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Citizens for Minnesota River to vote Nov. 17 on their top goals for action

A citizen-led group working for the natural resource and economic health of the Minnesota River basin will vote on their top goals for action at the seventh Minnesota River Congress and networking fair Thursday, Nov. 17 at the Kato Ballroom, 200 Chestnut St., Mankato.

Doors open with the networking fair at 4:30 p.m., followed by a meal at 6:15 p.m. At 7 p.m. Scott Tedrick will give a presentation on the Granite Falls whitewater park plan. The Congress business meeting will start at 7:30 p.m.

Resolutions which have been submitted for actions will be discussed and voted on, with those identified as a priority to be used in the creation of a policy statement. At 8:45 p.m. there will be a review of next steps, including the Action Board meeting in January and next full Congress meeting in April. The Congress will adjourn at 9:15 p.m.

Registration for the Nov. 17 Congress is available online at www.watershedalliance.blogspot.com/, or by mail to Minnesota River PO Box 488, New Ulm, MN 56073. Make checks payable to the Coalition for a Clean Minnesota River. The cost is \$20; there is no charge for young adults under 19 or with a college ID. The fee for networking fair exhibit space is \$30.

Over 20 policy resolutions have been gleaned from existing organizations and individuals with interests in the Minnesota River Basin. Some of the topics include: Establish watershed districts throughout the basin, create more water storage, promote cover crops, develop recreation, control drainage, create a Granite Falls water park, maintain the Fort Ridgley golf course under new ownership and management and support for the completion of the Minnesota Valley Trail.

“We’ve come a long way since the first Congress back in June of 2014,” said Scott Sparlin, of the Coalition for a Clean Minnesota River and Congress facilitator. “Now is the time for action. We need everyone to help create and carry out actions shaping our future throughout the entire Minnesota River System.”

Covering much of the southern third of the state, the Minnesota River basin holds about 14 million acres, more than 700,000 people among cities and in the countryside, and thousands of farms and industries.

The basin’s land and water face major challenges. Excessive pollutants threaten water quality. Agriculture juggles the demand for crop and livestock production with the challenges of economics, public policy, sustainability, and the weather. Towns and small cities strive for economic growth, while dealing with costly demands for drinking water and waste water treatment.