



For Immediate Release
Contact Robb Leer 612.701.0608

Local scientist to present nationally recognized research on manmade water contaminants

**Sauk River Watershed District will host a citizen's forum on May 18th to hear from
St. Cloud State University Professor Heiko L. Schoenfuss**

SAUK CENTRE, MN (APRIL 25, 2011) – When an expert on a vital environmental issue that is receiving national attention is located in your own back yard, it would be foolish not to take advantage of it.

That's why the Sauk River Watershed District (SRWD) is hosting an educational presentation on chemical contaminants in Minnesota streams and lakes that will be led by Heiko L. Schoenfuss, PhD, a professor of anatomy at St. Cloud State University and the Director of the school's Aquatic Toxicology Laboratory. This education forum is set for Wednesday, May 18th at Albany High School.

Schoenfuss has spent more than a decade conducting field research on endocrine active chemicals, or the introduction of manmade contaminants into lakes and streams. He will share highlights of what that research has uncovered, discuss possible repercussions for all Minnesotans, and answer questions about what can be done to counteract this development before it's too late.

“It's not time to sound alarms yet, but our message is that these contaminants are much more prevalent than anyone expected in lakes and streams that are literally in some of our own back yards,” Schoenfuss said. “It's not fully understood yet what sort of impact that can have on resident fish populations, but our state prides itself on how pristine our environments are and we need to turn some attention to this cautionary tale and how to minimize any negative effects.”

Biological indicators of endocrine active chemicals – chemicals that may block the natural hormones in fish or other organisms – have been detected in wild fish throughout Minnesota at sites directly downstream from wastewater-treatment plant effluent. However, observations also indicate that other sources of contaminants (runoff from land surfaces, atmospheric deposition and inputs from onsite septic systems) exist upstream from the discharge of wastewater-treatment plants.

“Minimizing the negative effects of contaminants begins with education and staying ahead of the curve,” Schoenfuss said. “For that, you must have the boots on the ground to help spread the word, which is why it’s crucial to have an ally like the Sauk River Watershed District.”

“We’re fortunate to have an authority like Dr. Schoenfuss, whose research is receiving national attention, work and live within our watershed,” said SRWD Administrator Holly Kovarik. “His presentation is a way for us to educate our residents on the complexities and science of water contaminants, which is one of the watershed’s primary missions.”

- **What: Citizen’s Forum on chemical contaminants in MN lakes and streams**
- **When: Wednesday, May 18, 2011 at 7 p.m.**
- **Where: Albany High School Auditorium & Theater
30 Forest Ave. Albany, Minn., 56307**

About the Sauk River Watershed District:

As a local government body, the SRWD was formed in 1986 and extends from six miles west of Osakis flowing south to the Mississippi River near St. Cloud. The District’s namesake, the Sauk River, meanders for 120 miles. The District marks its 25th anniversary in service to citizens on July 25, 2011. Members of its Board of Managers are appointed to three-year terms by commissioners from five counties to represent the interests of Douglas, Meeker, Pope, Stearns and Todd counties. For more about the SRWD, visit www.srwdmn.org or call 320-352-2231.