children's activities
- 2-3pm – Music and program
- 3-4 pm – Open house and tours

For more information, contact Lisa Coons at 507-389-4272 or lcoons@ssndmankato.org

“This Perennial Land” author presents at the Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance July meeting.

At the July 8th 2011 Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance (GBERBA) Policy meeting, attendees were treated to a presentation from Lansing Shepard, co-author of the book “This Perennial Land”; a book about the Greater Blue Earth River Watershed, restorative agriculture and the landscape.

Co-authors Lansing Shepard and Paula Westmoreland describe the book in this way, “This book is the product of a journey we began back in 2003. It is the story of a beautiful and intensely farmed land that has been written off as a “sacrificial landscape”- a natural place ceded entirely to industrial use-even by many concerned about the environment. We felt strongly then and even stronger now, that every landscape should be healthy and imbued with the processes that sustain it.

This is also a story of people trying to make a living farming with nature in mind, but within a farm subsidy system that largely discourages such practice. The challenges faced by anyone doing that are considerable, as was sorting out the complex and multi-layered issues.”

The book also includes an “opportunity map” offering “ a rough blueprint—a conceptual starting point—for landowners, policymakers, and citizen who want a part in forging a new vision for returning health, beauty, and economic stability to corn and soybean country.”

For more information about the Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance (GBERBA) or “This Perennial Land” please visit the web sites www.gberba.org and www.thisperennialland.com.

Extension's Fall Woody Biomass Webinar Series

The University of Minnesota Extension will offer 7 web-based seminars, or “webinars” on woody biomass in Fall, 2011. While they do require access to an internet connection, webinars offer the convenience of learning at your home or office, avoiding the time and expense of traveling to a workshop.

The series begins on August 17 and includes presentations on ecological impacts, supply and markets, biomass energy technology, policy issues, economics, and more. Everyone is welcome to attend. There

is no charge, but pre-registration is required in order to obtain webinar connection instructions. All webinars will be recorded and made available online for later viewing.

Webinar detailed topical descriptions and registration links are found at the My Minnesota Woods web site at www.myminnesotawoods.umn.edu by clicking the link on "Extension's Fall 2011 woody biomass webinar series" or by clicking this link <http://z.umn.edu/WBwebinar> .

Dates, topics and speakers are listed below:

- August 17, 2011: Ecological impacts of biomass harvesting: soil as the basis for sustainable management
Dr. Rob Sleasak, Site Level Program Manager
- August 31, 2011: Woody Biomass Supply and Market Opportunities for Minnesota
Ms. Anna Dirkswager, MN DNR Biomass Coordinator
- September 14, 2011: Biomass Energy Technology Options
Dr. Joel Tallaksen, Biomass Coordinator, University of Minnesota-Morris
- September 28, 2011: Federal and State Policy Development in Biomass Utilization
Dr. Dennis Becker an Associate Professor of the Department of Forestry, of the University of Minnesota
- October 12, 2011: Economics of Producing Short Rotation Woody Crops for Energy
Dr. William Lazarus, Professor and Extension Economic Specialist of the University of Minnesota
- October 26, 2011: Biomass Harvesting as a Wildlife Management Tool
Ms. Jodie Provost, Private Woodland Owner Wildlife Specialist of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- November 16, 2011: Biomass Energy: Private Sector Perspective
Bruce Labno, a senior consultant of the Golder Associates, Inc based in Roseville, MN

For more information contact Diomy Zamora, 612-626-9272, zamora015@umn.edu or Gary Wyatt, 507-389-6748, [wyatt@umn.edu](mailto:w Wyatt@umn.edu)

Cover Crop Cost-share Dollars Available

Rural Advantage, in partnership with Practical Farmers of Iowa, is seeking agricultural producers interested in utilizing cover crops. Cost-share dollars are available. This project is funded by NCR-SARE.

Cover crops are capable of providing multiple benefits when placed on the landscape. These benefits include: decreased soil erosion, increased soil organic matter, and increased soil nutrients. Common cover crops for Minnesota include: winter rye, oats, barley, field pea, and red clover. Cover Crops can easily be used after canning crop harvest, silage harvest, or small grain harvest. It is also possible to use cover crops in a corn/soybean rotation. Cover Crops are ideal for prevented plant acres as well.

