

# Upstream/ Downstream Dialogues: Setting the Stage to Think and Act like a Watershed



3<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin River Quality Improvement Symposium  
“Hearing the River, Hearing each Other”

Thursday, March 29, 2013

University of Wisconsin Stevens Point

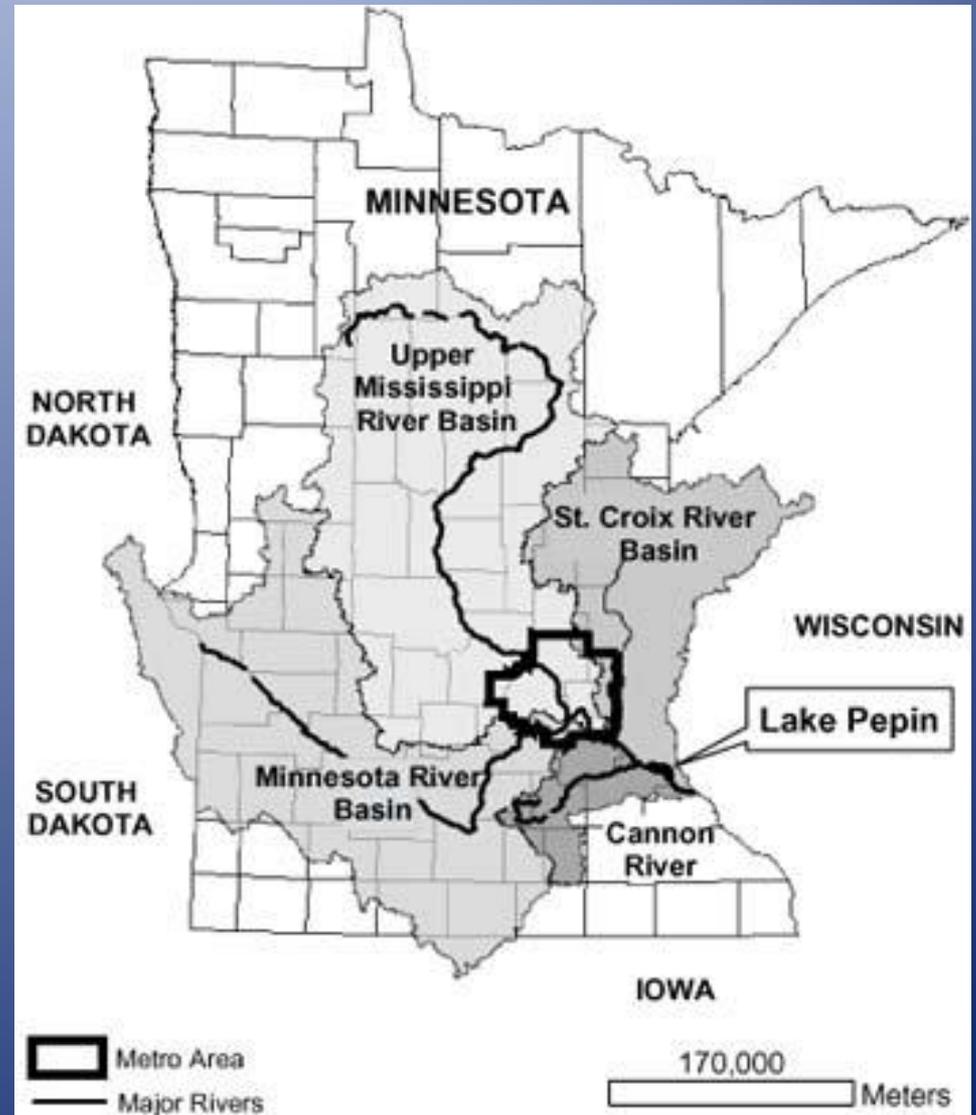
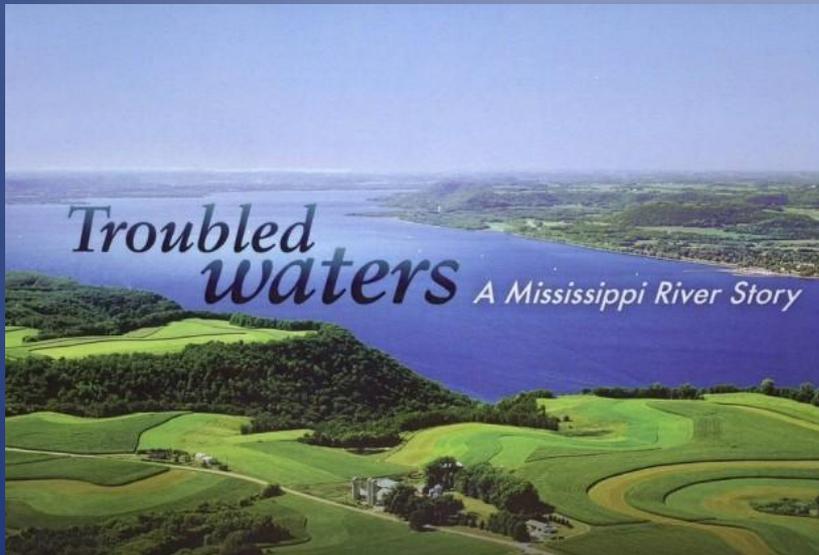
# Where I Am From:



