



WEST METRO WATER ALLIANCE

2024 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.



In 2024, WMWA educators provided 22 classroom presentations of Lesson 1 *What is a Watershed?*, 16 classroom presentations of Lesson 2 *The Water Cycle*, and 8 classroom presentations of Lesson 4 *Native Plants*.

The classroom version of Minnesota Sea Grant's Watershed Game was played in eleven classrooms in two schools in 2024.

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 2024 and 2025 budgets reflect these activities and were approved by the members on April 11, 2023 and March 12, 2024, respectively. The budgets are included in this report as *Appendix C*.

The 2024 Special Project is the Conservation Education and Implementation pilot program. A project has not been designated for 2025 and additional funding has been allocated directly to the Conservation Education and Implementation program.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION AND IMPLEMENTATION PILOT PROGRAM

In the fourth quarter of 2019, members re-evaluated spending on the current Special Project. Looking forward to the needs of 2020 and the future, members voted to use Special Project funding for 2020 to hire a WMWA Coordinator on a contract basis because members did not have enough time to dedicate to upcoming projects. An applicant was hired for the position beginning January 1, 2020. Due to difficulties with COVID, the applicant was unable to start and the position never moved forward.

In April 2022, WMWA members worked with the member watersheds, Hennepin County and the Minnesota Board of Soil and Water Resources to secure a Watershed Based Implementation Funding grant, a state grant funded through the Clean Water Legacy Amendment. This grant funded a two-year pilot program that began with a part-time Conservation Education and Implementation position employed by and shared jointly with Hennepin County with 50% of time spent on WMWA and Richfield-Bloomington WMO outreach and implementation, and 50% on Hennepin County outreach. Meetings from April through December 2022 refined the vision and scope for this position.

In spring 2023, Hennepin County hired Grace Barcelow with the title Conservation Specialist. In 2024 Barcelow's work with WMWA included developing relationships with city communication staff in WMWA territory, writing and managing communications to enhance water quality education, producing media kits for use by member watersheds and cities, writing an article about lakes delisted in the WMWA area which was published in local papers in May 2024, writing an article about chloride pollution which was published in December 2024, publishing an article about chloride pollution in collaboration with the *Star Tribune*, conducting chloride consultations with faith-based organizations, providing outreach to middle schools for the Adopt-A-Drain program engaging new schools, in WMWA territory, developing relationships with city communication staff in WMWA territory, writing and managing communications to enhance water quality education, giving a Watershed PREP presentation, and developing and managing WMWA WBIF projects *Shoreline Workshops* to improve water quality in Fish Lake and Eagle Lake, *Southgate Apartment BMPs* and community engagement project working to improve water quality in Smith Pond, and *Parker's Lake Chloride Reduction Project*.

In 2024, the WMWA partner watersheds agreed to contribute a portion of their fiscal year 2025 WBIF grant funding to continue this position in 2025 and 2026, with a goal of funding the position in the future through contributions from member watersheds and member cities that benefit from the enhanced outreach the position provides.

In 2024, Barcelow applied to have a Green Corps member support WMWA programming for the 2025-2026 year through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency program. The application was accepted, and Rachel Dunlap was assigned to work in the position for the 2025-2026 season. Dunlap started her service year in September 2024 and will continue through August 2025.

SOUTHGATE APARTMENTS BMPs

In early 2024, Barcelow worked with Metro Blooms to plan engagement work and stormwater improvement work at Southgate Apartment Complex located in Bloomington, the Bloomington-Richfield WMO's special project. Three engagement events were hosted with residents during the summer of 2024. Preliminary plans were made and reviewed by residents to install stormwater best management practices, rain gardens, pollinator gardens and a nature play area. The second phase of the project will include bringing designs to 100% completion and working with residents and contractors to install and maintain practices.

Pollinator Pathways grant funding through the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Lawns to Legumes program was awarded in 2024 to support pollinator plantings at the property.

