



WEST METRO WATER ALLIANCE

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

In 2006 the Shingle Creek and West Mississippi Watershed Management Commissions' 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 (HCEE), 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.

In 2023 WMWA partnered with HCEE to hire a shared Conservation Specialist. This position is an employee of Hennepin County and works part-time for the County and part-time for WMWA. The WMWA members pooled financial resources, including FY2023 Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) from the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to fund this position and four projects within the member watershed area for calendar years 2023-2024. For the purposes of this pilot project, Richfield Bloomington WMO also contributed funding. The purpose of this pilot position is to increase the deliverables available to member cities and assist in implementing projects and workshops.

MEETINGS

WMWA meets monthly, as needed, on the second Tuesday, virtually via Zoom. Member representatives include Laura Jester, Bassett Creek WMC Administrator; Doug Baines, Commissioner, Elm Creek WMC; Burt Orred, Commissioner, Shingle Creek WMC; Matthias Oddson, Richfield, Richfield-Bloomington WMC; Jenna Wolf, Robbinsdale, Bassett Creek and Shingle Creek WMCs; and Amy Riegel and Talori Dunsworth, Plymouth, Shingle Creek, Bassett Creek and Elm Creek WMCs. Other attendees include Bryan Gruidl, Richfield Bloomington WMC; Joanna Sorenson and Jessica Sahu Teli, Watershed PREP Educators; Diane Spector, Stantec Consulting Services, serves as technical support for WMWA, and Amy Juntunen, JASS, serves as administrative support. In 2024 twelve meetings were held. All WMWA member Commissioners and city staff are welcome to attend these meetings.

THE WMWA PROGRAM

Vision: The West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA) is a collaborative group working to create educational opportunities to protect and improve water resources.

Mission: The mission of WMWA is to improve water resources through education and outreach by:

- Identifying and implementing common education and outreach strategies to promote consistency of messages;
- Pooling resources to undertake activities in the most cost-effective manner; and
- Promoting interagency cooperation and collaboration.

The goals of the WMWA program are to:

- Inform the public about the watershed organizations and their programs.

- Provide useful information to the public on priority topics.
- Educate the public and encourage environmentally and water-friendly behaviors.
- Help member cities meet MS4 permit requirements regarding education.

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. In 2019 the *10 Things* brochure was updated and reprinted in partnership with Hennepin County.

WATERSHED PREP AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

Watershed PREP is a program of WMWA and stands for Protection, Restoration, Education, and Prevention. 2024 was the twelfth year of the program. There was turnover in the contract Educator position, with Joanna Sorenson coming on board after Jessica Sahu Teli left for a full-time position. The Educator is shared between the member watersheds. The focus of the program is two-fold - to present water resource-based classes to fourth/fifth grade students (concurrently with when The Water Cycle is taught) 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 fifth graders in the four WMWA watersheds and to other schools as contracted.

PREP Program. 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. **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 school grounds. **Lesson 4, *Native Plants***, describes how deep-rooted native plants can help stormwater infiltrate and how rain gardens, buffers and similar BMPs remove nutrients from stormwater. **Lesson 5, *Erosion***, teaches students what erosion is, how it can occur, and the detrimental effects erosion can have on our waters.



In 2025, WMWA educators provided 62 classroom presentations of Lesson 1 *What is a Watershed?*, 63 classroom presentations of Lesson 2 *The Water Cycle*, and 9 classroom presentations of Lesson 5 *Erosion*.

The classroom version of Minnesota Sea Grant's Watershed Game was played in 31 classrooms in seven schools in 2025.

THE WATERSHED GAME

The Watershed Game: Classroom Version is a large-format board game that includes both small-group work and whole-class play components created by Minnesota Sea Grant, a program of the University of Minnesota. The

game helps students understand community relationships between water quality and land uses. The Stream Model addresses an entire headwaters watershed and the land uses often found in it. The goal of the game is to reduce nonpoint source pollution (excess sediment or phosphorus) from various land uses to the stream without going broke. The game is designed for middle school students (grades 6 - 8), but is easily modified to use with elementary and high school students.. Working in small teams or as an entire classroom, students apply tools such as prevention, practices, plans, and policies to decrease water pollution while balancing financial resources.

The Watershed Game: Classroom Version emphasizes collaboration and cooperative decision-making, persuasive argumentation, teamwork, and leadership skills along with science and math. The game helps address Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards.

UPDATED WORK PLAN

WMWA's 2025 and 2026 budgets reflect these activities and were approved by the members on March 12, 2024 and March 11, 2025, respectively. The budgets are included in this report as *Appendix C*.