# Minnesota's "Forgotten" River



# Lake Pepin: Our Regional “dead zone” ?





# Lake Willbegone

*Where all the fields are drained, all the rivers are muddy,  
and all the rain is above average*

# NEW APPROACHES TO WATERSHED-BASED CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



## CREATE YOUR OWN UPSTREAM DOWNSTREAM FRIENDSHIP TOUR!

Learn How Fun & Friendly Upstream/ Downstream dialogues & tours can excite public participation.



This account is managed by [cureriver.org](http://cureriver.org) [Learn more](#)

## Minnesota River Lake Pepin Friendship Tours

InCommonsOrg



Subscribe

47 videos ▾



**INCOMMONS**

Collaboration Challenge Finalist

**Minnesota River/Lake Pepin  
Friendship Tours**

Vote at [InCommons.org](http://InCommons.org)



0:04 / 4:16



Join us for a citizen-led conversation on

# WATER QUALITY GOALS

for the Minnesota & Mississippi Rivers

*We will explore the question: Who has the power in our quest for clean water?*



## WRITTEN STATEMENT OF PURPOSE OF WHAT THE MN RIVER/LAKE PEPIN FRIENDSHIP TOUR NETWORK (FTN) IS ALL ABOUT

### WHO WE ARE & WHY WE EXIST:

Our group is a boundary-spanning professional network, comprised of citizens who are stepping to the edge of their circle to connect with other people who are standing at the edge of their circle when it comes to the potentially divisive issues involved with water quality and farm and urban runoff to the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers.

We are upstreamers and downstreamers who care about clean water and believe in the importance of building relationships first and listening to each other in order for appropriate actions to be identified.

We exist to identify points of collaboration between upstreamers and downstreamers, between urban and rural, between non-profit environmental advocacy groups and farm advocacy groups.

We exist to identify and support locally led projects that bring about clean water with measureable and demonstrable results.

We focus on voluntary approaches rather than regulatory approaches. We want to hold up and promote examples where people are working together to achieve mutually defined goals

We have multiple leaders. We are not owned by any one organization. When we speak publicly about what we are doing, we agree to check in with each other first and make sure it is okay. The power of the group is in our diversity of viewpoints, opinions, our civil dialogue and group learning process.

It was noted that a network like ours might never be able to agree completely on every issue, but that we can be a valuable entity when it comes to raising money and bringing resources to our respective projects and when we want to garner publicity, awareness and communication for our collective endeavors.

### OUR DISCLAIMER:

What the Friendship Tour Network decides to do as a group does not tie the hands or hamper the activities or positions of other groups that members of the FTN belong to. We acknowledge that there will be conflict and disagreement on matters of public policy. Each of us reserves the right to take initiatives to advance our organization's or group's respective agenda. The Friendship Tour Network, however, is a place for us to check in a couple times a year to find places to collaborate and to learn together from that collaboration.

