



Minnesota Association of Conservation Professionals

December 2009

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Mark your calendars

The 3rd Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Association of Conservation Professionals will be Friday, February 26, 2010 at the Initiative Foundation, 405 1st St., Little Falls.

The meeting will feature conservation leaders from state government, Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, Legislative Citizens Commission on Minnesota Resources, non-governmental organizations, the conservation industry, and the University of Minnesota.

The theme of the meeting will focus on conservation funding updates, a discussion on emerging Issues in conservation funding and delivery, and delivering conservation through partnerships. A full agenda will be featured in the Winter Newsletter.



Downwind Feature: Ray Valley—MACP President-elect

A year ago, I vaguely knew who the MACP was, now as I write this, I am President-elect. How did that happen?! Well the agenda for the annual meeting drew me in and I attended. Next thing I knew I was nominated for President and elected. I don't think it was anything I said at the meeting more than that I was according to current President Norrgard, "new blood." My internal drive to answer a call to serve ended up winning over my hesitations to lead the MACP with such little experience. I take comfort in knowing I can draw upon our Board and the membership at large to offer much guidance and support. After all, the MACP is a grassroots organization and leadership is here to guide grassroots movements on is-

sues. Accordingly, one of my primary agenda items this upcoming year is to voice the MACP's position on funding priorities of the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment.

On November 4th, 2008, amidst the worst recession in recent memory, Minnesotans overwhelmingly approved the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment that authorized an increase in the state sales tax to better protect and restore clean water and fish and wildlife habitat. This speaks volumes about how much Minnesotans value their natural heritage and the sacrifices they are willing to make to protect this legacy for future generations. However, details surrounding implementa-



tion, monitoring, ongoing management, and evaluation of projects remain unclear since increased sales tax revenues were not to support operating budgets (and staff) of the various agencies or entities already charged with these tasks. Instead, budgets supporting ongoing management of natural resources have been in decline for several years. Capacity to deliver effective

What's in the MACP for me?

- A safe environment to voice concerns relating to conservation issues
- A focus on conservation that spans multiple natural resource disciplines
- Networking opportunities with other professionals and conservation leaders
- A credible, unfiltered voice on natural resource conservation issues



Photo credit: Ray Valley

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conservation is diminishing as agencies lose experienced staff to retirement and are not filling positions. Withering capacity poses problems for implementing and achieving the ambitious goals of the Legacy Amendment. Habitat gains don't simply come from acquiring tracts of land. Prairies need to be burned, forests' thinned, wetlands and natural hydrology restored, impervious surface minimized, landscape best management practices implemented. Further, data on these activities needs to be collected, managed properly, analyzed, and disseminated. Projects and programs need to be evaluated and recalibrated accordingly to ensure that our efforts are actually leading to habitat gains and doing so efficiently. The upshot here is that large-scale and long-term habitat gains are a result of ongoing management and research. Money solely funding projects or acquisitions without sufficient professional and administrative staff to implement, manage, and evaluate them will not lead to greater protection, restoration or enhancement of our wetlands, prairies, forests, and fish, game, and wildlife habitat and the 1.6 million Minnesotans who voted yes for the amendment will be disappointed if not downright

angry.

So where does this leave the MACP and what can we do about it? I encourage you to attend the annual meeting at the initiative foundation in Little Falls on Feb 26th 2010. There we will have representatives from LCCMR, LSOHC, CWC to discuss strategies and future direction for dedicated natural resource funding. This capacity problem has indeed been acknowledged by the various councils, so this is a chance to hear their perspectives on the issue and their approach towards dealing with it. At the meeting we will facilitate a round table discussion to allow a two-way dialog with council representatives.

In the meantime, please share with me your experiences with new amendment or LCCMR projects. How have they affected your job? To what degree do you feel amendment dollars will lead to greater conservation of habitat and species factoring in gains from acquisitions and contracted clean water projects with current patterns of losses of administrative and technical staff at state natural re-

source agencies and local government units.

Thanks for sharing your insights and I look forward to a productive year as President of MACP.

At your service,
Ray Valley

“Capacity to deliver effective conservation is diminishing as agencies lose experienced staff to retirement and are not filling positions. Withering capacity poses problems for implementing and achieving the ambitious goals of the Legacy Amendment.”

Membership—time for sharing



Photo credit: Ray Valley

Members are the heartbeat of any organization. MACP has a strong core of committed members. To truly fulfill its mission, however, we need new members from all the conservation disciplines. We have made some headway in achieving the diversity we desire for intelligent and spirited discussion of the most important conservation issues in Minnesota. We can, and should, do much better. The ecosystem-

level focus of the MACP that integrates Fisheries, Wildlife, Conservation Biology, Forest and Water Resource sciences is unique to the MACP. Thus, the MACP offers a credible voice to conservation issues that span disciplines. Please take the time to share this newsletter with other conservation professionals. Encourage them to check out our website and attend the upcoming annual meeting.