The 2025 Special Project is the Conservation Education and Implementation pilot program. The 2026 Special Project is the redesign of the WMWA website, www.westmetrowateralliance.org.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION AND IMPLEMENTATION PILOT PROGRAM

In spring 2023, Hennepin County hired Grace Barcelow with the title Conservation Specialist. WMWA member WMOs, plus Richfield-Bloomington WMO, dedicated a portion of their biennial Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) grant funds to Hennepin County to pay for approximately half of Barcelow's staff time from 2022 to present. In 2026, Barcelow's time was dedicated to helping WMWA advance a chloride reduction campaign, shoreline restoration workshops and implementation, youth education planning, and region-wide communications. This included working with WMWA members to finalize a 2025–2026 chloride campaign plan and begin outreach to priority facilities; completion of two consultations (RBWMO and BCWMC) and continued implementation support at Parker's Lake properties; delivery and refresh of seasonal media kits (AIS, pet waste, drought/water conservation, fall lawn care, chloride/winter maintenance) and publishing a countywide article linking property values and water quality; moving Fish and Eagle Lake shoreline restoration designs to implementation and preparing new 2026 workshops for Weaver Lake, Rice Lake, Twin Lakes, and Crystal Lake; and initiating planning for 2026–2027 multi-family housing projects with RBWMO and BCWMC. A strategic planning session in November 2025 set the direction for the 2026 year.

CHLORIDE REDUCTION WORK – FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

The chloride reduction campaign was redesigned and finalized for the 2025–2026 season. Outreach began in fall and winter, and partners were asked to submit priority facilities in each watershed. The annual goal is to complete at least one consultation in each WMWA member watershed area. Two consultations were completed within RBWMO and BCWMC. Additional outreach occurred throughout the season, including re-engagement of sites previously contacted in earlier years. Lessons from the prior year's faith-based consultations shaped the updated approach, focusing on more targeted, high-impact sites.

PARKER'S LAKE CHLORIDE REDUCTION PROJECT

In 2025 work continued with Bolton and Menk, the City of Plymouth, and BCWMC to implement recommended practices at four priority properties with on-site salt storage. This included support on equipment improvements and Smart Salting training. Engagement challenges at some facilities led partners to redirect remaining consulting time toward preparing a comprehensive findings and recommendations report. The final report was received in April 2026, and next steps will be coordinated with BCWMC.

SHORELINE AND YARD RESTORATION

Two shoreline and yard restoration workshops were hosted in the fall of 2024 focused on improving water quality in Fish Lake and Eagle Lake located in Maple Grove, MN. Metro Blooms and Blue Thumb completed and distributed all restoration designs. Letters of intent went out to residents, and stipends for 2024 workshop participants were issued, with the first fully executed contract completed. The planned Eagle Lake shoreline workshop in September 2025 was cancelled due to low registration despite extensive outreach; remaining registered participants were directed toward the September 16 workshop at Fish Lake Pavilion. A larger shoreline project on Fish Lake moved forward, with ECWMC planning to partially fund implementation in spring 2026.

Spring 2026 workshops were prepared for residents of Weaver Lake, Rice Lake, Twin Lakes, and Crystal Lake. Residents from Fish Lake and Eagle Lake were invited but outreach focused on the new lake groups. Workshops were scheduled for May 19 and May 27, 2026.

COMMUNICATIONS WORK

Barcelow, with support from Hennepin County communications staff and Dunlap, produced seven media kits over the last year to support WMWA's education and outreach goals and add to previously created and updated kits. These media kits are posted publicly for anyone to use and emailed to partners monthly, for use in socials, newsletters, and more. Barcelow has worked to build out communications contacts at each WMWA territory city to send media kits and other news to. This helps spread this educational programming beyond the reach of just watershed and county networks. Media kits are updated yearly to reflect updated information and improve content. Topics in 2025 included AIS, pet waste, water conservation/drought, fall lawn care, winter chloride practices, habitat and beaver-related content, and litter impacts on water quality.

In addition to media kit releases, Barcelow wrote one news article on the link between water quality and property values that was published in 9 APG publishing papers within Hennepin County (*Osseo Maple Grove Press*, *Crow River News*, *2 Sun Posts*, *2 Sun Currents*, and *3 Sun Sailors*). Additionally, Hennepin County created pet waste post cards in partnership with the City of Champlin. These design files were made available to other cities as well. New educational stickers were designed and printed for partner events.

MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING PROJECTS

The Southgate Apartments project in Bloomington was discontinued by property ownership after design development. Partners will document lessons learned to help improve viability of future multi-family projects. Planning began for new 2026–2027 multi-family housing initiatives in RBWMO and BCWMC, focusing on early engagement with property managers and identification of candidate sites.

WMWA WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The WMWA website www.westmetrowateralliance.org serves as a repository for documents and information for access by member cities and citizens, lists local events WMWA is participating in and/or otherwise promoting, and storing Watershed PREP information for schools.