*Our Declaration  
of  
Interdependence*



SEARCH

BASIN

WATERSHEDS

REPORTS

MAPS & GIS

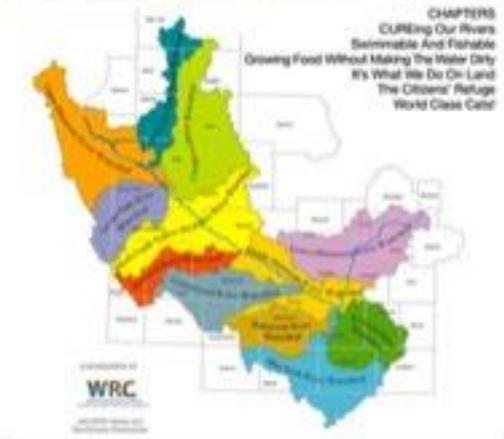
MAKE A DIFFERENCE

EXPLORE

WATER QUALITY

[Home](#) » [Media Center](#)

## River Revival: Working Together to Save the Minnesota River DVD



Unpredicted Outcomes:

Prime time TV Documentary  
Seen by 800,000 people  
Sponsored by Industrial  
Agriculture Groups  
National Attention for the  
River and the work of  
watershed based  
Community Building

# Friendship Tour Network

A New Approach to Watershed Based Civic Engagement

New Models For Interaction

A list of Things that Everybody agrees We should be Working Towards

Open Space Interaction With Multiple Leaders

A Spirit Of Innovation And Possibility

No Plans Just Passion & Excitement!

## About the Friendship Tour Network

1) Model Collaborative On-Farm Research and Demonstration Projects and Sub Watershed Demonstration Projects.

2) New Models for Collaborative Urban Runoff and Storm Water Quality Projects

3) New Models for Collaborative Expert & Citizen Research and Science Projects

4) New Models for Collaborative Community Awareness, Education, and Organizing

5) New Models for Placing Value on Things that we Cherish in Order to Incentivize Stewardship and Protection.

6) New Models for Collaborative Media Communication About the Minnesota River & Mississippi River/Lake Pepin Water Quality Issues.

7) New Models for Collaborative Public Policy Development Work

## About



Friendship Tour Network

## Red Wing Water Quality Dialogue



Tagged Red Wing photo

0 responses



Leave a Comment

Author:



Patrick Moore

Is this not you? Logout

Comment:



## Meta



Sarina Otaibi

Posted at 2:23 pm on Thu, Apr 5, 2012

Views (410)

## Share

Short URL

Tweet 0

Like 0

## Sites I Like

Clean Up the River Environment (CURE) - Organizing Citizens to Restore and Protect the Upper Minnesota River Watershed  
Welcome to InCommons I InCommons  
Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance  
Minnesota River Watershed Alliance  
Land Stewardship Project  
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  
Cannon River Watershed Partnership  
Meadowlark Project - A Leadership Laboratory on the Future of the Northern Great Plains  
Minnesota Agricultural

# Appreciative Inquiry Asks: How Can We Get More of What is Already Working?



Farmers and local landowners are key

On Tuesday August 14, there will be a similar opportunity for downstream residents to learn about drainage practices on the Doug Hager Farm near Good Thunder.





“Everybody’s  
Right”

Relationships First

Science Second





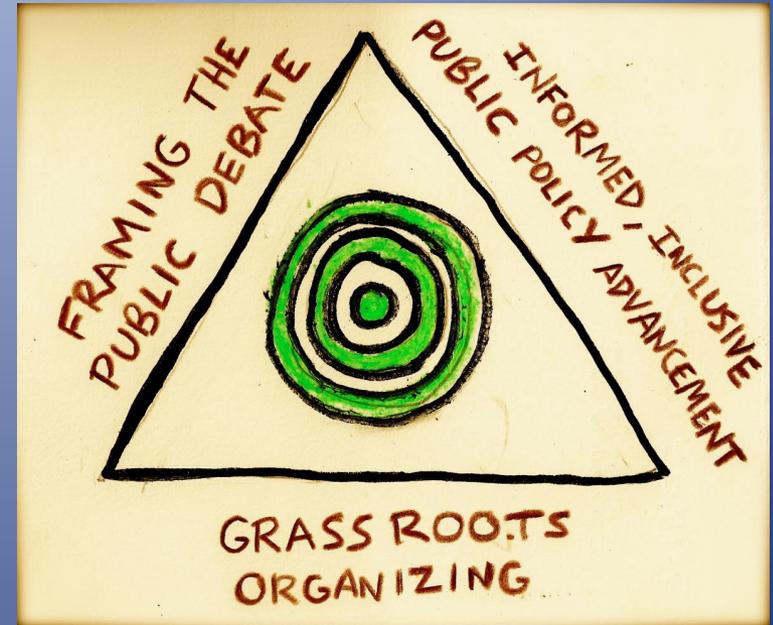
“We’re messing with your minds and you are messing with ours and that is a good thing!”



