

Minnesota farmer connects land, people and rivers

By Anne Queenan, TC Daily Planet (October 5, 2011)

Lake Pepin's beauty is captivating – from towering limestone bluffs to the nighthawk's peep soaring over tree-lined shores at dusk. Today, sediment is clogging its waters and settling at a rate ten times faster than what is natural. Its primary source? The Minnesota River. With well-researched levels of nitrate, phosphorous and sediments from agricultural runoff eroding into the banks, bluffs, creeks and ravines, Lake Pepin and a large part of its ecosystem will eventually disappear.

In an effort to learn more about this, an afternoon's drive through Minnesota's western landscape of vast fields of corn and soybeans culminated in meeting a pioneer in the farming community of Madison, MN. Here, several water districts away from Lake Pepin, Carmen Fernholz pays careful attention to the symbiotic relationship between land, water, and humans while successfully harvesting his fields.

Fernholz and his wife, Sally, are certified organic farmers of 450 acres in Lac Qui Parle County, near the headwaters of the Minnesota River. According to Patrick Moore, Executive Director of Clean Up the River Environment (CURE), "Carmen has been a shining example of sustainable agriculture in our region for decades."

For the entire article: [Minnesota farmer connects land, people and rivers](#)

Minnesota River Watershed Alliance meeting on November 1st in Hutchinson

Join the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance (Watershed Alliance) for its quarterly meeting on November 1st (Tuesday) from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Ridgewater College in Hutchinson. This is a great chance for the public to hear what is happening in the Minnesota River Basin.

The November quarterly meeting is being sponsored by the Land Stewardship Project (LSP) office in Montevideo. The mission of the LSP is to foster an ethic of stewardship for farmland, to promote sustainable agriculture and to develop sustainable communities.

LSP offers a number of innovative programs including the Farm Beginnings that provides participants a wide range of opportunities to learn firsthand about low-cost, sustainable methods of farming. Other LSP programs involve community based foods and economic development, local community organizing and stewardship science. For more information on LSP, <http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/>

This quarterly meeting goes from 6 to 9 p.m. at Ridgewater College (room 141) in Hutchinson. Ridgewater College is located at 2nd Century Avenue SE on the south end of Hutchinson. The Watershed Alliance encourages landowners and recreational users to be part of this effort to improve and protect the Minnesota River Basin.

We begin at 6 p.m. with a social hour to give participants time to interact with each other and share stories and concerns about what is happening in their part of the Minnesota River Watershed. At 7 p.m. the formal part of the meeting starts, with the group striving to wrap up all discussion by 9 o'clock.

The Watershed Alliance is an organized network of citizens, public agencies and private organizations dedicated to communicating the benefits of an ecologically healthy Minnesota River Watershed to others and are actively working toward its improvement and protection.

Our goal is to meet four times a year as we strive to communicate what is happening in the Minnesota River Watershed through many formats including the internet and print media.

For more information, <http://watershedalliance.blogspot.com/>

Cover Crop Field Day to be Held in Carver County

Join University of Minnesota Extension, Rural Advantage, and Carver County farmer Mr. Dean Schuette for an open-house-style cover crop field day near Mayer, Minnesota. The cover crop field day will be held October 24, 2011, from 11:00 am to 1:00pm.

Mr. Dean Schuette has partnered with Rural Advantage and University of Minnesota Extension Educator Jill Sackett on a cover crop demonstration project. This is Schuette's first year utilizing cover crops in his crop rotation and he is looking to increase soil nutrients and fertility. The field was planted to spring wheat for the 2011 growing season. After wheat harvest, Schuette planted seven acres to tillage radish, seven acres to a tillage radish-oat-field pea mixture, and three acres were left bare for a control area.

All those interested in cover crops are welcome to stop by Schuette's field during their lunch break for cookies and discussion on cover crops.

Directions: From the intersection of State Hwy 25 and County Rd 30 (Ash Ave. S. and 9th St. S.) on the south side of Mayer: Travel West on 70th St. / 9th St. S. for 1.0 mile. Turn south on Tacoma Avenue for 0.8 mile. Field will be on the east side of road.