SHORELINE WORKSHOPS

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. Lakeshore residents and members of the lake associations were invited to the workshops. The workshops were hosted by Metro Blooms and coordinated by Barcelow and other WMWA staff members. The Fish Lake (Elm Creek) workshop had 13 attendees and the Eagle Lake (Shingle Creek) workshop had 12 attendees. Consultations were conducted with residents after the workshop to determine what practices could be installed on private properties. Seven designs are being created for Fish Lake and six designs are being created for Eagle Lake by the Metro Blooms design team, with plans to deliver stipends and install practices in the summer of 2025.

Pollinator Pathways grant funding was awarded in 2024 to support pollinator plantings on private properties interested in installing practices.

PARKER'S LAKE CHLORIDE REDUCTION PROJECT

In early 2024, Barcelow worked with City of Plymouth staff and Laura Jester, Bassett Creek WMC Administrator, to identify and prioritize properties within the Chloride Management Area of the northern Parker's Lake subwatershed in Plymouth. Seventeen properties were identified as ideal candidates for targeted chloride consultations, and research was completed to identify contact information for each facility. Visual inspections were completed at multiple facilities within the Chloride Management Area in 2024 to observe onsite snow management and deicing practices.

In October 2024, letters were sent to each property identified for targeted outreach, and follow-up calls and emails were completed for many facilities. Barcelow and Dunlap engaged with Meritex, a property management company that owns and manages a large, 24.5-acre warehouse facility with multiple tenants. In December 2024, Barcelow, Dunlap, Jester, and City of Plymouth staff met with three representatives of Meritex to review current snow and ice removal practices and made customized recommendations for the site. In 2024, Barcelow and Dunlap also began working with facility managers at the Hennepin County Sheriff's Department and Correctional Facility, a 60-acre property west of Parkers Lake. Barcelow and Dunlap met with the facility's winter maintenance

contractor, BrightView, in January 2024 to review current practices and barriers to implementing best management practices. BrightView is also a property owner in the targeted subwatershed where their local maintenance facility is located. Work for 2025 is expected to include additional collaboration with facilities and operators in the Chloride Management Area to implement chloride best management practices.

FAITH-BASED CHLORIDE OUTREACH

Barcelow and Dunlap, along with city and watershed staff, met with nine faith-based organizations in the WMWA area over the 2024-2025 winter season to provide a chloride consultation using the Low Salt, No Salt Minnesota framework. Barcelow and Dunlap worked to improve and create new educational materials for the consultation process. The consultations consist of a site visit and meeting with staff members to survey their current practices to determine where improvements in practices can be made to reduce chloride pollution while continuing to address safety concerns, and education about chloride pollution. Barcelow and Dunlap gave facilities tailored technical assistance, along with an ice scraper and educational salt bucket cups.

Chloride Consultations were conducted at the following facilities:

1. Faith-Lilac Way Lutheran Church in Robbinsdale – Shingle Creek Watershed
2. Brunswick United Methodist Church in Crystal – Shingle Creek Watershed
3. Living Word Christian Center in Maple Grove – Shingle Creek Watershed
4. Bryn Mawn Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis – Bassett Creek Watershed
5. Calvary Lutheran Church in Golden Valley – Bassett Creek Watershed
6. Oak Knoll Lutheran Church in Minnetonka – Bassett Creek Watershed
7. NorthRidge Fellowship in Rogers – Elm Creek Watershed
8. St. Anne Catholic Church in Hamel – Elm Creek Watershed
9. Advent Lutheran Church in Maple Grove – West Mississippi Watershed

ADOPT-A-DRAIN K-12 PROGRAM

Barcelow and Dunlap worked to increase the number of classrooms within WMWA territory that adopted this programming. Hennepin County pays for the Adopt-A-Drain K12 program to be implemented in classrooms through a contract with Hamline University.