# Hearing the River, Hearing Each Other

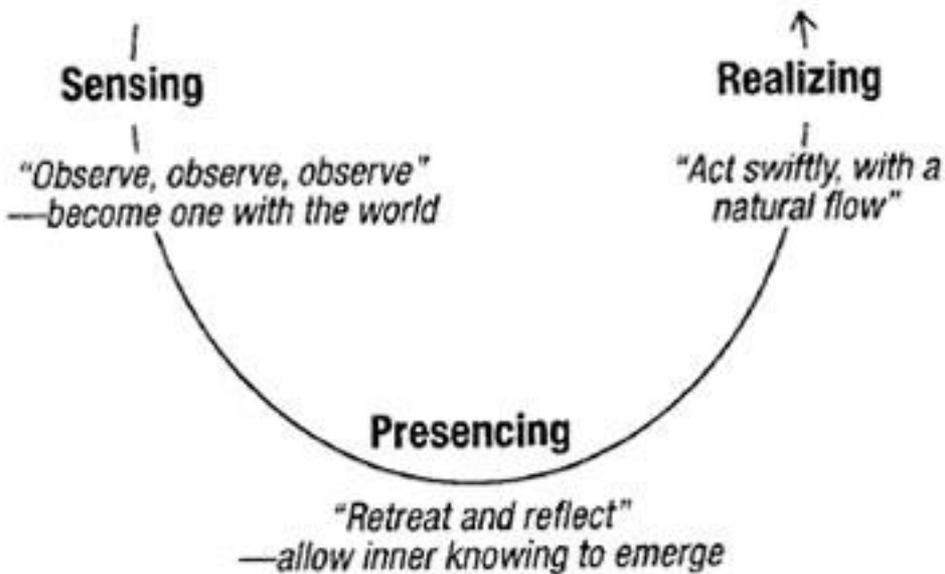
## Theory and Practice

1. Theory “U”
2. The Invitation
3. The Setting and the Greeting
4. The Food
5. The Questions
6. The Harvest
7. Circle, World Café, Open Space
8. Animating the Network – the bias toward action



