

Why Mississippi floods were expected

By Richard a Lovett, naturenews

Last year, it was Pakistan and Russia. This spring, all talk of disasters attributable to freak weather conditions turns eyes to the United States.

First, it was snowfalls that never seemed to end. After that came tornadoes. Now, a massive slug of water is working its way down the Mississippi River, forcing the US Army Corps of Engineers to deliberately flood farmland to spare riverside towns such as Cairo in Illinois, and threatening near-record water levels all the way to New Orleans. *Nature* looks at the underlying causes of these extreme events, and how the surge might have been predicted.

For the entire article: <http://www.nature.com/news/2011/110513/full/news.2011.289.html>

MPCA to Begin Summer Field Work Throughout Minnesota

Brainerd, Minn. — Monitoring crews from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) are beginning the fourth year of a 10-year effort to assess the condition of rivers, streams, and lakes in Minnesota. This work is funded by the Clean Water Fund, from the constitutional amendment passed by voters in 2008.

The majority of monitoring activities will focus on Minnesota's 81 major watersheds. Each watershed is comprised of a network of interconnected streams, lakes, and wetlands. Monitoring will help develop a complete picture of the conditions of the various water body types within each watershed and will help the MPCA choose options for improving water quality where necessary.

Monitoring in rivers and streams will primarily be carried out by two biological monitoring teams. The MPCA's biological monitoring staff is divided into a north team in Brainerd and a south team in St. Paul. This summer, the north team will work in the watersheds of the Long Prairie, Red Eye, Nemadji, Sandhill and Thief rivers, and southern tributaries to Lake Superior. The south team will work in the watersheds of the Cannon, Rock, Upper and Lower Big Sioux, and Little Sioux rivers.

In addition, crews will complete last year's start at sampling 150 river and stream sites picked at random, to determine the statewide condition of streams.

Other MPCA monitoring teams working with the Department of Natural Resources will track water quality trends on major rivers at the outlets of most major watersheds in Minnesota.

Stream monitoring measures and evaluates the condition of rivers and streams by studying fish, aquatic invertebrates (such as insect larvae, worms, crayfish and leeches) and plant life as well as habitat, flow, and water chemistry.

Lake monitoring crews will sample more than 50 lakes in the same watersheds. Lake teams will focus on nutrient concentrations and other water chemistry parameters to assess lakes for their ability to support recreational uses.

Wetland monitoring crews will sample 150 randomly-picked wetlands throughout Minnesota as part of a national study funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. For the first time, all wetland types will be sampled, including wet meadows, marshes, and bogs. This study will provide the first-ever estimate of the quality of Minnesota's wetlands. It will be repeated every five years in support of Minnesota's "no net loss" policy.

In addition to MPCA crews, local partners will assist with stream and lake monitoring, funded by MPCA grants in these watersheds. The MPCA also relies on a large contingent of trained volunteers to collect water quality data on lakes and streams.

For more information about the MPCA's condition monitoring program activities, visit www.pca.state.mn.us/clyp906.

Retired Environmental Professionals Sought to Assist Minnesota Small Businesses, Nonprofits, Institutions

St. Paul, Minn.—The Retiree Environmental Technical Assistance Program (RETAP) invites Minnesota retirees with former careers in environmental areas to apply to be consultants in the program. Previously known as the Retired Engineers Technical Assistance Program, the name was changed to reflect a broader range of environmental work.

RETAP makes use of the expertise of retired professionals to help businesses, local government and organizations look for opportunities to reduce waste, increase energy efficiency and conservation, and reduce operating costs. RETAP's services are free of charge.

RETAP is funded through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). Since its start in 2001, more than 200 businesses and institutions have benefited from RETAP's assessments. The program has been recognized as one of 18 top state energy efficiency programs by Americans for an Energy Efficient Economy.

"RETAP has been quietly delivering assistance and non-regulatory energy and waste recommendations for small businesses, schools and others for 10 years now," said MPCA program administrator Madalyn Cioci. "It's creatively structured, because working with retirees means respecting their schedules and balancing the free time they've earned. In turn, our consultants give their expertise back to Minnesota."

