

Miranda Hacker will be putting together the Minnesota River Weekly Update this summer. She graduated this spring with her Bachelor of Fine Arts-Graphic Design. She is interning with the Water Resources Center at Minnesota State University, Mankato and will be doing some of their Graphic Design work.

Sweetness Flows for Famers

EMBARRASS — Janna Goerdt is focused on growing quality food in a way that's best for the earth. If that includes the sticky-sweet flow of maple syrup, it's that much better. Goerdt operates Fat Chicken Farms near Embarrass where chickens range freely, turkeys trot, honeybees hover and a variety of vegetables emerge from the fertile earth. And don't forget the silver maples sending forth their sappy sweetness.

She believes people and planet deserve good food grown responsibly. To that end, Goerdt left the world of journalism, planting herself in something she'd always enjoyed, growing things. With plenty of land and silver maple trees growing on the riverbank, she launched into farming full-time. She had space for honey and from there, she kept adding as she went along. "When I became a farmer, I started doing more," Goerdt explained. People enjoyed locally grown products and she realized there was a ready market for them. "It felt good to provide those things."

A life-long gardener, growing vegetables wasn't new to her, but making syrup was. Once she started however, Goerdt was hooked. "I knew I'd keep doing it because the taste between maple and commercial syrup is so enormous," Goerdt said. Her friends and family wanted more so she made more, and it flowed from there. Along the way Goerdt adapted, developing unique ways to gather sap from her trees as conditions warranted. The river floods the banks where the trees grow right about syrup time each year, for example. Initially Goerdt donned hip waders and trudged into the water to tap the trees. Since then, she has come up with an ingenious way to gather sap: she breaks out her canoe. "I go in a canoe from tree to tree," she laughed. "It's a lot easier than wading in hip boots."

Her grove consists of about 200 trees, and Goerdt taps about a quarter of them, rotating annually. Silver maples are not the most common source for maple syrup; that claim belongs to sugar maples. With lower sugar content, more sap is required from a silver maple to make the same amount of syrup. Goerdt has to get about 60 gallons of sap per gallon of syrup, compared to about 40 gallons of sugar maple sap for the same. Goerdt ends up with a couple of gallons of maple syrup each season.

Making maple syrup is a good third-crop choice, Goerdt claims. "These things can be expensive and time-consuming," she said. "But if you're handy, you can make it more cost effective and fun. You can read a book while it evaporates." The syrup season is short so the effort doesn't require months of commitment. Furthermore, Goerdt said taps are inexpensive and durable; expensive evaporators aren't necessary. "I do mine on a wood fire outside. You could do it on a stove." She said. "The fundamentals are still simple. It takes a little ingenuity."

Goerdt suggests interested people watch, or even help, someone already making syrup. When determining if making maple syrup is the thing to do, starting simply prevents a large loss if it isn't. "One guy tapped his friends' and neighbors' trees, collected sap riding his bike and boiled it in his back yard," she recalled. The operation is quite sustainable for farm and farmer. "My purpose isn't to max out the land. I want it to be sustainable for the land, but also for me," Goerdt noted. "It's so enjoyable I want to keep doing it. I don't want to burn myself out because if I do, nobody will be there to produce locally."

She markets her wares in area farmers' markets and co-ops. The number of farmers' markets she participates in is growing, and she is testing community-supported agriculture this year. "Open yourself to try," she said. "Maybe you won't like it but at least you have syrup you like."

Rural Advantage is a nonprofit corporation based in Fairmont, Minnesota. Their mission is to promote the connections between agriculture, the environment and rural communities in order to improve ecological health, economic viability and rural vitality. Their work centers around efforts to reduce agricultural

nonpoint source pollution with major programming focused on the 3rd Crop Initiative, ECoPayPack development and building the Madelia Model concept. Contact them at 507-238-5449 or visit their website at www.ruraladvantage.org for more information.

DNR Lifts All Burning Restrictions

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has announced that effective at noon today, Friday, May 14, seasonal burning restrictions will be lifted in all counties and burning permits for vegetative matter will once again be available.

Heavy rains drenched northeastern Minnesota on Thursday, dramatically decreasing the threat of wildfires.

Likewise, the restrictions placed on campfires and fireworks in northeastern Minnesota are also lifted. Campfires may once again be enjoyed throughout the state; just in time for the fishing opener. While the entire state now returns to normal fire restrictions, the DNR would like to remind everyone that burning permits are required anytime vegetation is burned during the snow free season. Permits are available through state and federal forestry offices, township fire wardens, and online for a \$5 annual fee. In addition, residents are reminded that municipalities may have stricter regulations regarding the burning of vegetation. Check with local authorities and obtain the proper permits prior to lighting a fire.