*“Listen to Understand and Move Forward”*

# Theory "U"



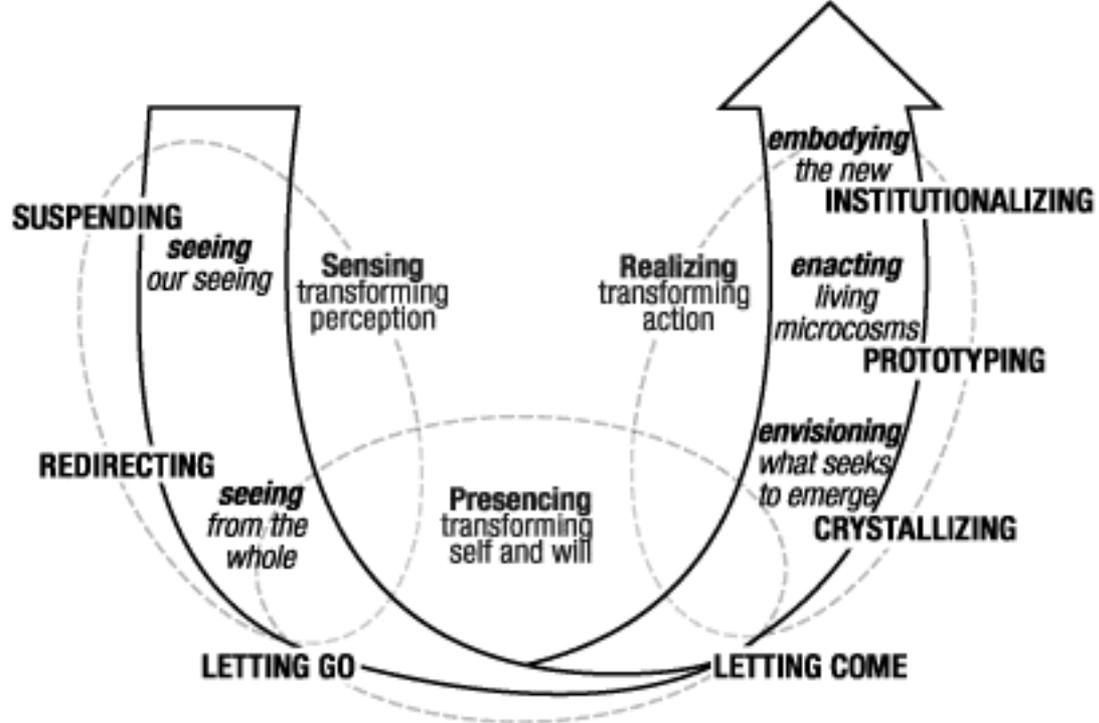
C. OTTO SCHARMER

# Theory U



Leading from the Future as It Emerges

The Social Technology of Presencing



© Peter Senge, C. Otto Scharmer, Joseph Jaworski, Betty Sue Flowers. *Presence: Human Purpose and the Field of the Future*. Cambridge, Mass.: SoL, Society for Organizational Learning, 2004. Page 225.



# The Invitation



## Please Attend an Organizational **Pot Luck Supper**

To identify citizen leaders to guide the formation of The Le Sueur River Watershed Project

**Tuesday, May 15**

5:30-7:30 p.m.

**Red Jacket Park**

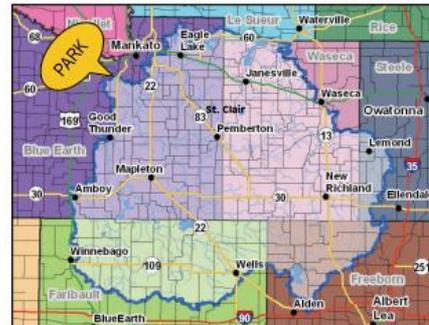
About 2.5 miles south of Mankato off State Highway 66



In case of inclement weather, please tune into KTOE Radio or visit the ["LeSueur Waters"](#) Facebook Page



Red Jacket Park Shelter



LeSueur River Watershed



Electrofishing the LeSueur River

**Who Should Come:** Farmers, Students, Teachers, Citizens, Paddlers, Fishermen, Bicyclists, Bikers, Bird Watchers, Researchers, County, State and Federal Government Employees, Neighbors and friends, County Commissioners, SWCD Supervisors

**What Will Happen:** Bring a dish to share and a lawn chair to sit in. We will provide hotdogs, coffee and lemonade. First we'll eat and talk informally, learn about the fish and other aquatic life and then we'll discuss things that a citizen led council can do to inform and direct county, state and federal

# The Setting and the Greeting

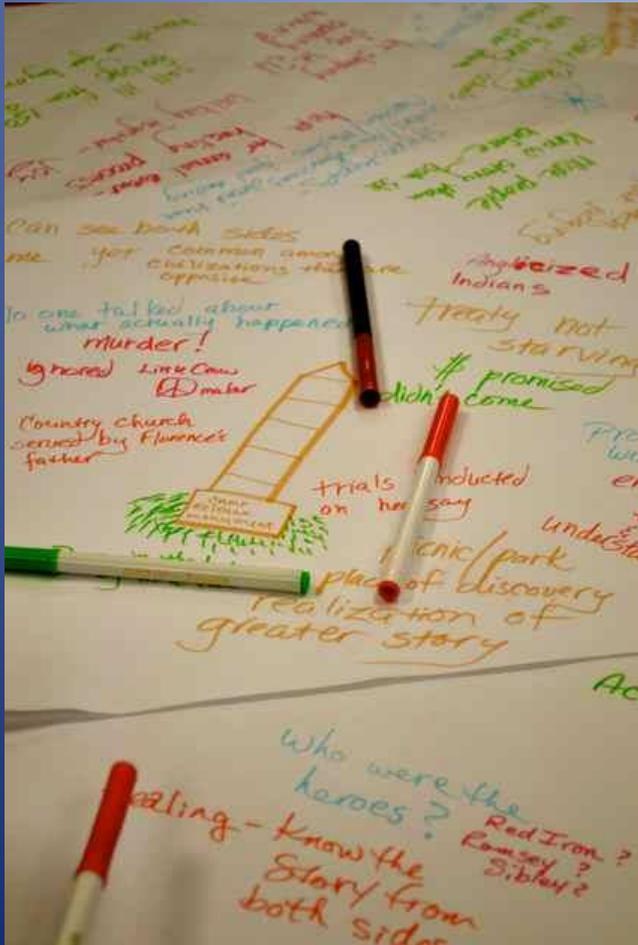


# The Food





# The Harvest



DO PEOPLE REALLY WANT TO GET ALONG?

