



Wild River Audubon *Current*

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June, 2009

President's Column

It's June. Tree Swallows and bluebirds are occupying nest boxes. The neotropical migrants have passed through and are settling into the task of producing a family. And we have come to the end of Wild River Audubon's programs for the year.

It's time for the election of officers and board members. We have a great slate of candidates—everyone re-upped, proof-positive that being involved in the work of this grassroots environmental organization is rewarding.

We'll vote at the picnic, **Tuesday, June 9th, 6:30 p.m. at Paradise Park in Chisago City**, so I urge you all to join us in a spring farewell for an evening of food and good conversation with like-minded people.

As we take a break, board members will be working on securing a regular meeting place for next year, thinking up interesting programs and considering other ways WRA can connect people to nature. Please pass along any ideas to a board member.

Have a great summer! See you at the picnic!

Sue



Fresh Food

It's summer and backyard gardens are beginning to issue their early bounty of lettuce, radishes, peas and rhubarb. But what if you don't have time for a garden?

There is a way to eat locally and enjoy the freshest produce possible: join an area CSA farm. Community Sustained Agriculture is an effort to connect people in an earthy way to the food they eat. CSA farms are small and organic, producing food that is sold directly to the consumer—you! Subscribers sign up with a seasonal fee, and in return, receive a box of seasonal produce each week: for example, lettuce and peas early in the summer, tomatoes and corn later on. Often, neighbors split a box. Some farms deliver to your door; others to a common pick-up site. Some ask that their subscribers to spend a day weeding; most do not. Produce delivery begins in May or June and runs through September or October.

The benefits are obvious—you get fresh vegetables and fruits and you know exactly how they were grown. CSAs promote a regional food supply, preserving farms in Minnesota and Wisconsin and reducing our reliance on far-off California.

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A Power Plant for Chisago County?

By the time you read this, it is probable that Governor Pawlenty will have signed legislation granting tax exemption status to a \$300 million natural gas-fired power plant proposed for the northeast corner of Lent Township, Chisago County. The utility would supply electricity at peak times for Chicago, Milwaukee and the Twin Cities. The utility company, L S Power of New Jersey and Missouri has yet to jump through the permitting hoops that would make the plant a reality, but the process has begun.

Estimates of the amount of water the plant will need to run vary, and continue to change. A company brochure states that it may need as much as 5 million gallons per day at peak capacity. Elsewhere, it is reported that LS Power proposes using 1.1 million gallons from the county wastewater treatment plant near the site, and 2 million gallons per day from deep groundwater, the Mt. Simon-Hinckley aquifer. To put this into perspective, in 2000, all of Chisago County used only 5.3 million gallons per day, according to USGS data, so that at peak times, almost 50 % of groundwater use would be due to this one business. Put another way, the annual amount of groundwater used would far exceed the amount that the entire city of North Branch uses (336 million gallons) in one year. "It's a ton," said DNR hydrologist Mike Mueller of the Cambridge DNR regional office. He added that the plant would likely require more than the initial estimates. Mueller served as a resource for this article.

The hydrogeology of Chisago County is complex and not fully understood. The Minnesota Geological Survey is at present mapping the aquifers, a study expected to take one more year. The DNR, which needs to okay the power plant, does not have access to the incomplete study. Mueller said the DNR could act without the Survey's finished map.

LS Power has hired Barr Engineering of Minneapolis to draw up a rough map of underlying aquifers. Barr is locating wells that currently tap into the

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Wild River Audubon Society

Officers

President: Sue Leaf 651 257-6044

Vice President: Dayle DeClercq 651 257-5045

Secretary: Gail Vokovan 257-0745

Treasurer: Kim Pittsley 651 257-6740

Board of Directors

Dann Adair '09 651 257-5627

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Joe Sausen '09 651 674-8119

Jeremy Kalin '09 257-9861

Ken Reine '09 763 552-2455

Craig Roberts '09 651 257-0786

Jocelyn Warholm '09 651 257-9231

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Dann Adair 257-5627

Newsletter Editor

Bonnie DeClercq 651 257-5045

Membership

Ken Reine

Christmas Bird Count

Joe Sausen

Birdseed Sale

Dayle DeClercq

Webmaster

Craig Roberts

www.wildriveraudubon.org

Fresh Foods

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East-central Minnesota and western Wisconsin are home to a phenomenal number of CSA farms, more than anywhere else in the region. Check out the Land Stewardship website

(www.landstewardshipproject.org/csa) for a list.