The DNR encourages everyone to be safe when burning. Have a source of water available, stay with the fire until it is dead out, and check the fire after you think it is out to make sure all embers have cooled

Sierra Club Announces May 22 Canoe Outing in Sibley State Park

The Western Minnesota Sierra Club group will hold a canoe outing May 22 in Sibley State Park. Sierra Club outings are open to the public, and everyone is invited to enjoy our environment and learn more about it with us.

Participants will meet at 9:00am at the Swimming Beach on Lake Andrew, about a half mile west of the Park Office. If you do not have your own canoe and life vests, you can rent them for \$20 all day from the park by stopping at the Park Office on County 48, where you can also pay the park entrance fee. Bring your own snacks, as well as pot-luck items to share for lunch. Note that we will not be cooking, and everything you bring must be carried across portages. The outing will end by mid-to-late afternoon.

If high winds are forecast, our group will break into teams to take advantage of the park's geo-caching program instead (bring your GPS). If moderate-severe storms are forecast, we will arrange eco-movies and discussion at a local site. Pre-registration required: Email Outing Leader Kay Slama at slama@morris.umn.edu or phone her at 320-796-5871 if you plan to participate in this outing or wish more information.

The Sierra Club North Star Chapter represents over 15,000 members, your friends and neighbors across Minnesota. Inspired by nature, we work together to protect our communities and the planet. For over 40 years we have worked to preserve and protect Minnesota's environment through educational programs and volunteer activism. Visit our web site at www.northstar.sierraclub.org

The Future of Paddling

Dear Water Trail enthusiast,

The DNR is gathering public input on how to spend money from the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Act that was approved by voters in 2008. A significant portion of this 3/8% increase in the state sales tax will provide funding for regional and state parks and trails.

You can help chart the course of outdoor recreation for the next 25 years by participating in one of 17 workshops to be held around the state in May and June. For more information and a schedule of workshops, check out <http://patl.intergov.mn.gov/public-meetings>. To provide input via a Facebook account, check out <http://www.citizing.org/projects/parkslegacy>.

If you have additional questions, please contact:

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For information on over 4,000 miles of YOUR Minnesota Water Trails, visit: www.mndnr.gov/watertrails to Minnesota state parks and trails this summer.

A new program series known as “Outdoors EXTRA!” will provide a lengthy list of things to see and do at Minnesota state parks, trails, and recreation areas this summer. More than 50 events, between June 6 and Sept. 5, will feature known entertainers, musicians, storytellers and outdoor skill-building experts. “It is no exaggeration to say that everyone can find something enjoyable in this special program series,” said Eric Pelto, interpretive naturalist and program coordinator. “We especially hope that people who haven’t been to Minnesota state parks or trails before, or those who haven’t visited in a while, will find new reasons to check them out.”

In its pilot year, the new program is offering a wide variety of opportunities for all ages.

Examples include:

- For adventure seekers - sea kayaking, fly fishing, or rock climbing.
- For animal lovers - the chance to see live elk, eagles, owls, and reptiles.
- For creative types - live music under the open sky, or workshops on nature photography and poetry.
- For history buffs - dramatic stories about the legends of Minnesota and much more.

All of the events are free, but a vehicle permit is necessary to enter Minnesota state parks and recreation areas. Permits (\$5 for one day or \$25 for year-round) can be purchased at the parks. There is no charge to use Minnesota state trails.

For more information about Outdoors EXTRA! and other special events and programs at Minnesota state parks and trails, visit www.mndnr.gov/parksandtrails or contact the DNR Information Center, info.dnr@state.mn.us or 651-296-6157 (Twin Cities) or 888-646-6367 (toll-free).

[View the Minnesota WaterFront Bulletin from March 2010](#)

Events:

May 20th (Thursday) is a **Trail Planning Regional Workshop** from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the McColl Pond Environmental Learning Center (13550 Dakota Avenue South) in Savage.

May 22nd (Saturday) is a **River Paddling Trip** at noon in LeSueur/Watonwan. Contact Dean at 507-345-8701 for more information.

June 1st (Tuesday) are **Walking Tours** from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at FarmAmerica in Waseca. Experiences the changes over time from the prairie and 1850s farm site to the 1930s farm site and beyond. Enjoy the animals and exhibits on display at the sites. For more information go to <http://www.greatermankatoevents.com/event-details.php?id=9173>

June 6th (Sunday) is the **15th annual celebration of the Earth Sabbath**. The day begins at 1:00 and features Sabbath Sites: Blacksmithing, Weaving, Miniature Horses, Walking the Evolving Universe Story,

tours, DVD "Story of Stuff", Live Music, Silent Auction and much more..... At 6:00 join us for the Sabbath Ceremony followed by an Earthrise grown and roasted turkey, baked beans, tabouli, garden greens and rhubarb crisp. Following this meal we will feast on the beautiful concert music of Sara Thomsen. We'd love to have you come. If you need to stay overnight we will soon be listing accommodation places on our website <http://earthrisefarmfoundation.org/>. More information is also included on our website. Please bring a loaf of your favorite bread to share and call or e-mail us if you think you can stay and eat supper with us. Admission for the events of this day is \$15.00 per adult or \$25.00 for the entire family.