**CURIOSITY**  
 teaching & understanding one another

- RESPECT of differences
- SEE ACCOMPLISHMENT + PEOPLE relationships
- love the family land (Rio's) so I'm engaged
- Keep moving on despite nos. from some invited
- open communication w/o defensiveness
- project where the 'enemy' and the 'other' are at the table working together

How CAN YOU HELP MOVE WORK?

**WHAT DO YOU NEED TO STAY ENGAGED?**

FOCUS on realistic, doable solutions for long term

people with differences in the same boat sailing

RECOGNIZE... WE'RE ALL IMPACTED by the raindrop  
 Ripple effect

Personalities can influence

lots of conversations on...  
 boundaries, and...  
 any effort in working with people

# Ripple Effects



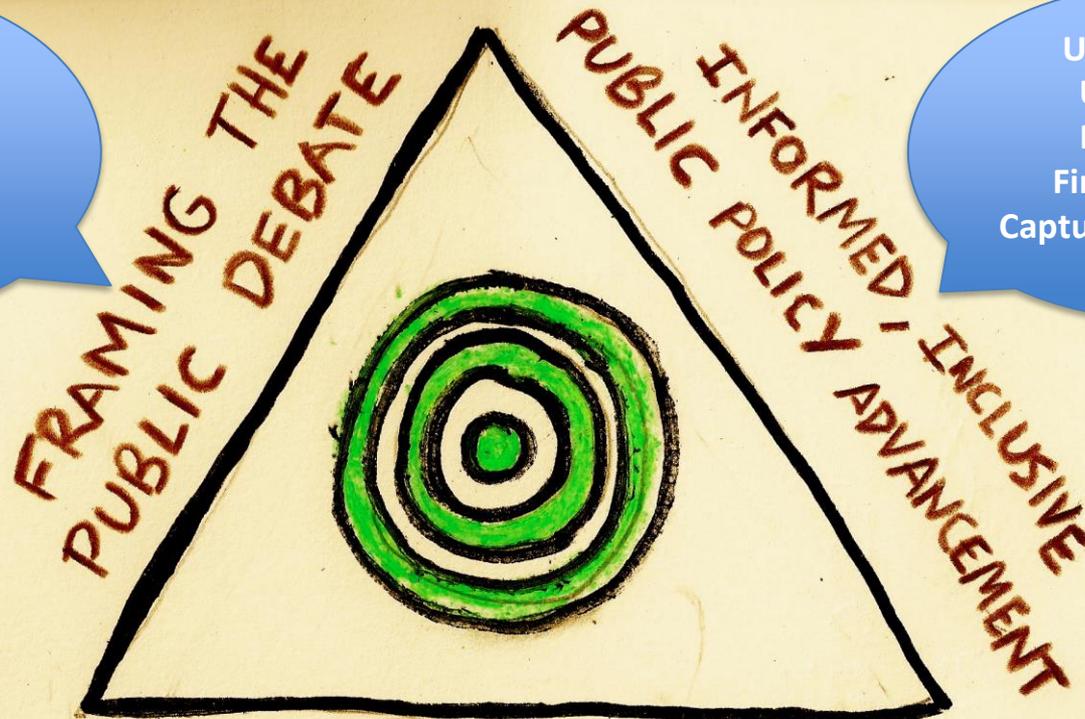
# Circle Practice Listening World Café Open Space



2012  
Art of  
Listening

# Animating the New Network With A Bias Toward Action

Demonstrations  
you can “touch,  
see and feel”



Unlikely Allies  
Unexpected  
Messengers  
Finding the “V”  
Capturing Momentum

GRASS ROOTS  
ORGANIZING

Maybe it should be  
called “Network  
Weaving”?



**This work is not “New Age.” Rather , it is in keeping with the time honored American traditions of Tom Sawyer because it encourages people to create new platforms for interaction . . .**



**This work, though theory based, is not academic. Instead it encourages people lose their fear, stand at the edge of their circle and engage – moving forward with an open ended sense of curiosity and adventure**

...