The website had 2,749 users engaged with an average of 1.74 pages viewed per session for a total 4,792 page views over 3,219 sessions on the website in 2025. The website metrics can be found in Appendix B

The most visited pages were: Home, Media Kits, Chloride Pollution, Native Plants, More Cool Stuff, Contact Us, About Us, Pet Waste, What You Can Do, and Leave it to Beavers.

As of December 31, 2025 the Facebook page had 244 followers with 5 new followers in 2025. For the period January 1 - December 31, 2025, there were 114 individual posts with a reach of 4,502 views and 158 content engagements.

In 2025, WMWA's current website platform, Weebly, announced that the software would no longer be supported. A Request for Proposal was sent in late 2025 seeking a web developer to redesign the website on the WordPress platform. Avallo was contracted as the website developer and the website will be designed and moved to the new platform in 2026.

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or Amy Juntunen, JASS, 763.553.1144, amy@jass.biz*

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A – WATERSHED PREP / EDUCATOR ACTIVITY

Table 1. 2024 schools and students participating in Watershed PREP classes

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

Date	School	School District	City	Watershed	Classes	Students
1/6-7	Jackson Middle School	Anoka-Henn	Champlin	W. Miss	4	121
1/15	Woodland Elementary	Osseo	Brooklyn Park	W. Miss	4	95
1/16	St Vincent DePaul	Parochial	Osseo	Shingle	2	54
1/28	Weaver Lake	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	4	124
2/10	Kimberly Lane	Wayzata	Plymouth	Bassett	3	93
2/12	Notre Ecole		Golden Valley	Bassett	1	9
2/13	Meadow Lake Elementary	Robbsindale	New Hope	Shingle	3	56
3/10	Neill Elementary	Robbinsdale	Crystal	Bassett	2	49
3/11-12	Plymouth Creek	Wayzata	Plymouth	Bassett	5	126
3/18	Robbinsdale Spanish	Robbinsdale	Robbinsdale	Bassett	5	130
5/5-6	Oxbow Creek	Anoka-	Champlin	W. Miss	6	183
5/14	Zacharay Lane Elementary	Robbinsdale	Plymouth	Bassett	2	53
5/20-21	Rush Creek Elementary	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	5	127
10/23	School of Engineering and Arts (SEA)	Robbinsdale	Golden Valley	Bassett	3	81
10/29	Notre Ecole		Golden Valley	Bassett	1	14
11/6-7	Meadowbrook	Hopkins	Golden Valley	Bassett	5	134
11/24-25	Woodland Elementary	Osseo	Brooklyn Park	W. Miss	5	127
12/1	St Vincent DePaul	Parochial	Osseo	Shingle	2	54
Total					62	1630

Lesson 2:

Date	School	School District	City	Watershed	Classes	Students
1/9	Good Shepherd	Parochial	Golden Valley	Bassett	2	54
1/13	Noble Academy	Charter	Brooklyn Park	W. Miss	2	54
1/14	Woodland Elementary	Osseo	Brooklyn Park	W. Miss	4	95
1/28	Weaver Lake	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	4	124
2/4	Kimberly Lane	Wayzata	Plymouth	Bassett	3	93
2/5	Meadow Lake Elementary	Robbsindale	New Hope	Shingle	3	56
2/11	Notre Ecole		Golden Valley	Bassett	1	9
3/4 & 7	Plymouth Creek	Wayzata	Plymouth	Bassett	5	126
3/6	Neill Elementary	Robbinsdale	Crystal	Bassett	2	49
3/17	Robb. Spanish Immersion	Robbinsdale	Robbinsdale	Bassett	5	130
5/5-6	Oxbow Creek	Anoka-Henn	Champlin	W. Miss	6	183
5/13	Zacharay Lane Elementary	Robbinsdale	Plymouth	Bassett	2	53
5/19-20	Rush Creek Elementary	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	5	126
10/9-10	Meadowbrook	Hopkins	Golden Valley	Bassett	5	134
10/27-28	Rice Lake	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	4	94
10/29	Notre Ecole		Golden Valley	Bassett	1	14
11/17-18	Woodland Elementary	Osseo	Brooklyn Park	W. Miss	5	127
12/17-18	Kimberly Lane	Wayzata	Plymouth	Bassett	4	135
Total					63	1656

Other Classes

Date	School	Class taught	Watershed	Classes	Students
3/24-26	Meadowbrook	Watershed Game	Bassett	5	127
3/19	Robb. Spanish Immersion	Watershed Game	Bassett	5	130
3/20-21	Robb. Spanish Immersion	Watershed Game Pt 2	Bassett	5	130
2/21-25	Jackson Middle School	Watershed Game	W. Miss	8	244
1/29-30	Weaver Lake	Watershed Game	Elm	4	124
4/11	Kimberly Lane	Watershed Game	Bassett	3	93
4/18	Kimberly Lane	Watershed Game	Bassett	3	93
5/7	Zacharay Lane Elementary	Watershed Game	Bassett	3	77
11/1	School of Engineering and Arts (SEA)	Watershed Game	Bassett	3	81
11/12-13	Rice Lake	Erosion	Elm	4	94
11/20-21	Meadowbrook	Erosion	Bassett	5	134
Total				48	1327

