

**BAELN** *Brainerd Area Environmental Learning Network*

## **Nitrate Contamination of Minnesota Groundwater:** economic and other implications

**Thursday, March 19, 2015, from 3:00-4:30 p.m.**

Sessions are free and all are invited.

**SPEAKER:** Dr. Bonnie Keeler, Lead Scientist, Natural Capital Project Institute on the Environment, University of Minnesota

Minnesota is rich in water resources, but growing and diversifying demands on water have led to water stress and threats to water quality. To secure a long-term sustainable water future, investments are needed in watershed protection and restoration. However, these investments can be costly and lead to tradeoffs with development and other activities. In order to evaluate these tradeoffs, we need information on how water quality and quantity is changing, along with how those changes affect our social and economic wellbeing.

To address this need, Keeler is studying the value of clean water in Minnesota. Along with colleagues, she recently published research on the [costs of nitrate contamination](#) and the [value of clean water to lake recreation](#). Using tools from ecology and economics, Keeler is understanding the connections between water quality and wellbeing - information that can better inform the design of policy or incentive programs and more efficiently target investments in restoration and protection. Keeler will discuss her work on water quality valuation, along with related projects led by the Natural Capital Project that are elevating the value of nature in decision-making.

Dr. Bonnie Keeler is a research scientist at the Institute on the Environment where she oversees the Natural Capital Project – a collaborative partnership between the University of Minnesota, Stanford University, the Nature Conservancy, and the World Wildlife Fund. Bonnie earned her Ph.D. in Natural Resources Science and Management and her M.S. in Ecology from the University of Minnesota. In her work with the Natural Capital Project, Bonnie applies ecosystem services approaches to improve water management, to quantify the externalities associated with land-use change, and to support conservation and restoration in Minnesota and globally.

**LOCATION:** Land Services Building, 322 Laurel St., Brainerd, Lower Level, Meeting Room 2. Located behind the Historic Crow Wing County Courthouse. Free parking in the county lot on the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Laurel.

If you have questions concerning this presentation, please contact Denise Stromme at [stromme@umn.edu](mailto:stromme@umn.edu) or 218-828-2680.

**BAELN offers environmental professionals and community members** free professional development and timely information on environmental and sustainability issues. Events are held on the third Thursday of the month from 3:00-4:30 p.m. They include a 30-40 minute presentation, followed by questions and discussion with time for networking and refreshments.

**To receive BAELN notifications or** for general information on BAELN, please contact Stephen Mikkelson at 218-316-3887, toll free at 1-800-657-3864 or [stephen.mikkelson@state.mn.us](mailto:stephen.mikkelson@state.mn.us).

**The Brainerd Area Environmental Learning Network** *is a collaborative effort of: Central Lakes College, Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, citizen representation, Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District, Initiative Foundation, MN Department of Natural Resources, MN Department of Transportation, MN Pollution Control Agency, The Nature Conservancy, and University of Minnesota Extension.*

### **BAELN Sessions**

**September 18:** The History of Conservation and the Hope of Restorative Agriculture: a story of struggle, accomplishment, and optimism

**\*October 9 (second Thursday):** The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Lake Friendly Development Awards

**November 20:** Wild for Monarchs

**December 18:** Keeping the Doors Open: using social enterprise to sustain a social mission in the environmental nonprofit community

**January 15:** Wolf Conservation and Management in Minnesota

**\*\*February 19 (5:00 evening event):** Solving Wicked Problems by Design: a 'Design Thinking' documentary and discussion

**March 19:** Nitrate Contamination of Minnesota Groundwater: economic and other implications

**April 16:** Creating a Stronger Connection between Brainerd and the Mississippi River

**May 21:** Thought-provoking TED Talk and Discussion

**June 18:** Faith Communities in Action through environmental stewardship