# Thank You!



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[www.riverartisan.com](http://www.riverartisan.com)

**Down Streamers Say:**

**Up Streamers Respond:**

<p>The problem is drainage – it is sending too much so much water downstream loaded with sediment and nutrients to Lake Pepin.</p>	<p>Tile drainage puts out clean water – it is much better than having the water run across the field and take the nutrients with it. How well land is drained is the basis upon which I run my farm. It is the basis upon which it is valued for rent or sale. We cannot be productive modern farmers without drainage.</p>
<p>Ok, you may be right that tile water is cleaner, but it is the volume of the water that is the problem – there is so much more water, moving so much more faster into the rivers than ever before due to drainage – that is causing the stream banks to slough and erode and put more sediment in Lake Pepin.</p>	<p>The issue of what is causing stream bank erosion has not been adequately studied. It is a new science and we can't make assumptions without more research. Besides this, you need to take into account the different soil types we are dealing with and how varied they are in terms of their ability to erode. Each farm is different, each watershed is different, the Minnesota River watershed is complex and does not allow us to make blanket statements about it.</p>
<p>It is obvious to us that the problem has to do with too much land in row crops – too much corn – we need to put more land in permanent vegetative cover.</p>	<p>That is not going to happen – we are seeing the demand for corn and beans rise – we are actually predicting that more land will come into row crop production, not less. We are in a global market place, we need to feed the world, we know how to do efficiently than anyone else and it is good for our rural economy.</p>
<p>Feed the world? Come on – a lot of the corn you grow goes to make high fructose corn syrup and ethanol. The rest goes to CAFO's that produce meat that is unsafe and unhealthy to eat.</p>	<p>Don't know where to begin with this Yuppie urban professional view of the world inspired by the likes of Micheal Pollan. Here is the deal about corn – you come up with a crop that gives as much flexibility to a farmer in terms of ability to market and get a price and we will grow it – but the truth is there is nothing that comes close to corn and this whole thing comes down to what pays the bills. Corn pays the bills. When you guys come back to the real world of where most people live, maybe then we can talk.</p>
<p>But what about the dependency on fossil fuels that our current agricultural system is tied too?</p>	<p>We corn and soybean growers have dramatically reduced the amount of diesel fuel it takes to grow a crop. With different tillage practices and new generation herbicides and pesticides we make far fewer trips over the field than we used too. If you want to see a waste of fuel, look at how organic food is raised – there are many more passes over the field with a tractor than there are with conventional crops.</p>
<p>It seems to us as if the whole system is screwed up – we have a farm policy that is designed to benefit Cargill, ADM and Monsanto while environment and rural communities suffer. It isn't the problem with farmers that we have – it is the system that farmers are victims of that concerns us.</p>	<p>We farmers are not victims. We are fully actualized human beings who like our freedom to innovate in how we grow crops and care for the land. We are providing a vital service to society in a way that frees more of you to live in cities and pursue the arts, sports and entertainment lifestyles you all desire. Our agriculture system is</p>

	<p>the envy of the world. Our rural communities are doing fine compared to the problems in your cities.</p>
<p>But what about clean water? That is the ultimate goal isn't it? Our agricultural system is polluting our water and despite a billion dollars spent in SWCDs and other agencies in the MN River Basin over the past 15 years, the problem is not getting better and we are tired of it – we need accountability. We need to see improvement .</p>	<p>The water is getting cleaner, slowly. We farmers have made great strides and we are proud of what we do. A lot of this problem is natural runoff – it has to do with the types of soils, the geology – we can't be held accountable for that. There are acts of nature like this recent rain event we had that no one can be held accountable for. We are trying and we need to get credit for the progress that has been made and it is not helpful to be talked about as if we are some kind of boogeyman who doesn't care who is not trying and who only cares about profits.</p> <p>Most of us want to see our kids and grandkids become farmers on this land that we now farm and we are doing the best we know how with the tools and resources we have to make a living and care for the land.</p>
<p>Okay then, where would you like us to help you? Would it be a good idea to get the laws enforcing mandatory setbacks from waterways in the form of buffer strips in place along the river? We can help push for that.</p>	<p>Buffer strips don't catch the water. The water runs down through the tiles and as we said before, it is relatively clean. Water doesn't flow uphill through the grass. I have to pay taxes on that land that you want me to plant to grass and if it is in grass I don't get any return from that land.</p>
<p>I have seen studies that show that buffer strips can serve to catch wind blown sediments and it is the law and it should be enforced</p>	<p>Maybe so, but you know we want to see public money spent on things that we know will work. We don't want to be forced to plant buffers in places where they won't do any good.</p>

**THE MINNESOTA RIVER:**  
FLOAT IT · FISH IT · FIBR IT

**Minnesota Falls Dam**



**Citizen-Led Dialogue**

**Minnesota River**



