

This is the eighty-seventh edition of what is a "twice-monthly or so" News You Can Use newsletter for participants in one of the Initiative Foundation's Planning and Preservation programs. This newsletter is sent to everyone that has provided an e-mail at one of our Conservation-based training events. If you wish to be removed or if you have other names/e-mails to add please contact Don Hickman (dhickman@ifound.org) or Leah Posterick (lposterick@ifound.org). The goal of this publication is to share funding opportunities, new resources, and pending hearing or training events of common interest.

Please note that this newsletter is also now regularly posted on our website (www.ifound.org) on the Natural Resources page, under "news and notes."

News You Can Use for Conservation, Issue #87

April 11, 2008

Workshop: Installing a Rain Garden for Water Quality

Wondering what to do with the rain water that collects or creates gullies in your yard? Rain gardens are a solution! Rain gardens are gaining in popularity because they also add beauty to our landscapes while helping to keep our lakes and rivers clean. Rain gardens are shallow depressions planted with beautiful flowers, grasses and shrubs that collect storm water runoff from roads, roofs, driveways, and other hard surfaces. They are designed to allow runoff to seep into the soil, as well as trap sediments and filter other pollutants found in runoff – keeping these pollutants out of our storm sewers, lakes and rivers.

Participants of this workshop will learn how to design a rain garden, determine rain garden size and location, select appropriate plants, and install and maintain a rain garden on their property

Date and Time: Tuesday, April 15th, 2008; 6:30pm – 9:30pm
Location: Blueberry Town Hall, 37493 U.S. Hwy 71, Menahga
Cost of this workshop: \$10.00

Pre-registration is required for this workshop. To register or receive more information, contact Kari Tomperi, Local Water Resource Tech with the Wadena County SWCD at 218-631-3195 ext. 3, Kari.Tomperi@mn.nacdn.net.

Government Training Services releases spring schedule:

Government Training Services, an organization that offers workshops for staff and appointed officials from all levels of government, is offering educational workshops to share information on trends, tools, and processes that help local units of government.

Registration is now open, go to <http://www.mngts.org/LandUse/LandUse2008.html>

Basics of Planning and Zoning, April 23, Little Falls, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

This workshop covers the nuts and bolts of planning, zoning and subdivision regulation. Participants learn where they fit in to the planning and zoning process, and how to maximize their impacts. Among the topics to be addressed are:

- The history, process and results;
- Implementation, exercising authority, zoning/subdivision ordinances, amendments, permits and enforcement;
- Planning, zoning and subdivision laws, legal limitations, avoiding litigation, “due process,” conducting a proper public hearing, recording your findings;
- Who participates in the planning & zoning process, **YOUR** role, responsibilities and opportunities;
- Hands-on simulations of actual planning and zoning dilemmas;
- Hot issues; answers to your questions

Who should attend: For those new to land use planning or interested in an extensive review of fundamentals.

The remaining schedule for the spring includes:

- Your Role as Planning Commission Member, April 30, Little Falls, 1-5 p.m.
- Beyond the Basics of Planning and Zoning, May 21, Little Falls, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Advanced Zoning Applications, June 11, Little Falls, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Conservation Design in Shorelands, June 18, Walker, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Volunteer Stream and Lake Monitors Invited to Workshop

Volunteer citizen lake and stream monitors, those interested in becoming volunteer monitors, lake association members and others interested in surface water quality issues are invited to a workshop on **Thursday, April 24**, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m., Pine City, Pokegama Lake Association Building 12965 Lake Line Road. The topic is blue green algal blooms and toxicity.

For information, contact: Valerie Prax, Regional Extension Educator, University of Minnesota Extension, 320-225-5054 or malmq002@umn.edu. (Note: Mapquest and Google directions will not work).

Build Smart Summit, Focusing on central MN counties of Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd and Wadena.

When and Where:

- Wednesday, April 30th, 2008, & Thursday, May 1, 2008
- Madden’s on Gull Lake, Brainerd MN.