Events

Date	Event	City	Type	WMO	Attended
1/29	Robb. Spanish Immersion	Robbinsdale	Science Night	BC	103
2/6	Sonnesyn Elementary	Robbinsdale	Science Night	Shingle	74
20-Feb	Greenwood Elementary	Plymouth	Science Night	Bassett	211
19-Mar	Woodland Elementary	Brooklyn Park	Science Night	W. Miss	44
22-Mar	Discover Plymouth	Plymouth	City Event	EC/SC/BC	80
4/26	Maple Grove Arbor Days	Maple Grove	City Event	EC/SC/W M	
5/17	Brooklyn Center Pub Wks open house	Brooklyn Center	City Event	SC/WM	11
6/14	Father Hennepin Days	Champlin	City Event	EC/WM	63
7/19	Maple Grove Days	Maple Grove	City Event	EC/SC/W M	300
8/5	Corcoran Night to Unite	Corcoran	City Event	Elm Creek	53
10/9	Plymouth Environmental Academy	Plymouth	City Event	EC/SC/BC	18
11/20	Weaver Lake Elementary	Maple Grove	Science Night	Elm	85
Total					1042

APPENDIX A – WATERSHED PREP / EDUCATOR ACTIVITY

Table 2. Compilation of annual Watershed PREP outreach

Watershed PREP

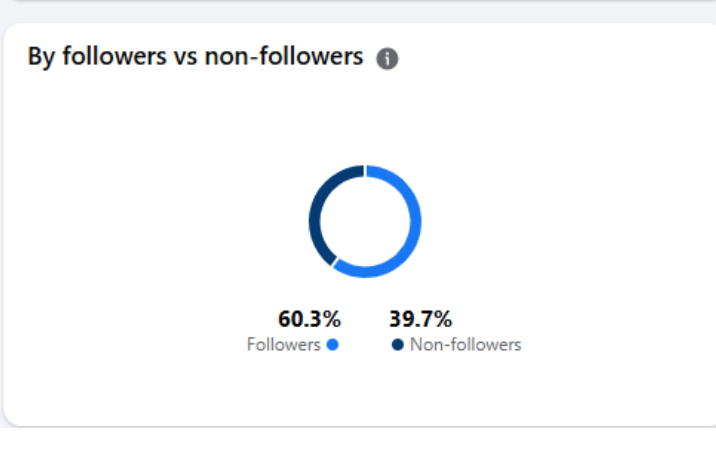
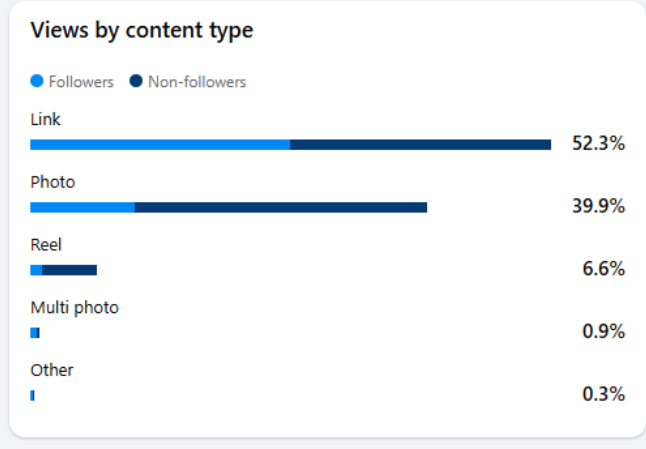
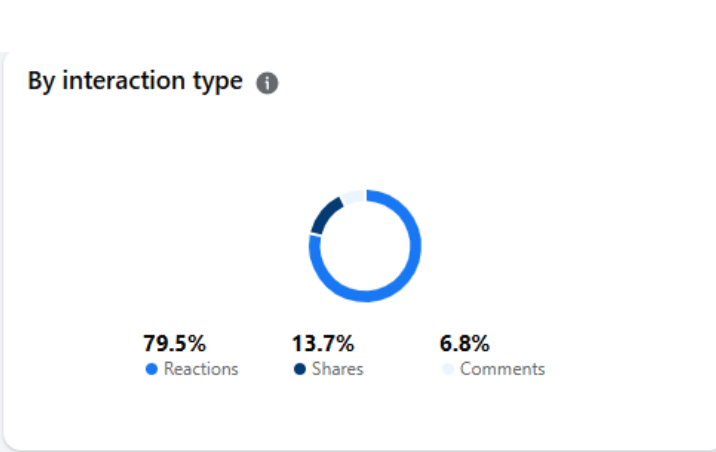
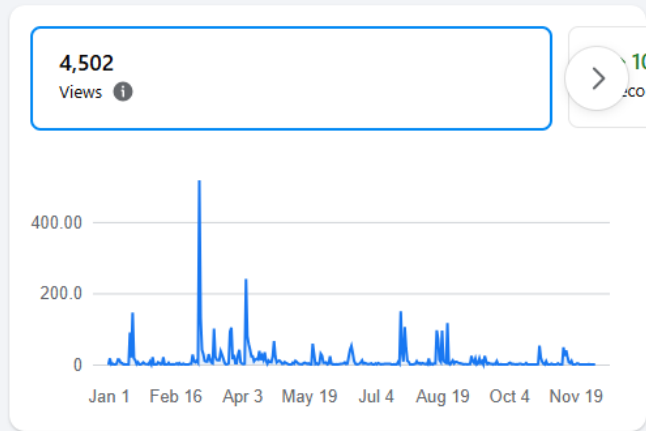
Lesson 1: What is a Watershed and Why Do We Care?

