



Water Resources Center

Working Together for the Minnesota River: Collaboration Through Communication

Project Overview

The Water Resources Center at Minnesota State University Mankato proposes to accelerate cleanup of the Minnesota River through a project that will dramatically increase collaboration among all stakeholders in the basin. The project includes:

- A video documentary about the history of the river from Glacial Lake Agassiz to the present, including an overview of current pollution problems and restoration activities.
- An updated and expanded Minnesota River Basin Data Center website (<http://mrbdc.mnsu.edu/>) to serve as a clearinghouse for information about the river and a means of communication for all stakeholders.

Collaborators and financial supporters of the project include Clean Up the River Environment, Coalition for a Clean Minnesota River, Freshwater Society, Friends of the Minnesota Valley, High Island Creek & Rush River Watershed Implementation Projects, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota River Board, Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter, Minnesota River Watershed Alliance, Ron Schara Productions, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Geological Survey, Water Resources of Minnesota.

Documentary

A one-hour documentary, produced in collaboration with Ron Schara Productions, will air on KARE 11 television in fall 2010. Presented statewide on commercial television and hosted by Minnesota's best-known advocate for the environment, the documentary will bring unprecedented attention to the river and the actions required to restore it. Segments of the documentary will include:

- Geological history of the river, depicted in a state-of-the-art computer animation.
- Cultural history of the basin, from earliest inhabitants through development of large-scale agriculture and urban centers.
- The many types of pollution affecting the river, paired with success stories of people working together across the basin to restore the river.
- History of citizen engagement in the basin, beginning with establishment of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

Data Center Website

The documentary will inspire the public to want to participate in restoration efforts. To turn that inspiration into action, we will create an updated and expanded Minnesota River Basin Data Center website that will be *the* gateway for all stakeholders. The site will be a clearinghouse of all information related to research, public lands and restoration efforts in the Basin, and it will be rich in Web 2.0 features, allowing users to both view and contribute information in several formats.

The centerpiece of the site will be an interactive map enabling users to access and share information about public lands and restoration activities throughout the basin. An iPhone version of the map will also be produced to help people explore the Minnesota River Basin and enable them to conduct onsite evaluations that can be uploaded to the website.

Visit <http://mnrriver.org> to see a 3-minute video describing the project.