Contacts for this event: Jill Sackett, UMN Extension - Rural Advantage, 507-238-5449; sacke032@umn.edu and Laura Kieser, UMN Extension - Carver and Scott Counties, 952-466-5306, torb0022@umn.edu

Cover Crop Workshop and Field Day at SWROC

A Cover Crop Workshop and Field Day will be held Thursday, October 27, 2011, from 10:00am to 12:30pm at University of Minnesota's Southwest Research and Outreach Center (SWROC).

Shannon Osborne with USDA-ARS will start off the workshop portion of the day with a general cover crop discussion. Jill Sackett, UMN Extension Educator, will show attendees the new Minnesota Cover Crop Decision Tool website and Brian Christiansen, NRCS – Redwood and Murray Counties, will give a short presentation on the EQIP and CSP programs. The last hour of the program will be a tour of the cover crop project being conducted by partners UMN Extension, Rural Advantage, Albert Lea Seed House, SWROC, and Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE). These cover crop plots will show two different planting dates, three different field situations, and 12 different species and mixes of cover crops.

Directions: The Southwest Research and Outreach Center is located 1.5 miles West of Lamberton on US Highway 14. Turn North and follow State Highway 330 to the Center.

Contacts for this event: Jill Sackett, UMN Extension – Rural Advantage, 507-238-5449, sacke032@umn.edu and Nathan Winter, UMN Extension – McLeod and Meeker Counties, 320-484-4303, wint0146@umn.edu

Events:

October 15th (Saturday) is the **Fall Festival at the Ney Nature Center** with activities starting at 8 a.m. with a Trail Run and finishing late in the evening with a Barn Dance. The Fall Festival is an event designed to introduce people to the Ney Nature Center. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the park, it's history and the experience and connection to nature it creates for each of us. Check out the poster at <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/fallfestival11.pdf>

October 15th (Saturday) is the presentation: **Lions, Cheetahs and Students, Oh My! Teaching and Living in Tanzania, a Fulbright's Scholar Perspective** by Cindy Johnson, Director, Linnaeus Arboretum/Professor, Biology Department at the Linnaeus Arboretum in St. Peter along with coffee and treats beginning at 9:30 a.m. The presentation will take place in the Melva Lind Interpretive Center at the Linnaeus Arboretum, Gustavus Adolphus College, Saint Peter, MN. For more information on the Linnaeus Arboretum: <https://gustavus.edu/arboretum/>

October 15th (Saturday) and 16th (Sunday) is the **Make-and-take snowshoe workshop** at Lac qui Parle State Park. On Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. workshop presenters will teach attendees how to string the laces on pre-built wooden snowshoe frames, then demonstrate how to use them. The \$75 registration fee includes the snowshoe kit and materials. Lunch will not be provided, so attendees should bring a sack lunch. Class size is limited to 12 people and advance registration is required so that the appropriate quantities and sizes of snowshoe kits may be ordered. Registration deadline is Oct. 3. To register, contact the park office at (320) 734-4450 ext 225 or e-mail cara.greger@state.mn.us.

November 1st (Tuesday) is the **Quarterly Meeting of the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance** from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Ridgewater College in Hutchinson. The meeting is sponsored by the Land Stewardship Project (LSP) office in Montevideo. The meeting begins at 6 p.m. with a social hour to give participants time to interact with each other and share stories and concerns about what is happening in their part of the Minnesota River Watershed. At 7 p.m. the formal part of the meeting starts, with the group striving to wrap up all discussion by 9 o'clock. For more information, <http://watershedalliance.blogspot.com/>

November 4th (Friday) is the **Showing of the documentary: Rain in a Dry Land** at the Treaty Site History Center in St. Peter. How do you measure the distance from an African village to an American city? What does it mean to be a refugee in today's "global village"? *Rain in a Dry Land* provides eye-opening answers as it chronicles the fortunes of two Somali Bantu families moved to the U.S. Admission is free. Sponsored by St. Peter Public Schools, Nicollet County Historical Society, River Rock Coffee and St. Peter Food Co-op. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/documentaryfilmseries.pdf>. Please contact 507-934-2160 or jessica@nchsmn.org for details.