Lesson 2: Project WET, The Incredible Journey

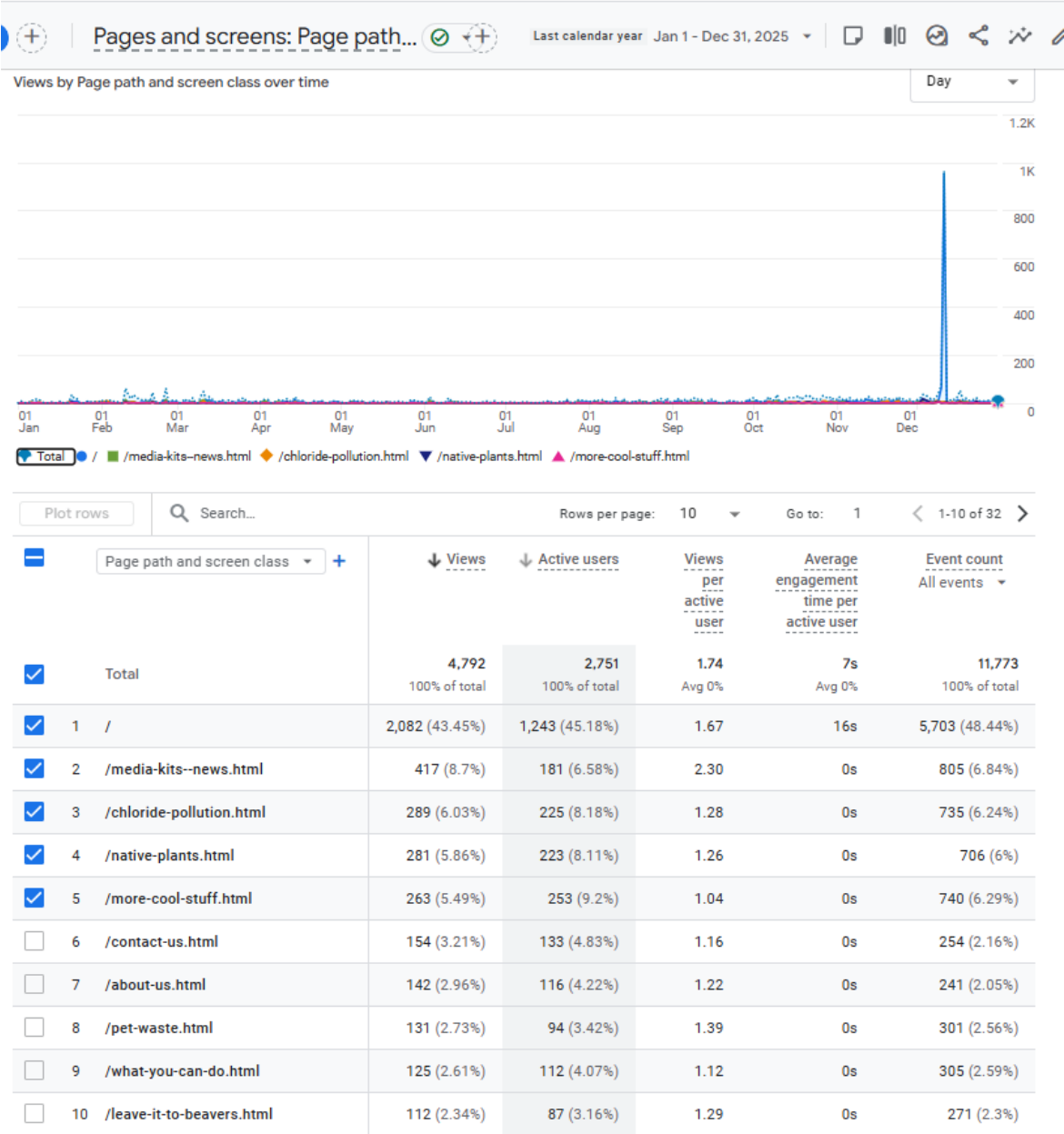
Year	Lesson 1 Classes	Lesson 1 Students	Lesson 2 Classes	Lesson 2 Students	Other	Students	Watershed Game	Students	Total Engages
2013	35	870	9	230					1100
2014	73	1875	5	160					2035
2015	118	3106	27	859					3965
2016	107	2850	20	524					3374
2017	125	3358	38	1072					4430
2018	143	3593	69	1755					5348
2019	103	2681	58	1516					4197
2020	20	572	10	256					828
2021	4	80	0	0					80
2022	51	1551	55	1557	14	342			3450
2023	45	1818	66	1792	37	905	8	207	4722
2024	22	531	25	629	8	229	12	321	1710
2025	62	1630	63	1656	9	228	39	1099	4613
Total	908	24,515	445	12,006	68	1,704	59	1627	39,852