June 8th (Tuesday) is a **Trail Planning Regional Workshop** from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Bryant Lake Park (6800 Rowland Road) in Eden Prairie.

June 9th (Wednesday) is a **Trail Planning Regional Workshop** from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Southwest Minnesota State University (1501 State Street, Room 117, Conference Center) in Marshall.

June 9th, 10th & 11th (Wednesday, Thursday & Friday) is a **High School River Expedition** at the Lac qui Parle River. Camp out at the LqP County Park, the State Park and at Lagoon Park. Call 320-269-2984 to sign up or to volunteer to help.

June 12th (Saturday) is the launch of the **Minnesota River Paddler Patch Program** at 9:00 a.m. below the Rapidan Dam (on the Blue Earth River west of Rapidan in Blue Earth County). Canoe rides, information booths, and music. Post-paddle ceremony and music starts at 2:00 p.m.

June 14th (Monday) is a **Nature Hike** from 9:00 a.m. to noon at Gneiss Scientific and Natural Area. Tour led by Ron Bolduna - Minnesota River Valley Photographer. For more information visit http://www.rcrca.com/upcoming_events_others.htm

June 15th (Tuesday) is an event talking about how to **Improve Water Quality with Native Plants** from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Mt.Olivet Lutheran Church. Learn how to plan, purchase and plant native gardens, rain gardens, and shorelines. For more information visit <http://www.minnesotawaters.org/node/741>

June 16th (Monday) is **Women's Conservation Day 2010** from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the Prairie Event Center in Marshall. A day provided for women landowners and operators to further their knowledge of conservation programs. For more information visit <http://www.redwoodswcd.org/Women's%20Day.htm>

June 17th (Thursday) is a **Trail Planning Regional Workshop** from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at South Central College (1920 Lee Boulevard E119 and E121) in North Mankato.

June 22nd (Tuesday) is a **Cottonwood River Paddle** from County Road 11 to Flandrau State Park in New Ulm sponsored by Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area (RCRCA). Please register by June 16th by calling RCRCA at 507-637-2142, ext. 2.

June 24th (Thursday) is a **Redwood River Paddle** from County Road 6 to Lake Redwood sponsored by Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area (RCRCA). Please register by June 16th by calling RCRCA at 507-637-2142, ext. 2.

July 19th (Monday) is a **Minneosta River Board Meeting** in New Ulm, MN. Executive Committee meeting at 8:00 a.m. and Full Board meeting at 9:00 a.m.

July 20th (Tuesday) is a **Minneosta River Watershed Alliance Quarterly Meeting** from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Hutchinson Event Center in Hutchinson. For more information visit www.watershedalliance.blogspot.com

September 3rd & 4th (Friday & Saturday) is **Riverblast 2010** in New Ulm, MN (Center and Front Streets). For more information visit www.riverblast.org

September 20th (Monday) is a **Minneosta River Board Meeting** in Montevideo, MN. Executive Committee meeting at 8:00 a.m. and Full Board meeting at 9:00 a.m.

November 15th (Monday) is a **Minneosta River Board Meeting** in Gaylord, MN. Executive Committee meeting at 8:00 a.m. and Full Board meeting at 9:00 a.m.

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

Environmental/Conservational Articles:

[Biodiversity research yields an increase in energy](#) (MinnPost). At the Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve in Bethel, researchers such as University of Minnesota ecologist David Tilman are experimenting with growing bioenergy of the future. Tilman explains how planting a variety of prairie species in an area will yield a higher amount of bioenergy than a plot with just one variety, such as switchgrass.

[Research links pesticides with ADHD in children](#) (MPR). A new analysis of U.S. health data links children's attention-deficit disorder with exposure to common pesticides used on fruits and vegetables.

[North St. Paul / Gateway Trail requires rerouting](#) (Pioneer Press). Work on a new Gateway Trail bridge has forced the rerouting of bicycle and pedestrian traffic on the popular path at Century Avenue.

[Walleyes aplenty for fishing opener](#) (Star Tribune). Anglers didn't have to catch walleyes here Saturday, the first day of the state's 2010 fishing season, to enjoy themselves.

[Cleaner air for metro](#) (Star Tribune). Nine years ago the Minnesota Legislature, with prodding from state environmental groups, passed a pioneering law that enticed utilities to switch to cleaner power generation.

