

BCWMC Education & Public Outreach Committee

Meeting Notes from March 5, 2010

Members present: Liz Thornton, Stu Stockhauss, Margie Vigoren, Ginny Black and Pauline Langsdorf

Education & Public Outreach Plan Development BWSR Workshop

Margie Vigoren has represented the BCWMC at these meetings. Two more meetings are planned. The workshop is designed for one representative from each of the Watershed Management Organization's (WMO's) in the west metro area. The WMO's that send representatives to the West Metro Watershed Alliance (WMWA), formerly called the Joint EPOC, have attended these workshops as well as a few other WMO's. They are in the process of developing guidelines to work through strategies which will be determined by each WMO's Education & Public Outreach Committee. Then this will be presented to their respective WMO.

WMWA Update

The February meeting of WMWA was snowed out in February. An oral report will be given of the March 9th meeting at the BCWMC March meeting. The WMWA April meeting will be April 13, 8:30 a.m., in Conference Room 2 at the Plymouth Creek Center, 14800 34th Ave. N. in Plymouth.

Rain Garden Workshops

BCWMC as part of WMWA financially supports rain garden workshops. Judie Anderson, of WMWA, has arranged for workshops at the following sites:

March 31, from 6:00-9:00 p.m. – Champlin Park High School

April 17, from 9:00-Noon - Robbinsdale (workshops A & B combined)

May 18 from 6:00-9:00 p.m. - Crystal (workshops A & B combined)

May 20 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Plymouth, St. Barnabas Lutheran Church (part A workshop only)

Seeds Packets for 2010 Handouts

We decided that we would order 300 seed packets to handout at various events. Instead of the mix of native flower and native grasses we have used in the past we will change the mix to consist of just blackeyed susan and purple coneflower seeds. We feel this mix will be more successful as we expect the seeds to germinate better and as a result have higher success rate. Pauline will check into the cost of making this change. We want to have the seed packets in hand by our first public event in April.

Plymouth Yard and Garden EXPO – April 9 & 10

BCWMC will have our exhibits, brochure and seed packets at the Plymouth Yard and Garden EXPO on April 9 & 10. Friday, the 9th it is open from 6:00-9:00 p.m. and Saturday, the 10th it is open from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Teacher Focus Group – Ongoing Discussion

We continued our discussion on our next steps following the input we received at the Teacher Focus Group we held in January. We decided in our review of their comments to decide which of the issues they raised are *easy to change*, are *doable*, are more difficult but possible and *those over which we have no impact*. We will continue with this evaluation at future meetings.

2011 Education & Public Outreach Budget

We will develop our first draft of the 2011 Education & Public Outreach budget at our April meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of this committee is scheduled for Friday, April 2nd at 9:00 a.m.

Notes by Pauline Langsdorf

February 26, 2010
For immediate release.

Raingarden Workshops Scheduled in Northwest Metro Area

Four local watershed organizations - the Basset Creek, Elm Creek, Shingle Creek and West Mississippi Watershed Management Commissions - are partnering with Metro Blooms to offer low-cost raingarden workshops and design assistance in the northwestern metro area. Learn how to manage stormwater runoff by installing a raingarden using native plants that will improve water quality in our lakes, rivers and streams. Metro Blooms has offered raingarden workshops in the metro area since 2005 and more than 4,400 people have attended. Metro Blooms has more than 25 years of history promoting gardening to beautify communities and to heal and protect the environment. For more information and workshop details visit their website www.metroblooms.org.

2010 Raingarden Workshop Schedule

Register at metroblooms.org or call (651) 699-2426.

2010 Raingarden Workshop Part A Location

May 20, 2010 (6:30 – 8:30 p.m.) St. Barnabas Lutheran Church 15600 Old Rockford Road, Plymouth

The **Raingarden Workshop (Part A)** teaches landowners how to install a raingarden using native plants that don't require fertilizers or pesticides, and whose long roots help draw the water deep into the soil. **Rusty Schmidt**, a Minneapolis landscape ecologist, is the key presenter. After attending Part A, landowners can follow-up with the **Part B Raingarden Design Workshop**. In a two-hour small group format, they will receive professional advice about their raingardens from Metro Blooms Landscape Design Assistants and local Master Gardeners who are trained in landscape design and horticulture. For a list of Part B Workshop dates visit www.metroblooms.org.