APPENDIX B –SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY

Facebook likes grew in 2025 to a total of 244 followers. In 2025 there were 114 posts resulting in 4,502 views, 158 engagements, 6 new followers and 112 visits to the WMWA Facebook Page.



The website had 2,749 users engaged with an average of 1.74 pages viewed per session for a total 4,792 page views over 3,219 sessions on the website in 2025.



APPENDIX C – BUDGET

	2023	2024				2025			
	Balance	Budget	Revenue	Expense	Balance	Budget	Revenue	Expense	Balance
Admin/Tech Services	\$6,001	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$7,692	\$10,309	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$16,148	\$6,161
Special Projects	24,440	12,000	12,000	12,000	24,440	6,000	6,000	9,818	20,622
Watershed Prep	0	20,000	20,000	\$8,907	11,093	20,000	20,000	20,046	11,047
Outreach Staff						22,000	22,000		22,000
TOTAL	\$30,441	\$36,000	\$44,000	\$37,858	\$45,842	\$44,000	\$60,000	\$44,000	\$59,830

	2026
	Budget
Admin/Tech Services Routine tasks, website, social media, meetings, annual report, etc	\$12,000
Special Projects	6,000
Watershed Prep	20,000
Outreach Coordinator/Staff	22,000
TOTAL	\$60,000

APPENDIX D – CONSERVATION EDUCATION AND IMPLEMENTATION PILOT PROGRAM

Grace Barcelow, the shared Outreach Coordinator/Hennepin County Conservation Specialist, creates and updates media kits for use by member watershed organizations and their member cities. Media kits can be found on the WMWA website at <https://www.westmetrowateralliance.org/media-kits--news.html>.

The media kits include the following topics:

1. **Chloride Consultations** – Updated February 2026. This media kit highlights the chloride consultations that WMWA is offering and encourages residents to follow best winter maintenance practices.
2. **Blue Thumb Partnership** – Updated March 2026. The media kit included a sample newsletter article, and social media posts with information on native plant sales, the Lawns to Legumes grant program, the Blue Thumb plant finder tool and Blue Thumb workshops with photos and links for more information on each topic.
3. **Earth Month and Adopt-A-Drain** – Created April 2025. This media kit highlights Earth Month and includes directions for residents to clean up streets, improve water quality, and sign up for the Adopt-a-Drain program.
4. **Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention** – Updated May 2026. This media kit for West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA) education and outreach work highlights what AIS are, encourages residents to take preventative measures, and solicits pledges to stop the spread of invasive species through lakepledge.com. This media kit contains a news article and set of social media posts.
5. **Pet Waste** – Updated June 2025. The kit included one newsletter and set of social media posts that have a summer focus, and one newsletter and set of social media posts that have a focus on early spring. A pet waste mailer was also created for cities to send out as a utility insert or post card.
6. **Water Conservation and Drought** – Updated July 2025. This media kit includes information to help residents enhance water conservation efforts during late summer. Residents are encouraged to plant drought-friendly plants, create landscapes resilient to a changing climate, and reduce water usage. There is a newsletter and set of social media posts. There is an additional set of social media posts that discuss capturing rainwater. Capturing rainwater can be a key way to reduce costs and mitigate pollution carried into bodies of water during storms. This should be used if the weather forecast looks rainy, or if you want to post more best practices to conserve water and reduce pollution.
7. **Fall Lawn Care** – Updated September 2025. This media kit includes information to help residents improve practices on their properties to reduce leaves going into storm drains during the fall season and encourages residents to sign up for the Adopt-a-Drain program.
8. **Chloride Pollution Reduction** – October 2024. This media kit includes information to help residents and facilities reduce their reliance on chlorides for winter maintenance. Residents and property owners are encouraged to adopt best management practices in the winter season and attend MPCA Smart Salting trainings. In this media kit there are two sets of articles and social media posts for TWO separate audiences (property management and residents).
9. **Leave it to Beavers** – January 2026. This media kit offers information on the water quality and additional environmental benefits of preserving and protecting terrestrial and aquatic habitats, using beavers as an example. It also includes recommendations to reduce damage related to beaver activities.

