



2015 ANNUAL REPORT



BACKGROUND

In 2006 the Shingle Creek and West Mississippi Watershed Management Commission's Education and Public Outreach Committee (EPOC) invited the Education Committee of the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission to partner in developing joint education and outreach activities. Since that time this voluntary partnership has grown to include the Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission, the Three Rivers Park District, Hennepin County Department of Environment and Energy, and the Freshwater Society. The WMOs are designated as "members," the latter three organizations as "partners."

This alliance, the West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA), grew from a recognition that the individual organizations have many common education and public outreach goals and messages that could be more efficiently and effectively addressed and delivered collaboratively and on a wider scale.

MEETINGS

WMWA meets monthly, as needed, on the second Tuesday, at Plymouth City Hall. Member representatives include Laura Jester, Administrator, Bassett Creek WMC; Doug Baines, Dayton, Elm Creek WMC; and Shelley Marsh, Brooklyn Center, and Ben Scharenbroich, Plymouth, Shingle Creek and West Mississippi WMCs. Partner attendees have included Denis Hahn, Three Rivers Park District; Mary Karius, Hennepin County; and Peggy Knapp, Freshwater Society. Other attendees include Jenny Schaut and Mary Anderson, Watershed PREP Educators; Dawn Pape and Becky Rice, Metro Blooms; Michaela Neu and Tammy Schmitz, Mississippi WMO; and Dave Dahle, Eden Prairie. Diane Spector, Wenck Associates, serves as technical support for WMWA, and Amy Juntunen and Judie Anderson, JASS, serve as administrative support. In 2015 eleven meetings were held.

THE WMWA PROGRAM

Goals of the WMWA program are to:

- Inform public about the watershed organizations and their programs.
- Provide useful information to public on priority topics.
- Engage public and encourage positive, water-friendly behaviors.

Two informational pieces have been developed by WMWA to support these goals. The *10 Things You Can Do Brochure* targets the general public. The brochure is distributed at all venues where the Commissions or member cities have a presence and also in the Watershed PREP classrooms. It is also available on the websites of the WMO member cities.

The *Maintain Your Property the Watershed Friendly Way* handbook targets small businesses, multi-family housing properties, and common interest communities such as homeowners' associations. It contains tips for specifying and hiring turf and snow maintenance contractors, and includes checklists for BMP inspections. Nearly 5,000 copies were distributed to member cities in 2015.

WATERSHED PREP

Watershed PREP is a program of WMWA, and stands for Protection, Restoration, Education, and Prevention. 2015 was the third year of the program. Two contract educators with science education backgrounds are shared between the member watersheds. The focus of the program is two-fold - to present water resource-based classes to fourth grade students and to provide education and outreach to citizens, lake associations, other civic organizations, youth groups, etc. Goals of the program are 1) to have audiences gain a general understanding of watersheds, water resources and the organizations that manage them, and 2) to have audiences understand the connection between actions and water quality and water quantity. The ultimate goal is to make this program available to all fourth graders in the four WMWA watersheds and to other schools as contracted.

Fourth Grade Program. Three individual lessons meeting State education standards have been developed. **Lesson 1, What is a Watershed and Why do we care?**, provides an overview of the watershed concept and is specific to each school's watershed. It describes threats to the watershed. **Lesson 2, Water Cycle - More than 2-dimensional!**, describes the movement and status of water as it travels through the water cycle. **Lesson 3, Stormwater Walk**, investigates movement of surface water on schools grounds.



In 2015, 149 classes totaling 4,042 students attended lessons 1 and 2 (compared to 78 and 1,373, respectively, in 2014, and 37 and 931, respectively, in 2013.) *Appendix A* details the students reached in lessons 1 and 2.

Additionally, the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO) awarded a grant for \$2,000 for the Educators to bring Watershed PREP to five schools in that watershed.

Community Education and Outreach. The PREP educators also provided outreach at four community and school events. Outreach activities are also described in *Appendix A*.

UPDATED WORK PLAN

In 2015 the WMWA Work Plan was updated to reflect current practices. The last plan, created in 2010, had become outdated. Several of the activities included in the 2010 Plan are lower priorities now, and some activities such as Watershed PREP were not included at that time. The updated Work Plan identified the following activities:

1. Facilitate information availability and sharing.
2. Reschedule professional opinion survey to measure knowledge and attitudes about water resources to 2019.
3. Provide Coordinated Communication, Media Relations, and Information Sharing that more closely parallels what the NPDES Permit education and public outreach minimum measure require. Components include identifying priority issues every year, developing a communications plan that identifies educational goals by stakeholder, establishing measurable goals, and identifying responsible parties.

4. Develop county-wide or regional activities. At this time WMWA does not have the capacity to undertake these activities.
5. Pursue and obtain funding for education and public outreach activities.
6. Support and expand in scope and reach the Watershed PREP program.

WMWA's 2015 and 2016 budgets reflect these activities and were approved by the members on May 13, 2014 and March 10, 2015, respectively. The budgets are included in this report as *Appendix B*.