Who Should Attend:

County, City and Township board and staff members; Municipality Administrators; Municipal Planners & Zoning departments; Local Policy makers, local elected officials; Developers, Builders, Contractors; Architects, Engineers; Lenders; Appraisers; Real Estate Brokers & Sales Persons; Interested general public

Architects, Engineers and other professionals who could benefit from Professional Development Hours (PDH's) or Continuing Educational Units (CEU's) will be given a Continuing Education Certificate upon request. Thursday, May 1, 2008: 7 hours of approved continuing education course instruction from the Department of Commerce for Realtor credit and the Department of Labor for contractor credit **pending**.

Why Attend:

Day 1: Discover Opportunities to Build Conservation Designed Communities.

Community Development is changing at a rapid pace. Speakers will discuss why conservation development is needed, why it benefits communities and how local units of government can implement conservation design strategies. The presentation will include case studies and issues effecting water quality, downtown and residential development.

Day 2: Gain insight on how to apply conservation designed concepts to specific projects.

With energy costs rising, consumers are seeking energy-efficient designs, materials and methods in construction of their homes and businesses. Learn more about the latest techniques for high performance design and construction, find out more about sustainable, "green" building and energy efficient design. Review local commercial low impact development project challenges and successes.

Presenters:

Nationally recognized lecturers: Randall Arendt, Patrick O'Malley, and Ed VonThoma.

State known and respected speakers: Dr. John Gulliver (University of Minnesota), Don Burger (MN Pollution Control Agency), Local expert presenters: Dann Siems (Beltrami Soil & Water Conservation District), Tim Ramerth (Westwood Engineering), Janelle Riley (Sylvantis Technologies/Fairview Office Park), Phil Hunsicker (1000 Friends of Minnesota).

This summit is being offered for \$89.00 registration fee for both days (includes morning break and lunch) register online at www.regionfive.org or call (218) 894-3233 to request mailed registration forms. **Register by April 15th to reserve your space.**

“The Value of Healthy Lakes: What realtors should know about lakeshore property”

May 6th, 2008 from 12:45 to 5 p.m. at the Walker Community Center

Shoreland properties often require special consideration such as maintaining property value, landscaping to protect the shoreland and lake, and understanding shoreland ordinances and regulations. This workshop is designed for realtors, contractors and builders so they may help current and prospective shoreland property owners protect their investment and the lake.

Who should attend: Realtors, contractors, and builders. Others welcome.

Fee: This workshop is free to members of the Greater Lakes Association of Realtors who have purchased an education card. The fee for others is \$40/person.

Realtor Education Credits: This workshop will provide 3.75 approved realtor credit hours. Certificates will be provided at the end of the workshop.

For registration information contact Paula West, Leech Lake Area watershed Foundation at (218) 838-5010 or westcom@brainerd.net. For information on content or education credits contact Eleanor Burkett at UM Extension, (218) 828-2326, burke044@umn.edu.

The Watershed Assessment tool is now available on the MN DNR Website
http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/watershed_tool/promo.html

This interactive tool is designed to improve access to information about Minnesota's natural resources and the ecological health of our watersheds.

LOOK FOR THESE SPECIAL FEATURES:

- Text describing the 5 components of watershed health.
- On-line interactive map that displays 40 GIS data layers and summarizes information for each major watershed.
- Information and metadata about each of these data layers
- Downloadable pdf MapBooks for each major watershed and each component Used together, the map and the text will lead to a better understanding of the components, their connection to each other and the complexity of interactions between them.

Beth Knudsen Research Analyst, MN DNR Ecological Resources, 1801 South Oak Street, Lake City, MN 55041, Phone - 651/345-3332 ext 228

BAELN's 2007-2008 Season

Living Lightly in Our Communities is pleased to offer...

Living Lightly by Living Locally

Thursday, April 17, 2008, from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. Free. All are invited.