Retired engineers, scientists, managers and others may apply to be RETAP consultants and are selected based on their skills and the specific needs of the program's clients. Most are paid \$14 per hour and work anywhere from 10 to 30 hours a month. Coordinators work between 40 and 70 hours per month and are paid \$20 per hour.

The electronic application to become a RETAP consultant is available at www.pca.state.mn.us/retap. Applications are due by 3:00 p.m. on June 30, 2011. Questions should be directed to Mary Baker at mary.baker@state.mn.us or 651-757-2208.

Job Announcements:

Wilderness Inquiry Trail Staff and Intern Positions for 2011

Wilderness Inquiry is currently hiring trail staff and interns for 2011. We are looking for people with outstanding leadership and decision-making skills, high energy, and a desire to work hard for the mission of WI. To learn more, see job descriptions and to apply see Wilderness Inquiry's website: www.wildernessinquiry.org

Each year, Wilderness inquiry operates hundreds of Canoeing, Kayaking and Hiking trips to destinations in Minnesota, across the United States, and around the world for people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. Trail staff leads inclusive outdoor adventures, leads single-day events and multi-day expeditions, navigates, cooks, tells stories and teaches outdoor skills along with other responsibilities.

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

Events:

May 29th (Sunday) is a **MN State Parks Power Point Program by Photographer Doug Ohman** at Fort Ridgely State Park and Historic Site in the Historic Commissary at 2:00 p.m. sponsored by the Nicollet County Historical Society. Included are photos and stories from his latest book "Prairie, Lake, Forest: MN State Parks." State Park vehicle permit is required. For more info call 507-426-7888 or visit <http://nchsmn.org/>

June 4, 2011 (Saturday) is a **Walking Tour of Fort Ridgely Battlefield** by Historian John LaBatte at Fort Ridgely State Park and Historic Site at 1:00 and 2:30 p.m. sponsored by Nicollet County Historical Society. First view the video in the Historic Commissary and then join John as he walks the parade ground to share his research on the Battles of Fort Ridgely. State Park vehicle permit is required. For more information call 507-426-7888 or visit <http://nchsmn.org/>

June 8th (Wednesday) is the presentation **Why Renewable Energy is Vital to Rural Minnesota** starting at 7 p.m. at the Treehouse Room at [Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center](#) (12718 10th Street NE, Spicer). The featured speaker is Jeff Vetsch, CERTS Regional Coordinator and sponsored by the Western Minnesota Sierra Club. Join Sierra Club members and friends to learn about the importance of renewable energy and efficiency for our region, and why we need a road map to transition from dirty coal to clean fuels. Take action for clean, renewable energy and help us plan the upcoming Clean Energy Tour! Free event, refreshments provided. All are welcome. More info/RSVP: Kay at slama@morris.umn.edu or [320-796-5871](tel:320-796-5871)

June 11th (Saturday) is a **Minnesota Valley nature program** by Ron Bolduan at Fort Ridgely Historic Commissary at 1:00 p.m. sponsored by the Nicollet County Historical Society. Ron's photos are filled with natural, cultural and historic sites along the MN River Valley Byway. June 11 is Minnesota State Park Open House day. Admittance to the State Park and Historic Site is free. For more information call 507-426-7888 or visit <http://nchsmn.org/>

June 11th (Saturday) is the **Kingery Family** at Fort Ridgely State Park and Historic Site at 3:00 p.m. sponsored by Friends of Fort Ridgely. Join us for some family musical entertainment at the amphitheater. Admittance to the State Park this event is free. For more information call 507-426-7840 or visit <http://www.thekingeryfamily.com/>

June 16th (Thursday) is an **Open House** for Uruguayan Photographer Federico Estol's book of local people and local photos: "Hello Montevideo from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Montevideo Public Library.

June 16th (Thursday) is an **Agroforestry In-Service Workshop** from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Southwest Wisconsin Kickapoo Valley Reserve LaFarge and Mark Shepard's Farm, Viola, WI. For more information <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/agroforestry.pdf>

June 18th (Saturday) is the **Trifesta Celebration** in Montevideo starting at 8:30 at Lagoon Park with a 5k Run, Bike Race, Kayak Race, Canoe Race, Rubber Duck Race, music, food and much more.