Priceless Prizes

Each year at the annual meeting, the MACP membership participates in our most important (in fact our only) fundraising event of the year – a silent auction. This coming year will be no exception.

There will be plenty of artwork and useful outdoor tools to be sure, yet the most unique and highly valued fundraising items often come from you, our members. Hand-tied fishing flies, collectible books, home-made preserves and maple syrup, hand-picked wild rice, and handcrafted turkey calls, frontier knives, ricing sticks and snowshoes are gifts that cannot be purchased

anywhere else. Our members are not only conservation leaders they are knowledgeable and highly skilled outdoor users.

Please consider a donation for our fundraising effort. Put your skills to use in creating gifts that speak to the unique nature of our organization. And if, like me, you find that your skill set does not lend itself to this endeavor, please remember that we accept more traditional donations as well.



Photo credit: Ray Valley

Express Your Gratitude

One of the most important treasures of our profession is the dedication of those with whom we work. We see such great work being done every day that goes too often unnoticed by those outside of our inner circles including the public we serve and even our leadership. Wouldn't it be great if there was some way to really show your appreciation?

Now there is. Each year the

MACP accepts nominations for recognition awards. Just simply send the nominating committee a short description of why you believe a particular conservation professional deserves recognition. There are no requirements for employment, length of service, or affiliation. Last year, two of our award winners were MN Department of Transportation employees nominated by MN Department of Natural Resource professionals for their

exemplary work on project reviews. The nominee needs only to have exhibited extraordinary commitment to the ideals of conservation delivery in Minnesota. Contact Nominating Committee Members: Paul Stolen (stolami@gvtel.com), Diana Regenschied (direg_ebfire@msn.com), Dean Paron (dinop@scicable.net), or Doug Norris (jdnorris@tcq.net).

“Take time today to recognize those great people who make Minnesota worth conserving.”

The Future of the Minnesota Association of Conservation Professionals

MACP is making great strides in broadening our membership. Our present Board of Directors represents a blend of youthful exuberance, seasoned professionals, four different disciplines, and sage retirees. Maintaining this desirable level of diversity as terms expire requires active recruitment of new ideas and the energy to make them happen. Consider how your ideas and your commitment to the ideals

of MACP can help carry us forward into the second decade of the new millennium. Here are the offices open in 2010.

President – elect

Current incumbent – Ray Valley

Secretary

Current incumbent – Beau Liddel

Treasurer

Current incumbent – Lee Sundmark

Four Board Members

Current incumbents – Dave Pauly, Jim Lilienthal, Anna Lippenga, Dan Steward



Photo credit MN DNR

President - Ray Norrgard

President-elect - Ray Valley (valleyr1@yahoo.com)

Past President – Jeanine Vorland

Secretary – Beau Liddell

Treasurer – Lee Sundmark

Senior Director – Dave Pauly

Senior Director – Jim Lilienthal

Senior Director – Anna Lipenga

Senior Director – Dan Steward

Junior Director – Paul Stolen

Junior Director – Diana Regenschied

Junior Director – Dean Paron

Junior Director – Doug Norris

MCF Rep - Diana Regenschied

FWLA Rep - Ray Norrgard

Webmeister and general questions -

John Huber (johuber51@yahoo.com)

We're on the web

www.mfwea.org

MACP Mission

The purpose of Minnesota Association of Conservation Professionals is to provide a forum for the gathering and exchange of information that will lead to the improvement of natural resource management, enhancement of native species and their habitats, and protection and restoration of natural ecosystems and ecosystem functioning.



Female woodduck; photo credit Roger Strand

By the way....

- The MACP Board of Directors met July 22, September 30, and November 4, 2009. The minutes are published on the MACP website at <http://www.mfwea.org>
- The Board of Directors is considering a change in the by-laws to open the membership to conservation professionals employed by nonprofit organizations. Minnesota is blessed by a number of national affiliations and state level organizations with paid professional staff. Look for more information in our next newsletter.
- Weigh in on the U of MN's Water Sustainability Framework. The Minnesota State Legislature has charged the Water Resources Center with designing a framework on how and when to make investments that will ensure the purity and abundance of Minnesota's water for generations to come. Below is the weblink for the on-line survey for the 25 year water plan. Survey responses will be tallied and used to guide the framework's final set of recommendations. <http://wrc.umn.edu/watersustainabilityframework/MinnesotansandTheir-Water/index.htm>
- Last but not least: Happy Holidays!



photo credit Ray Norrgard