SPECIAL PROJECT

At WMWA's request, Metro Blooms/Blue Thumb submitted a proposal for a project that would encourage residents to replace impervious surface and turf grass with native plantings to benefit clean water by reducing stormwater runoff. The project includes the additional benefit of creating habitat for pollinators. An agreement between Metro Blooms and the Shingle Creek Commission, as fiscal agent, to move the project forward was approved.

Phase one of the project began with creation of a name, tag line and logo. The project was promoted in the Blue Thumb space at the State Fair where the public voted to name the campaign, *Pledge to Plant for Clean Water and Pollinators*.



Phase two was approved contingent on identifying additional funding sources. The second phase will include development of a web application and associated elements.

WMWA WEBSITE

It was an original intention for WMWA to have a website that served as a repository for documents and information for access by member cities and citizens. Hennepin County provided a page on its website for WMWA to realize this intention. In late 2015, it was determined that the page on the County website was difficult to navigate and did not provide the support desired, such as the ability to update and include Watershed PREP information for schools. The domain www.westmetrowateralliance.org was purchased and a subcommittee was formed to create a new website, develop content, and populate with links and information. The site will be open to the public in early 2016.

2015 MARKETING ACTIVITY

Water Links. The members and their partners contribute to the WMWA eNewsletter *Water Links*, which is published by Hennepin County Department of Environment and Energy. Three issues were published in 2015. Articles included seasonal topics such as Environmentally Friendly Lawn Care, Managing Fall Yard Waste, and Snow and Ice control, as well as project updates including grants received to study carp and bacteria, restoration projects, waters removed from the impairments list, and information on monitoring programs.

Seed Packets. One of the priority messages in 2015 was the role of native vegetation in improving stormwater infiltration and reducing other negative environmental impacts. To help promote this message, WMWA and the

member Commissions handed out 500 packets of native seeds at community events and in Watershed PREP classrooms. A short educational message was printed on the seed packets.



Plymouth Home Expo. Bassett Creek, Shingle Creek, West Mississippi and Elm Creek booths were combined into a large area and included a WMWA focus area at the 2015 Expo, April 10 and 11. There were over 120 direct contacts at the booths. The WMWA educators demonstrated the Enviroscope. A “Planting in native clay soil” handout was available at the SC/WM/EC booths and doggy-doo bags were provided at the BC booth. Over 900 folks visited the event.

Beer Coaster Project. In 2014 WMWA partnered with the Freshwater Society and Excelsior Brewing on a beer coaster project. Excelsior agreed to print batches of their coasters with water quality messages and the WMWA name and contact info at no cost to WMWA. The flip side of the coaster has a QR code that takes the reader to a web page of environmental messages. The first set of coasters was printed in 2015.

To learn more about WMWA, contact:

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APPENDIX

2015 Watershed PREP

Lesson 1: What is a Watershed and Why do we Care?

	Date	School	School District	Watershed	# of Classes	# of Students	Educator	Funded By
1	7-Jan	Shirley Hills Primary	Westonka	Minnehaha	1	23	Mary	HC
2	9-Jan	Good Shepherd	Parochial	Bassett	2	48	Jen	HC
3	13-Jan	Lakeview Elementary	Robbinsdale	Shingle	3	78	Jen	HC
4	14-Jan	Jackson Middle School (8th gr.) Expert day	Anoka-Hennepin	W. Miss	2	30	Jen	WMWA
5	16-Jan	Elm Creek	Osseo	Elm	3	78	Jen	WMWA
6	23-Jan	St. Alphonsus	Parochial	Shingle	1	15	Jen	HC
7	24-Feb	Zachary Lane Elementary	Robbinsdale	Bassett	4	105	Mary	HC
8	18-Mar	Oakwood	Wayzata	Minnehaha	4	102	Mary	Plymouth
9	27-Mar	Sacred Heart	Parochial	Shingle	1	26	Jen	WMWA
10	25-26 Mar	Plymouth Creek	Wayzata	Bassett	5	128	Mary	WMWA
11	10-Apr	Gleason Lake	Wayzata	Minnehaha	1	25	Mary	Plymouth
12	29-Apr	St. Charles Borromeo	Mpls	MWMO	2	34	Jen	MWMO
13	27-28 Apr	Kimberly Lane	Wayzata	Bassett	5	127	Mary	WMWA
14	4-May	Rush Creek	Osseo	Elm	5	148	Jen	WMWA
15	6-May	Earle Brown Elementary	Brooklyn Center	W. Miss	6	216	Jen	WMWA
16	14-May	Mary Queen Of Peace	Parochial	Elm	1	18	Jen	WMWA
17	15-May	Bethune	Minneapolis	MWMO	2	34	Jen	MWMO
18	18-May	St. Vincent de Paul School	Parochial	W. Miss	2	52	Jen	WMWA
19	6-7 May	Birchview	Wayzata	Bassett	5	124	Mary	WMWA
20	Jun1, Jun 3	Hassan	Elk River	Elm	5	144	Jen	WMWA
21	Spring	Sunset Hill	Wayzata	Bassett	4	99	Mary	WMWA
22	28-Sep	Yingua Academy	Mpls Charter	MWMO	2	56	Jen	MWMO
23	29-30 Sept	Woodland Elementary	Osseo	W. Miss	5	140	Jen	WMWA
24	2-Oct	School of Engineering and Arts (SEA)	Robbinsdale	Bassett	3	84	Jen	WMWA
25	9-Oct	Weaver Lake Science Math & Tech	Osseo	Elm	4	120	Jen	WMWA
26	12-Oct	Rice Lake	Osseo	Elm	4	112	Jen	WMWA
27	19-Oct	Rogers Elementary School	Elk River	Elm	5	135	Jen	WMWA
28	20-22 Oct	Oxbow Creek Elementary	Anoka-Hennepin	W. Miss	7	224	Jen	WMWA
29	20-Oct	Monroe Elementary	Anoka-Hennepin	W. Miss	4	105	Mary	WMWA
30	22-23 Oct	Champlin Brooklyn Park Academy	Anoka-Hennepin	W. Miss	6	155	Mary	WMWA
31	27-28 Oct	Robbinsdale Spanish Imm.	Robbinsdale	Bassett	5	117	Jen	WMWA
32	3-Nov	Elm Creek Elementary	Osseo	Elm	3	77	Jen	WMWA
33	24-Nov	Meadow Lake	Robbinsdale	Shingle	4	88	Jen	WMWA
34	20-Nov	New Millennium	Mpls	MWMO	3	70	Jen	MWMO
35	1-Dec	New City School	Mpls	MWMO	2	46	Jen	MWMO
36	8-Dec	Learning for Leadership	Mpls Charter	MWMO	1		Jen	MWMO
37	Dec	Hilltop	Westonka	Minnehaha			Jen	WMWA