10. **Otters and clean water: A holiday gift for wildlife** - December 2025. This media kit highlights the role of river otters as indicators of healthy aquatic ecosystems. It connects their survival to clean water, abundant fish populations, and intact shorelines. It also provides recommendations for winter practices that protect otter habitat and water quality, with a seasonal tie-in to the holidays.

11. **Trash and Litter Prevention** – Updated April 2026. This media kit is designed to support public education around how trash and litter impact local water quality. This kit includes a sample newsletter article, social media posts, and images to share alongside postings

West Metro Education and Outreach Plan

West Metro Water Alliance

May 2010



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Introduction

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 most of the watershed management organizations in Hennepin County, the Three Rivers Park District, and Hennepin County Department of Environmental Services.

This partnership has taken the name West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA). This partnership 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. The partnership developed this West Metro Education and Outreach Plan (Plan) as a way to define those common goals and set forth a plan for implementing those common activities.

It is understood that each watershed management organization (WMO) and community may have additional localized goals for their education programming. For example, implementation of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plan may require targeted messages to specific audiences. Activities targeted to the urbanized areas of the county are likely to have a different emphasis than activities targeted to developing or agricultural areas. The Plan also serves as a guide for each of the partners to refine their own individual education and outreach plans and activities.

The West Metro Education and Outreach Plan is intended to serve as a framework to accommodate activities common to most or all WMOs and communities in the county as well as unique local activities.

Purpose and Goals

This section identifies the vision, mission, and goals set forth collectively by the WMWA. It also identifies the target audiences and the objectives for learning for each of these target audiences.

Vision:

The West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA) is a collaborative group working to create educational opportunities to protect and improve water resources.

Mission:

The mission of the WMWA is to improve water resources through education and outreach by:

- Identifying and implementing common education and outreach strategies to promote consistency of messages;
- Pooling resources to undertake activities in the most cost-effective manner; and
- Promoting interagency cooperation and collaboration.

Goals:

The actions in the West Metro Education and Outreach Plan are based around the education and outreach requirements of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's General Stormwater Permit. The following is a summary of the goals set forth for this Plan.

- Provide a guide for WMOs and communities to focus their educational efforts;
- Identify partnerships and opportunities to work within Hennepin County on joint educational programs;
- Develop a centralized list of available information regarding water resources issues; and
- Present one common, useable document for all participating communities and WMOs to help them deliver a common message to the general public.

Target Audiences

Target audiences are individuals or groups to whom education is being directed. The Plan has identified the following target audiences and general educational goals for each. Often more than one target audience will benefit from an educational activity.

1. Single family homeowners and renters
 - a. Have a general understanding of watersheds and water resources
 - b. Understand the connection between behavior and water quality
 - c. Adopt sensible practices that protect water resources
 - d. Support protection and restoration efforts

2. Commercial, industrial, and multifamily property owners and managers
 - a. Have a general understanding of watersheds and water resources
 - b. Understand the connection between behavior and water quality
 - c. Maintain their properties and best management practices (BMPs) in water-friendly ways

3. Developers, consultants and contractors
 - a. Be aware of laws, regulations and permits and the steps needed to meet them
 - b. Understand the purpose of regulations
 - c. Be informed of and adopt the latest techniques
 - d. Be aware of techniques to go beyond the regulatory minimum

4. Government: elected and appointed officials, staff, board and commission members
 - a. Have a general understanding of watersheds and water resources
 - b. Establish and maintain up-to-date ordinances, rules, and practices
 - c. Understand public opinions and needs regarding water resources
 - d. Be adequately trained to better perform administrative, regulatory, inspection, maintenance, and education activities

5. Educators and students
 - a. Incorporate water resources education and activities into curricula

6. Agriculture and animal operators
 - a. Have a general understanding of watersheds and water resources
 - b. Understand the connection between behavior and water quality
 - c. Undertake conservation and nutrient management practices

Joint Education and Outreach Activities

Activity 1. Facilitate Information Availability and Sharing – County-Coordinated Website

Description:

Provide a convenient “one-stop” online location for water quality/quantity information and resources. A website hosted by Hennepin County will provide informational, educational, and training materials; links to individual watershed management organization websites; and the latest news and information about water resources in Hennepin County.

