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PANEL TO SPEAK ABOUT HOW TO RESTORE THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER IN METRO AREA

Hastings, Minn. — Building islands, managing the fish population, curtailing pollutants upstream, and securing state funding will all be addressed by a panel Thursday, Jan. 28, on restoring the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities metro area. The panel is part of the Mississippi Makeover open house Thursday from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Hastings High School, 200 General Sieben Drive.

State Rep. Pat Garofalo of Farmington and State Sen. Katie Sieben of Newport will take part in the 4 p.m. panel and State. Rep. Tim Kelly of Red Wing and State Sen. Steve Murphy of Red Wing (invited) will take part in the 6 p.m. panel, along with representatives from local industry and citizens involved in the Mississippi Makeover Project.

Several state agencies will have displays at the open house to explain their roles in the Mississippi Makeover project, which is the first citizen-driven comprehensive plan for restoring the river from Hastings to Lake City, including Spring Lake and the Lower Vermillion River. Information will be available on a variety of topics including fish, waterfowl, aquatic vegetation, mussels, water clarity, sedimentation, and river management techniques such as temporary water level drawdowns and island building. Participating agencies and organizations include:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Minnesota DNR
- MPCA
- Army Corps of Engineers
- National Park Service
- Dakota County Parks
- Mississippi Makeover Project
- Friends of the Mississippi River
- Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Hastings Environmental Protectors
- Wetland Health Evaluation Project

Activities for children will also be available, courtesy of the Dakota County 4-H.

The Mississippi Makeover project addresses pollutants in Spring Lake, the Mississippi River above Lake Pepin and the Lower Vermillion River. These water bodies suffer from low water clarity, caused by sediment, algae and other materials suspended in the water, making it cloudy or turbid. This cloudy water is unpleasing to people and harmful to fish, wildlife and aquatic plants. The sediment is also filling in Lake Pepin downstream, making it more shallow.

With funding from the MPCA, Dakota County is coordinating this project with assistance from many partners.

For more information about the Mississippi Makeover project, people may contact Laura Jester, watershed conservationist with the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District, at 651-480-7784. Project details are also online at http://www.dakotacountyswcd.org.

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Broadcast version

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