June 18th (Saturday) is a **Military Event** at the Fort Ridgely State Park and Historic Site at 1:30 p.m. sponsored by Nicollet County Historical Society. Become a "volunteer soldier". Civil War-era re-enactors will be at the Historic Site to train recruits for infantry and artillery militia. Max and Donna Daniels, as President Abraham and Mary Lincoln will review the troops. President Lincoln will give the Gettysburg Address at 2 p.m. State Park vehicle permit is required. For more information call 507-426-7888 or visit <http://nchsmn.org/>

June 26th (Sunday) is the **Flag Program** at Fort Ridgely State Park and Historic Site at 1:30 p.m. sponsored by Friends of Fort Ridgely. The Fairfax Honor Guard will demonstrate proper flag etiquette including folding of the flag. The reasons for the folds and other interesting information about our country's flag will be shared. The demonstration will be followed by a 21-gun salute and "Taps". Demonstration will be on the Historic Site parade grounds. State Park vehicle permit is required. For more info call 507-426-7840 or visit <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/index.html>

June 26th (Sunday) is the **Minnesota and the Civil War presentation** by Civil War expert Stephen Osman at Fort Ridgely State Park and Historic Site at 2:00 p.m. sponsored by Nicollet County Historical Society. Osman will present a Power Point program in the Historic Commissary about the Minnesota volunteers who fought in the Civil War. Enjoy colorful images and stories of their heroic service. State Park vehicle permit is required. For more information call 507-426-7888 or visit <http://nchsmn.org/>

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

Environmental/Conservational Articles:

[Program teaches kids to 'Grow. Eat. Share.'](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). A program for school kids teaches them how to grow their own food, eat healthier – and share the bounty.

[Frederickson talks DNR issues with Lyon County Board](#) (Marshall Independent). The Lyon County Board heard a presentation from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources on Tuesday, but this time the messenger was a little different than usual.

[Students turn ideas of water conservation into art](#) (Agri News). A Rochester high school senior hopes her art that depicts how valuable water is to other cultures will help Minnesotans realize how important it is to them.

[Minnesota DNR continues catfish project, seeks angler help](#) (Outdoor News). The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is looking for the public's help in gathering data on catfish angling and consumption as part of a project to enhance management of the fish.

[Governor, Legislature headed for collision over the environment](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). The first bill that DFL Governor Mark Dayton and the Republican Legislature agreed on was to streamline environmental review and permitting.

[Put the hose away, go native](#) (Twin Cities Daily Planet). America loves lawns. If you live in a house, whether it's in St. Paul, Richfield, or Moorhead, you most likely have a lawn.

[Farm Runoff in Mississippi River Floodwater Fuels Dead Zone in Gulf](#) (Public Broadcasting Service). A dead zone – already the size of the state of New Jersey – is growing in the Gulf of Mexico, fueled by nutrient runoff from the swollen Mississippi River.

[Projects still reap benefits of E.O. Olson Trust Fund](#) (Worthington Daily Globe). Standing along a berm just a mile or so north of Worthington, one can hear the tall grasses blowing in the breeze, water flowing over a dam, a pair of geese squawking about their new guests and, in the distance, a pheasant rooster crackling as he forages for food.

[Ramp gates a solution for zebra mussels?](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Homeowners on Christmas Lake are pushing for a better way to protect their clean waters.

[DNR: Dam funding cut could let Asian carp spread](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). A Minnesota House committee has eliminated funding to rebuild a dam that officials say is the best option for stopping the spread of invasive Asian carp up the Mississippi River into many of the central and northern lakes.

[Moratorium on acquiring public lands?](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The Minnesota House has approved a bill that would prohibit the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council from recommending new land acquisitions outside the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area for a year.

[Legacy funds are left hanging at Legislature](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The Minnesota Senate approved \$450 million in outdoors and arts spending, but the House adjourned at midnight without voting on the measure.

Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves. – John Muir

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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