Rural Advantage is seeking farmers willing to establish cover crops. Funding is available for up to \$20 per acre for up to 20 acres [\$400 maximum per farm]. Participating farmers may plant the cover crop(s) of their desire. A demonstration aspect and simple reporting will be required. Funding for the project runs from Fall 2009 to Fall 2012. Farmers from all areas of Minnesota are welcome to participate.

For more information, please contact Jill Sackett, UMN Extension Educator – Conservation Agronomist, at the Rural Advantage office: 507-238-5449 or sacke032@umn.edu

Job Announcements:

REAP Food Group Development Coordinator

REAP Food Group, a non-profit organization located in Madison, Wisconsin, is seeking to hire a half-time Development Coordinator. The Development Coordinator will take the lead in fundraising for REAP's programs and general administrative functions through donor development, grant writing, donor appeals, earned income and special events

A full position description, required qualifications, and application instructions are available at http://www.reapfoodgroup.org/images/stories/pdf/development_coordinator.pdf. Application Deadline is July 27, 2011

Events:

July 23rd (Saturday) is the **Fort Ridgely 1862 Battlefield Tours** starting at 1:00 and 2:30 p.m. in the Fort Ridgely Historic Commissary. Join historian John LaBatte for a walking tour of the Fort Ridgely Battlefield. First view the video in the Fort Ridgely Historic Commissary and then join John as he walks the parade ground to share his research on the Battles of Fort Ridgely. A fee is charged. Sponsored by Nicollet County Historical Society. For more info call (507) 426-7888, (507) 934-2160 or visit <http://www.nchsmn.org/>

July 27th (Wednesday) is the **Conservation Marketplace of Minnesota (CMM) Annual Meeting** from 8:30 am – 5 pm. The meeting will be in Mankato at the City Center Hotel, 101 East Main Street. A morning tour of the Greater Blue Earth River Watershed is planned along with afternoon presentations on ecosystem services and environmental markets with local to national speakers. RSVP is required to reserve a spot on the bus and lunch. Register by July 15 by contacting Brooke Hacker at 507-389-5338 or brooke.hacker@mnsu.edu. CMM Annual Meeting Agenda: <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/cmmannualmeetingagenda.pdf>

July 30th (Saturday) is **B is for Battle Cry presentation** at 2: 00 p.m. in the Fort Ridgely Historic Commissary. David and Pat Geister speak about the Civil War and the process of writing and illustrating their book: *B is for Battle Cry*. The program is interactive with the audience. *B is for Battle Cry* brings to life the battles, leaders and inventions of the time period of the Civil War. *B is for Battle Cry* and other books by Dave and Pat will be for sale. . A fee is charged. Sponsored by Nicollet County Historical Society. For more info call (507) 426-7888, (507) 934-2160 or visit <http://www.nchsmn.org/>

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

Environmental/Conservational Articles:

[No mowing at Edina city building draws complaints](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). A 'sustainable' area of native grasses around the new Edina Public Works building is riling the neighbors.

[Experts weigh in on viability of ethanol](#) (Marshall Independent). Say industry will carry on, even if the federal government discontinues the blender's credit and tariff on imported ethanol.

[Beekeepers closely watch population, productivity](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). July is typically a busy month for bees, and peak time for honey production in Minnesota. It's also a busy time for beekeeper Jeff Anderson, who keeps a close eye on his hives - not just to watch for honey, but also for disease.

[Effects of climate change appear in national parks near Great Lakes](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). National parks around the Great Lakes are showing early and damaging signs of climate change, according to a new report from two environmental groups.

[More deer ticks, fewer loons: Climate change on the Great Lakes](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Two environmental groups warn of more damage by midcentury.

[Green economy grows jobs](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). With a boost from government, environmentally friendly industries in Minnesota are adding workers.

[Herbicide suspected in tree deaths](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Recently approved Imprelis is leading suspect in tree die-off nationwide.

[Dayton, GOP finally reach budget deal](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). After weeks of crippling political deadlock, DFL Gov. Mark Dayton and Republican legislative leaders emerged in the darkened Capitol on Thursday to announce they had brokered a budget deal to end the longest state government shutdown in U.S. history.

It is inconceivable to me that an ethical relation to land can exist without love, respect, and admiration for land, and a higher regard for its value. By value, I of course mean something far broader than mere economic value; I mean value in the philosophical sense. – Aldo Leopold

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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