

MAWRC Monthly

- November 2015



Governor Announces Water Summit

Speaking at both the Minnesota Farm Bureau Annual Conference and the Minnesota Farmers Union Annual Conference, Governor Dayton announced that he will convene a water quality summit in February 2016. The Governor said he hopes to bring all stakeholders together to address what he described as worsening conditions of water resources in Minnesota. The Governor also pointed out the significant and growing costs facing urban residents as water and sewage infrastructure ages.

The Governor's announcement has been followed by editorials suggesting that agricultural ought to be the primary target of discussion at the Summit. Read these perspectives here- <http://www.startribune.com/water-quality-is-a-worthy-signature-issue-for-dayton/354133351/> and here- <http://www.startribune.com/the-elephant-in-the-water-quality-room/354124811/> . Hopefully the process will allow a more balanced, scientific approach to implementation of Minnesota's Clean Water Legacy Act than these editorials suggest.

Nutrient Management Conferences to Address Farm Profitability and Water Quality Concerns

The MAWRC will host two conferences in 2016, featuring presentations on nitrogen and phosphorus fertilization, nitrates in wells, cover crops and advanced nutrient technologies. These conferences address both economic and environmental issues, highlighting current research of interest to all agriculturalists. Speakers include Dr. Fabian Fernandez and Dr. Dan Kaiser of the University of Minnesota, Dr. Ignacio Ciampitti of Kansas State University, Bruce Montgomery of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, and others.

Mark your calendars for the 8th Annual Nutrient Management Conference, which will be held on February 9, 2016 at Jackpot Junction near Morton. The Second Annual Nitrogen Management Conference will be held on February 23, 2016 at the International Event Center in Rochester. Watch for more information on speakers for these programs and additional registration details in the coming weeks. Both events will be hosted by the MAWRC with the support of numerous sponsors.

Minnesota River Action Board Formed

A 19-member Action Board was formed at the Minnesota River Congress held in New Ulm in November. Additional spots on the Board are still open. Interested persons should contact Scott Sparlin at sesparlin@gmail.com .

The Congress also discussed a proposal to create a Minnesota River Commission, in order to increase funding for projects in the Minnesota River Basin. A poll was taken to determine support for legislation associated with the proposal, with 35% voting yes, 43% yes with conditions, and 22% no. The Action Board is expected to address concerns associated with the conditional votes as they begin to meet this winter.

You can find more information about the Congress and previous meetings at <http://watershedalliance.blogspot.com/>

Conservation Story Board Highlights Common Conservation Practices

The Minnesota Corn Growers Association has launched an interactive online map to provide more information about conservation practices used by Minnesota farmers. Viewers can see pictures of buffers, conservation tillage, grass waterways and other practices at <http://ec2-50-19-246-156.compute-1.amazonaws.com/MCGA/Storymaps/> .

Farmers, to contribute to the story map, contact Adam Czech at aczech@mncorn.org .

You can also participate in the MAWRC's Green Star Initiative to help us quantify and report on a wide range of conservation activities you already employ. The Green Star program takes about 30 minutes and is completely confidential. Your participation helps us grow a database of farmer information on your efforts to reduce soil erosion, increase nutrient use efficiency, and other important water quality factors. Go to <https://greenstarfarms.org/> to learn more.

DNR Continues to Ramp Up Water Appropriation Permit Enforcement

Numerous livestock producers report receiving letters from the Minnesota DNR advising them to obtain a water appropriations permit. The requirements to have an appropriation permit have not changed, but the agency is casting a wider net by including small and mid-size farms. A general permit is available for those operations using between 1 and 5 million gallons annually. Farms using more than 5 million gallons need an individual permit. Both categories of permit holders are required to report water use annually. Find more information at <http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/forms/livestockqp.pdf> .

Winter Meetings in Full Swing

November marks the beginning of the winter conference and annual meeting season. MAWRC staff were in attendance at the Minnesota Farm Bureau and Minnesota Farmers Union conventions just prior to Thanksgiving. Watch for our booth at the following upcoming events:

- December 2-3- Minnesota Milk Producers Dairy Conference and Expo- St. Cloud
- December 4-5- Minnesota State Cattlemen's Conference- Hinckley
- December 4-5- Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producers Conference- Chaska
- December 7- Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts- Bloomington
- December 8-10- Minnesota Crop Production Retailers/ U of M Shortcourse- Minneapolis
- December 9-10- Prairie Grains Conference- Grand Forks, ND

The MAWRC is a non-profit research and education corporation comprised of 24 agricultural organizations working together to address water issues. For more information, go to www.mawrc.org .