Total: 122 3183

****New Schools in 2015**

Lesson 2: The Incredible Journey

	Date	School	School District	Watershed	# of Classes	# of Students
	11-May	Rush Creek	Osseo	Elm	5	148
	21-Apr	Earle Brown	Brooklyn Center	W. Miss	6	216
	29-May	Forest Elementary	Robbinsdale	Shingle	3	72
	5-6 Oct	Woodland Elementary	Osseo	W. Miss	5	140
	7-Oct	Jackson MS-Water Day (6th gr)	Brooklyn Park	W. Miss	4	148
	16-Nov	Rogers Elementary	Elk River	Elm	4	135
	Total				27	859

Street Clean-Up

	Date	School	School District	Watershed	# of Classes	# of Students
	28-Oct	St. Vincent de Paul	Parochial	W. Miss	1	15
	*cancelled because of weather. Did Lesson #2 and watched street clean-up video.					

Other

	Date	Event	Location	Watershed	# of Attendees
	24-Feb	Basswood Science Night	Maple Grove	Elm Creek	104
	10-11 April	Plymouth Home & Garden	Plymouth	BC, SC, EC	111+
	26-May	Fernbrook Nature Night	Maple Grove	Elm Creek	180
	29-Jul	Plymouth Kids Fest	Plymouth	BC, SC, EC	89

WMWA 2015 Operating Budget (mirrors 2014 budget)

Revenue	BC	EC	SC	WM	Partners	Total	Actual 2015 (unaudited)		
							RECD	Pending	Total
Member Reimbursement Admin/Tech Servs Routine tasks, coordinate newsletter, etc. Annual Report, Newsletter, Social Media	3,750	3,750	3,750	3,750		15,000	15,000	15,691	691
Member Reimbursement - Special Projects	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500		6,000	6,000	6,000	0
							from 2014 budget carryover; 2015 budget is unspent		
Watershed PREP Fourth Grade Initiative Public Outreach	4,500	4,500	4,500	4,500		18,000	18,000	11,840	6,160
							includes MWMO mini grant expense outside		
Green Yard Workshops - Metro Blooms (not included in services agreement)	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	2,500	14,500	7,800	7,800	0
Total Revenue	9,750	9,750	9,750	9,750	2,500	39,000	46,800	41,331	5,469

APPROVED 2016 BUDGET

Revenue	BC	EC	SC	WM	Partners	Total
Member Reimbursement Admin/Tech Servs Routine tasks, coordinate newsletter, etc. Annual Report, Newsletter, Social Media	3,750	3,750	3,750	3,750		15,000
Member Reimbursement - Special Projects	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500		6,000
Watershed PREP Fourth Grade Initiative Public Outreach	4,500	4,500	4,500	4,500		18,000
Green Yard Workshops - Metro Blooms (not included in services agreement)	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	2,500	14,500
Total Revenue	12,750	12,750	12,750	12,750	2,500	53,500

The cost to develop written materials such as the *Ten Things* brochure is shared by the members. Each watershed organization and/or member city is invoiced for the number of items they purchase for their use/distribution.