[Pedal power expanding in the suburbs](#) (Star Tribune). Residents in Roseville and Arden Hills could pedal their bicycles to distant reaches of the metro area as new trails link them to surrounding cities.

[U of M Institute invites industry to help set environmental research priorities](#) (MinnPost). How can a manufacturer efficiently recycle precious metals taken from products slated for the dumpster? Does "green" labeling influence consumers' choices? If so, how?

[What should St. Paul parks system look like?](#) (Star Tribune). The St. Paul Parks and Recreation system is going to look a lot different in the coming years, and city officials are asking residents for input on what that look should be.

[Real disaster might be lurking beneath the surface](#) (MinnPost). From the first moments that the [Deepwater Horizon oil rig sank](#) last month, it has been apparent that the blooming Gulf oil spill has been an oil disaster unlike any other. But the full truth of that statement is perhaps only now beginning to become apparent.

[Neighbors get help to clean up Diamond Lake](#) (Star Tribune). Diamond Lake's ship has come in, thanks to an unusual neighborhood endeavor to clean up the small south Minneapolis lake's dirty water.

[Lake Elmo / DNR grant allows park solar panels](#) (Pioneer Press). Solar panels will be installed on a shower and restroom building at Lake Elmo Park Reserve as a result of a grant from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

[Dennis Anderson: Deal perhaps within reach on Lessard-Sams "definitions" conflict](#) (Star Tribune). It appears the definitions conflict dividing anglers, hunters and other conservationists and the state House of Representatives over expenditures from the Outdoor Heritage Fund might soon be resolved.

[Time to move away from fossil fuel economy](#) (Mankato Free Press). NEW YORK — The ecological damage occurring in Louisiana and the Gulf states from the explosion and fire on an oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico demonstrates the folly of trying to find the last drop of oil anywhere on planet Earth.

[Neal St. Anthony: Minnesota firms working to get 'beyond petroleum'](#) (Star Tribune). The disastrous Gulf of Mexico oil spill is another painful reminder of why it's good for U.S. energy, economic, environmental and security policy to move, as BP has said in its ubiquitous ads, "beyond petroleum."

[Only minor change needed in safe fish guidelines](#) (MPR). A new study shows fish in most Minnesota lakes outside the metro area have low or undetectable levels of chemicals called PFOS.

[Dennis Anderson: In search of improving your catch](#) (Star Tribune). Dirk Peterson was named head of the Department of Natural Resources fisheries section March 1, replacing Ron Payer, who retired.

[No lack of hot spots in metro](#) (Star Tribune). Some anglers ply metro waters in metal-flaked boats with big motors seeking -- and catching -- gargantuan muskies, walleyes and bass. But most Twin Cities fishing is done from piers or the shore, and the fish sought are small.

['Minnesota boy' David Gelbaum bets big on solar power](#) (Star Tribune). Amid the \$6 million homes perched on a beachfront cliff in this conservative Southern California enclave, the seven-year-old Honda Civic hybrid with the Obama bumper sticker is the giveaway.

[Will Minnesota and the nation lead the world on green energy?](#) (Star Tribune). The time has come to devote the energy and funding necessary to support research and conversion to sustainable energy and a green economy ("Report: More work needed on Minnesota's green economy," May 12).

[Report: More work needed on Minnesota's green economy](#) (Star Tribune). With its university research, sources of biomass and track record of innovation, some people think Minnesota has the tools to become a major leader in the green economy. But will it live up to its potential?

[Compromise reached on environmental spending bill](#) (Pioneer Press). A House-Senate conference committee has reached a compromise on a \$26 million environmental spending package recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources.

[Minnesota House OKs study of St. Croix River bridge funding](#) (Pioneer Press). The Minnesota House on Tuesday passed a transportation bill that will explore tolls as one option to help build — and possibly accelerate — construction of a new St. Croix River crossing south of Stillwater.

[At Gulf oil spill hearing, plenty of blame, not many answers](#) (MinnPost). The US Senate waded into the expanding Deepwater Horizon oil spill mess for the first time Tuesday, [grilling oil industry executives](#) over fail-safe systems that failed, lack of planning to deal with a major spill, and the executives' attempts to shift blame to one another.

[Lots of locks sent to fight an oily mess](#) (Star Tribune). A charitable endeavor taking off in Minnesota gives new meaning to the term "greasy hair."

[Energy policy and politics spill over into Capitol halls with first oil spill hearings](#) (MinnPost). Everyone agrees that something needs to be done. Exactly what, well, that's a trickier question. "We all know that accidents happen, but some accidents are simply unacceptable," Sen. Amy Klobuchar said at a Senate hearing Tuesday on the cause of — and response to — the massive April 20 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Thousands have lived without love, but not one has lived without water. - W.H. Auden

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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