November 5th (Saturday) is the workshop: **"Claim the Commons We're in it Together"** at the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Mankato (170 Good Counsel Drive) sponsored by the Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry. In this conference you will learn more about the commons, explore the dangers it is facing, understand our part in protecting it, and find ways to claim and protect it for all. Claiming the commons can instill us with a new vision of politics, culture and community. A new vision of the power we have together. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/commonsworkshop.pdf>

December 1st (Thursday) is the **Showing of the documentary: Reel Injun** at the Treaty Site History Center in St. Peter. Hollywood has made over 4000 films about Native people; over 100 years of movies defining how Indians are seen by the world. *Reel Injun* takes an entertaining and insightful look at the Hollywood Indian, exploring the portrayal of North American Natives through the history of cinema. Admission is free. Sponsored by St. Peter Public Schools, Nicollet County Historical Society, River Rock Coffee and St. Peter Food Co-op. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/documentaryfilmseries.pdf>. Please contact 507-934-2160 or jessica@nchsmn.org for details.

January 5th (Thursday) is the **Showing of the documentary: Okie Noodling** at the Treaty Site History Center in St. Peter. For centuries, a unique breed of fishermen has been catching monster catfish with their bare hands in the rivers and lakes of Oklahoma. Today, the tradition of "noodling" still has Okie

anglers hooked. Admission is free. Sponsored by St. Peter Public Schools, Nicollet County Historical Society, River Rock Coffee and St. Peter Food Co-op. For more information, <http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/kudels/documentaryfilmseries.pdf>. Please contact 507-934-2160 or jessica@nchsmn.org for details.

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

Environmental/Conservation Articles:

[Chopping block for federal habitat programs](#) (Minnesota Outdoor News). It's easy these days for sportsmen and conservationists to assume CRP will remain a viable program - aiding wildlife, reducing soil erosion, cleansing groundwater - well into the future.

[Put the sun to work for Minnesota](#) (Minnesota Daily Planet). The University of Minnesota should take the lead on investing in solar power and clean energy.

[Xcel Energy sues EPA over new emissions rules](#) (St. Paul Pioneer Press). Xcel Energy said it filed a lawsuit in Washington DC against the US EPA asking an appeals court to review new federal regulations on emissions.

[DNR tries treating Otter Tail County lake to kill zebra mussels](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The DNR said Friday that favorable weather conditions allowed a contractor to treat a 10-acre section of Rose Lake in Otter Tail County on Thursday for an isolated infestation of zebra mussels.

[Public shows support for Camden bike trail](#) (Marshall Independent). The voices at a public hearing about a proposed bike trail connecting Marshall and Camden State Park were all positive.

[Opinion: Smart growth's dirty little secret: How dirty, how little, how secret?](#) (TC Daily Planet). It should surprise no one that the dirtiest air in the United States hovers over the densest cities, where gridlocked traffic and tall, tightly packed buildings emit more pollution per square mile than practically anywhere else.

[Supporters want to continue funding to weatherize low-income and rental homes](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Minnesota received millions of federal stimulus dollars over the last several years to dramatically expand a program that renovates low-income homes and rental properties to make them more energy efficient.

[State climatologist moves on to new season of life](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Jim Zandlo talks about (what else?) the weather upon retirement.

[Port of Minneapolis: Another carp victim?](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). It's an idea in its infancy, but the port of Minneapolis could be closed because of invasive fish. And some top city officials welcome the opportunity.

In every glass of water we drink, some of the water has already passed through fishes, trees, bacteria, worms in the soil, and many other organisms, including people . . . Living systems cleanse water and make it fit, among other things, for human consumption. – Elliot A Norse, 1985

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

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