Here are a few to get you started:

Big River Farms (Marine-on-the-St. Croix)
651-433-3676

Winding Road Farm (St. Croix Falls) 715-
483-9588

Philadelphia Community Farm (Osceola)
715-294-4048

Nitty Gritty Dirt Farm (Harris) 651-674-
6065

Many of the farms listed at the Land Stewardship Project's website are already sold out, so do not delay if you'd like to join up. Isanti County residents: there was not a single CSA farm listed in your area. If you know of one, let us know.

Slate of candidates for officers and board members of Wild River Audubon

President: Sue Leaf (Center City)

Vice-President: Dann Adair (North Branch)

Secretary: Sue Mahler (Forest Lake)

Treasurer: Kim Pittsley (Lindstrom)

Executive Board

Tom Anderson (North Branch)

Dayle DeClercq (Center City)

Jeremy Kalin (North Branch)

Ken Reine (Cambridge)

Joe Sausen (North Branch)

Jocelyn Warholm (Lindstrom)

Our constitution allows for an unlimited number of board members. Terms are for two years. Other candidates can be nominated from the floor, at the picnic.

Pinfeathers

If you're finding that your newsletter isn't getting to you on time, be sure to check the website (www.wildriveraudubon.org). Craig Roberts, webmaster, keeps it up to date. You can also get on an e mail list to receive meeting notices just prior to the event.

The Executive Board voted at its May meeting to support the Chisago Lake Middle School's drive to install eight solar collectors on its roof with a \$50 donation, to be paid in the fall, when our membership check from National Audubon arrives.



Clean Roadsides

On April 25th members of Wild River Audubon did its annual task of cleaning the ditches between Almelund and the entrance to Wild River State Park. We have been cleaning these ditches since 1991 under the Chisago County Adopt a Highway program. Members who participated this year were Dann Adair, Dorothy Chrun, Dayle DeClercq, Sue Mahler and Doug LaBelle.

Dayle DeClercq

Power Plant

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Mt. Simon-Hinckley aquifer. The DNR is using Barr's study in evaluating the proposal.

The Mt. Simon-Hinckley aquifer is seen by the DNR as the main aquifer of the future. The Minnesota 1989 Ground Water Act includes a provision that protects the aquifer for drinking water purposes and prohibits use of the resource for lower priority and non-essential purposes, but the provision is limited to the metropolitan area. A DNR Guidance Paper from 1998 reads "the volume that can be authorized from the Mt. Simon-Hinckley is limited to domestic water demands." (document available at http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/water_mgmt_section/appropriations/mt_simon_hinckley_guidance.pdf)

Concerning the discharge of coolant water: Mueller believed that spent water would be piped back to the waste treatment facility, treated and released into the Sunrise River. A May 14, 2009 Minneapolis Star Tribune article reported the water would simply be released into the river. At present, the proposal lacks plans for cooling ponds. Mueller stated that coolant water contains excess minerals and would probably not meet DNR discharge regulations.

The Friends of the Sunrise River will host an informational meeting focused on groundwater resources on June 2 at 6:30 p.m. at the Royal Wilcox Community Center in Sunrise. Mueller, John Nieber of the U of M, Jerry Spetzman, Chisago County Water Plan co-ordinator and Dale Setterholm of the Minnesota Geological Survey will be there to answer questions. The meeting is free and open to the public. For further information, contact Larry Baker, president of Friends of the Sunrise River at 763-370-1796 or baker.waterthink@gmail.com.

www.wildriveraudubon.org

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