Held at the MN Pollution Control Agency, 7678 College Road, Suite 105, Baxter/Brainerd.

Speaker: John Farrell, Research Associate, Institute for Local Self-Reliance,
www.newrules.org

Whether its electricity traveling 500 miles or apples traveling 5000 miles, most Americans get their resources from far away. Living locally can help a community live lightly, by reducing the transaction, transmission, and transportation costs associated with long-distance living. With renewable energy such as ethanol or wind, power can be produced locally and be locally owned, creating economic dividends in addition to energy. Shopping at independent, locally-owned retail returns 30 cents on the dollar more to the community than shopping at chain stores. And

reducing a community's carbon footprint can often be done most effectively locally, with energy conservation and local offsets.

From farmer-owned wind turbines to independent business associations, there are many examples of communities finding local solutions to living lightly by living locally. This talk will examine some of the advantages in living locally and the practical ways communities have gone about it.

BAELN is a collaborative effort of the following organizations: 1000 Friends of Minnesota, Central Lakes College, Crow Wing County Soil and Water Conservation District, Initiative Foundation, MN Department of Natural Resources, MN Department of Transportation, MN Pollution Control Agency, The Nature Conservancy, Paul Bunyan Trail Association, and University of Minnesota Extension.

For information on BAELN, please contact Stephen Mikkelson at (218) 855-5001, or toll free at 1-800-657-3864.

Upcoming events:

May 15: Environmental impacts on health. Is there a connection between our environment and our health? If so, what can we do to make it better?

June 19: BAELN's Celebration of Living Lightly. The season's final event will celebrate, through music, food, displays and lively conversation, five years of BAELN and all our efforts to live lightly in our communities.

The trouble with road salt

Our waters are being contaminated, sometimes long after the snow has melted.

By LAWRENCE BAKER, Minneapolis Star Tribune

The salt-strewn streets that have become a common winter sight in Minnesota now cause salt pollution severe enough that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has started to classify some Twin Cities streams as legally "impaired" from chloride contamination.

The use of road salt (mostly sodium chloride) in the United States, uncommon a generation ago, has increased eightfold since 1960. A University of Minnesota study showed that the Twin Cities metropolitan region now uses an astounding 260 pounds of road salt *per person* every winter.

During snow melt, peak chloride concentrations in some urban streams can approach half that of ocean water, far higher than many freshwater organisms can tolerate even for a short period. Chloride levels high enough to impair aquatic plants and animals may persist through the summer. This happens because some dissolved road salt infiltrates into groundwater, which then seeps slowly into streams, contaminating them long after the snow has melted.

<http://www.startribune.com/opinion/commentary/16912511.html>

Environmental Toolkit for Congregations

<http://www.greenguardian.com/grants/educational-tool-kit>

Created during 2007, this free 66-page resource will help those in/working with faith communities to educate and actively engage members in reducing waste, changing purchasing practices, rethinking reuse and recycling, and properly disposing of hazardous items. A 12-page Supplement goes into more depth on the theological basis for people of faith taking environmental actions, and provides scripture references, sermon and hymn ideas, and national web sites for the Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Baha'i, and Unitarian Universalist faiths. An Appendix B lists specific fact sheets and handouts, some free for download and some available by calling to order copies. The Toolkit is divided into these sections:

- Overview and Getting Started
- Calendar of Activity Ideas
- Activity Ideas for Congregations, Adults, Teens and Children
- Special Event Ideas
- Tracking and Evaluation Tools
- Waste Reduction for Internal Operations
- Additional Educational Resources (includes Appendix B)

The Twin Cities-based non-profit organizations Congregations Caring for Creation (C3: <http://www.ccc.nonprofitoffice.com/>) and the Alliance for Sustainability (<http://www.afors.org>) produced this graphically attractive guide, and used information regarding waste and toxicity reduction provided by Hennepin County Environmental Services.