



Healthy Waters Coalition Update **April - May 2014**

The Healthy Waters Coalition is a diverse group of municipal and state water and wastewater organizations, and conservation and sustainable agriculture organizations working in Washington DC and in communities throughout the country. The Coalition is focused on strengthening links between our working agricultural lands and the quality of our Nation's waters with a specific focus on nutrients. Please feel free to circulate this list to your members and let us know if you have any colleagues who would find this monthly update informative. If you do not wish to receive these updates, we can remove you from our lists.

Below is an overview of the related press coverage and other materials from the months of April and May.

Federal Activities

[USDA Seeks Partnerships to Protect Soil, Water](#)

Associated Press

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is teaming with businesses, nonprofits and others on a five-year, \$2.4 billion program that will fund locally designed soil and water conservation projects nationwide, Secretary Tom Vilsack said. Authorized by the new farm bill enacted earlier this year, the Regional Conservation Partnership Program is intended to involve the private sector more directly in planning and funding environmental protection initiatives tied to agriculture. "It's a new approach to conservation that is really going to encourage people to think in very innovative and creative ways," Vilsack said.

State Activities

[Most Mississippi River Basin States Have Completed Plans to Control Nutrient Pollution](#)

Bloomberg BNA

Ten of the 12 states participating in a federal-state task force to tackle hypoxia in the Mississippi River and Gulf of Mexico have submitted either draft or final plans to reduce nutrient runoff into the basin, according to the task force co-chairman. Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Kentucky, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin have submitted plans, while Arkansas and Tennessee are expected to submit their plans by the end of the year, Iowa Agriculture Secretary Bill Northey said May 21 at the spring meeting in Arkansas of the Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Hypoxia Task Force.

Regional and Local Activities

[Higher Nitrogen Levels at Headwaters than Healthy](#)

The Star Democrat

Mid-Shore Riverkeeper Conservancy (MRC), with assistance from citizen volunteers (Midshore Creekwatchers), has been collecting water quality data in a consistent and objective manner from our local waterways for five years. Even though 2013 was a wet year, its patterns are reflective of those in each of the four prior years. In other words, each of the five years shows a similar pattern. Nutrient pollution is measured in terms of milligrams per liter of water, or "mg/l." Data from year 2013 was collected from the headwaters, all the way to the mouth, where the rivers connect to

the Chesapeake Bay. Standards for a healthy river are those that can adequately support human and biological health

Research and Studies

[Purdue Partners With EPA To Reduce Water Pollution](#)

Indiana Public Media

Purdue University is one of a dozen schools partnering with a task force of federal and environmental groups to help curb water pollution. The group will specifically focus on addressing nutrient pollution from the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico. Purdue University Professor of Agricultural Economics Otto Doering says the partnership initially aims to answer one question. “How do you link the work that’s going on in the land grant universities with what the state governments, the state agencies, and the federal government and the federal agencies need in terms of their efforts of reducing the nitrogen flows down the Mississippi?” he says.

Miscellaneous

[As Dairy Farms Grow Bigger, New Concerns About Pollution](#)

Yale Environment 360

The slogan on Wisconsin’s license plate — “America’s Dairyland” — celebrates the state’s number one agricultural activity and iconic status as a milk and cheese producer. What it doesn’t reveal is how dramatically the dairy industry in Wisconsin and in other parts of the United States has been changing, or the environmental concerns those changes pose. While milk carton imagery pictures bucolic, small farms, more than 50 percent of U.S. milk is now produced by just 3 percent of the country’s dairies. With this increased concentration of milking cows comes a corresponding concentration of manure production. And what happens to this manure is at the heart of the pollution issues surrounding the dairy industry