Target Audience:

Government employees and officials, watershed boards and staff, City Councils and staff, general public, educators, students

Education Goals:

1. Deliver a consistent message
2. Create an efficient and cost-effective means for distribution of messages and resources

Proposed Activities:

1. Develop and update a website containing relevant information and links
2. Develop and make available published materials; newsletter articles; photos, etc.
3. Develop and maintain a listserv to update partners

Measurable Goals:

1. Record number of “hits” on the website; the number of times an article is used/published. Develop strategy for measurement.
2. Increase in knowledge and adoption of practices as measured in periodic opinion surveys (see Activity 2)

Responsible Parties:

1. Partners – supply materials for website
2. Hennepin County staff – update website as needed

Timeframe:

Online October 2009 at www.hennepin.us/water

Joint Education and Outreach Activities

Activity 2. Measure and Monitor Public Opinion and Awareness

Description:

Conduct periodic opinion surveys, focus groups, online surveys, etc. to monitor target audience awareness of various issues, and use those results to refine programming and measure success.

Target Audience: All target audiences

Education Goals:

1. Target education messages and activities based on measures of public opinion and awareness
2. Measure and demonstrate results of education and outreach activities, e.g., increased awareness, adoption of practices, public support

Proposed Activities:

1. Undertake county-wide telephone opinion survey to update the 2007 Shingle Creek, West Mississippi, Bassett Creek, and Elm Creek joint survey
2. Create a database of potential survey questions for inclusion in city residential surveys
3. Undertake targeted surveys at events, regional parks, lake association meetings, etc.
4. Convey results of surveys to communities and other interested parties

Measurable Goals:

1. Number of information-gathering opportunities
2. Use of gathered information
3. Statistically significant change in awareness, adoption of or willingness to adopt practices

Responsible Parties:

1. Partners – participate in survey development, distribute potential questions, distribute results, coordinate targeted surveys
2. County – serve as clearinghouse for gathered data

Timeframe:

1. Survey question database, ongoing
2. Targeted surveys, 2013-2015
3. County-wide survey, by 2015

Joint Education and Outreach Activities

Activity 3. Provide Coordinated Communication, Media Relations, and Information Sharing

Description:

Coordinate and, where appropriate, jointly prepare communications and information pieces such as articles, brochures, newsletters, graphics, photographs, handbooks, etc. Work with regional media to undertake coordinated information campaigns on general water resources issues.

Target Audience:

All target audiences

Education Goals:

1. Produce coordinated materials to avoid mixed messages.
2. Increase awareness of water quality/quantity issues.
3. Provide stakeholders with the information and tools necessary to do simple things to make a difference.

Proposed Activities:

1. Prepare new and update existing published materials.
2. Prepare follow-up campaign materials for brochure, *Ten Things You Can Do to Improve Minnesota's Lakes and Streams*.
3. Maintain an up-to-date media and communications plan.
4. Consider alternate communication strategies such as billboards, PSAs, professional writers and photographers, etc.

Measurable Goals:

Number of pieces printed, number of hits on website for publication, number of requests for copies of materials

Responsible Parties:

All partners, including financial support, editorial skills, graphic design skills, printing

Timeframe:

Ten Things brochure printed in summer 2009

Follow-up campaign begin 2010

Joint Education and Outreach Activities

Activity 4. Develop and Coordinate County-Wide or Regional Activities

Description:

Provide information sharing and training opportunities on topics of wide-scale or general interest on a regional or county basis.

Target Audience:

All target audiences, particularly elected officials and decision-makers.

Education Goals:

1. Train elected officials in storm water practices
2. Deliver consistent messages
3. Deliver most current information regarding BMPs

Proposed Activities:

1. Coordinate and present West Metro Water Alliance conferences
2. Coordinate countywide Watershed cleanup
3. Coordinate Project NEMO – Watershed Game. Lake Game, River Game, general and project-specific presentations
4. Coordinate multi-jurisdictional training opportunities such as salt workshops, NPDES-related training, BMP workshops
5. Develop and coordinate West Metro Water Festival
6. Coordinate with Metro Blooms

Measurable Goals:

1. Number of attendees
2. Results of workshop evaluations
3. Number of certified attendees

Responsible Parties:

Staff-appropriate individuals, other partners for attendee recruitment and promotion

Timeframe:

Begin early 2010, continued as requested or needs are identified and funding is available

Joint Education and Outreach Activities

Activity 5. Pursue and Obtain Funding for Joint Education and Outreach Activities

Description:

Investigate options and pursue funding from foundations, grant agencies, and other sources to supplement WMO and city funding for education and outreach activities.

Target Audience:

WMOs and cities

Education Goals:

1. Obtain funding to undertake and expand activities
2. Raise awareness of WMWA with funding agencies and sources

Proposed Activities:

1. Identify fiscal agent(s)
2. Identify funding options and funding goals
3. Identify matching funding sources and amounts
4. Develop packet of information for funding sources describing WMWA and its partners, the organization's goals and activities, and education and outreach strategies
5. Write and submit grant proposals
6. Document outcomes of previous programs.

Measurable Goals:

1. Number of applications successfully made
2. Grant and matching funds raised

Responsible Parties:

Staff-appropriate individuals, other partners for research, grant writing, and matching funding identification

Timeframe:

Begin early 2010, continued as funding opportunities are available