2010 Raingarden Workshop & Design Studio Locations (Combines Both A & B Workshops)

March 31, 2010 (6:00-9:00 p.m.)	Champlin Park High School	6025 109th Avenue North, Champlin
April 17, 2010 (9:00 a.m.-Noon)	Robbinsdale Public Safety Building	4101 Hubbard Avenue N, Robbinsdale
May 18, 2010 (6:00-9:00 p.m.)	Crystal Community Center	4800 Douglas Drive N, Crystal

The **Raingarden Workshop & Design Studio** is a three-hour session that combines the content of the A and B workshops. Participants will learn about watershed management, stormwater runoff, and raingarden basics including design, installation and maintenance of raingardens using native plants. In the second half of the session participants will receive hands-on assistance in planning a raingarden project from Metro Blooms Landscape Design Assistants and local Master Gardeners who are trained in landscape design and horticulture.

Space is limited. Register with a credit card at metroblooms.org or send a \$10 check payable to Metro Blooms, PO Box 17099, Minneapolis, MN 55417. Specify workshop location and include your name, address, zip code, phone number and e-mail address. See more workshop listings at metroblooms.org.

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Teacher focus group outcomes – Thurs., Jan. 14, 2002

BCWMO Education & Outreach Committee

Current water quality curriculum components:

Project WET
Grade 4 FOS kit (Hopkins)
River Watch

Barriers

Funding

Field trips taken as part of the curriculum must be paid for by the school (not the students)
Not understanding that “in kind” contributions can be used as matching funds for BCWMO grant
Curriculum is compartmentalized (not interdisciplinary)
Teacher training, testing and funding all focus on reading and math

Time:

- Class length
- Time to plan
- Time to understand and fill out grant application
- Standardized tests take up much of the time
- Limited time for developing a grant project, understanding and filling out the application

Testing

Concern for actually damaging a resource in the course of studying it with numbers of students
Student safety and supervision
Distance from a natural resource to study
Pressure to standardize curriculum
Students disconnected from nature
Class size
\$1,000 is not enough money to complete some of the desired goals (build a nature center, cover cost of program and transportation to take class to off-site learning center)
Reluctance or disinterest among colleagues

Opportunities

Do “real” work – where student water quality testing would be used in projects and/or decision-making
Introduce students to nature and habitat
Develop lessons applicable to the STEM curriculum and grant opportunities
Provide teacher training
Start after-school and community environmental learning/involvement programs
Provide funding to develop STEM curriculum
Develop nature study areas
Develop curriculum that incorporates engineering principles in water quality planning and projects

Strategies

Explore incorporating water quality engineering principles in the STEM curriculum and seek grant funding
Provide feedback of testing outcome from programs like River Watch

Increase grant funds (fewer grants with greater awards, or increase grant budget)
 Simplify the grant application and make it clear that “in kind” contributions count as matching funds
 Offer help in writing grants
 Meet with district curriculum specialists to explore water the possibility of incorporating water quality lessons
 Develop a STEM grant
 Meet with school boards – make a case for incorporating water quality lessons into curriculum
 Make a presentation at the MnSTA (Minnesota Science Teachers Association) conference to promote incorporating water quality lessons in science curricula
 Engage other stakeholders in sharing the cost and effort (e.g. lakeshore associations, scouts, faith communities, etc.)
 Hire a teacher to develop a Bassett Creek-specific water quality curriculum
 Review current K-12 science standards
 Develop a Bassett Creek educational packet, including:
 Topographical and boundary maps
 A watershed history
 Engineering lessons relating to watershed projects and plans

Next steps

Create a sample of a Bassett Creek educational packet
 Share the packet and other ideas and goals with district curriculum specialists
 Discuss sharing the work with the WMWA
 Review and revise the grant program to address concerns raised by the teachers

Teacher Participants

Dave Jackson	Birchview Elem. School	Wayzata District
Jim Brickwedde	Meadowbrook Elem. School	Hopkins District
Kent Johnson	Plymouth Middle School	Robbinsdale District
Elisa Helmke	Wayzata East Middle School	Wayzata District
Jon Ong	Cooper High School	Robbinsdale District
Kathy Kneeland	Armstrong High School	Robbinsdale District
Steve Merten	West Lutheran High School	Private School