Classrooms have joined the program in the following schools:

1. School of Engineering and Arts in Golden Valley – 2 classrooms – Bassett Creek Watershed
2. Brooklyn Park Academy in Champlin – 1 classroom – West Mississippi Watershed
3. Parnassus Preparatory in Maple Grove – 5 classrooms – West Mississippi Watershed
4. Brooklyn Middle School in Brooklyn Park – 5 classrooms – Shingle Creek Watershed
5. Fair School in Crystal – 1 classroom – Shingle Creek Watershed
6. Richfield Middle School – 3 classrooms – Richfield-Bloomington Watershed

COMMUNICATIONS WORK

Barcelow, with support from Hennepin County communications staff and Dunlap, has produced 9 media kits over the last year to support WMWA's education and outreach goals. 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. New media kits are continually being developed. Dunlap has worked to update illustrations in media kits to increase visibility and audience reach.

In addition to media kit releases, Barcelow has written 2 news articles that were 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*) discussing WMWA project work, water quality, and chloride pollution. Additionally, Barcelow and Dunlap worked with *Star Tribune* writers and photographers to publish an article regarding general chloride pollution education and chloride consultations that they are facilitating with the West Metro Water Alliance.

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 1,267 users engaged with an average of 1.94 pages viewed per session for a total 2,465 page views over 1,626 sessions on the website in 2024. The website metrics can be found in Appendix B

The most visited pages were: Home, Media Kits, Native Plants, Chloride Pollution, About Us, Pet Waste, What You Can Do, Contact Us, Watershed Prep Class, and Workshops/Events.

In May 2016 WMWA created a social media campaign for the Pledge to Plant campaign and WMWA in general on Facebook and Twitter. As of December 31, 2020, the WMWA Twitter page had been discontinued. As of December 31, 2024 the Facebook page had 239 followers with 13 new followers in 2024. For the period January 1 - December 31, 2024, there were 95 individual posts with a reach of 896 and 72 content interactions. There were 314 visits to the WMWA Facebook page.

*To learn more about WMWA, contact:
Diane Spector, Stantec, 763.252-6880, diane.spector@stantec.com
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
1/10-11	Jackson Middle School	Anoka-Henn	Champlin	W. Miss	6	165
4/3	Robbinsdale Spanish Immersion	Robbinsdale	Robbinsdale	Bassett	4	105
4/30	FAIR School	Robbinsdale	Crystal	Shingle	2	44
5/23	Zacharay Lane Elementary	Robbinsdale	Plymouth	Bassett	2	46
5/29	Rush Creek Elementary	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	5	121
10/14	School of Engineering and Arts (SEA)	Robbinsdale	Golden Valley	Bassett	3	71
12/4	Noble Elementary	Robbinsdale	Golden Valley	Bassett	2	30
12/3	Elm Creek Elementary	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	3	92
12/16-17	Meadowbrook	Hopkins	Golden Valley	Bassett	5	127
Total					22	531

Lesson 2:

Date	School	School District	City	Watershed	Classes	Students
1/12	Ramsey Elementary	Anoka-Henn	Ramsey	W. Miss	5	125
4/4	Robbinsdale Spanish Immersion	Robbinsdale	Robbinsdale	Bassett	4	105
10/15	Rice Lake Elementary	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	4	95
11/6-7	Meadowbrook	Hopkins	Golden Valley	Bassett	5	128
11/25	Noble Elementary	Robbinsdale	Golden Valley	Bassett	2	30
11/26	Elm Creek Elementary	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	3	92
12/11	St Vincent de Paul	Private	Brooklyn Park	W. Miss	2	54
Total					25	629

Other Classes

Date	School	Class taught	Watershed	Classes	Students
2/12	Weaver Lake	Native Plants	Elm	4	124
2/26-29	Jackson Middle School	Watershed Game	W. Miss	6	166
3/27-29	Meadowbrook	Watershed Game	Bassett	5	129
4/5	Robbinsdale Spanish Immersion	Native Plants	Bassett	4	105
Total				19	524

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	Native Plants	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
Total	824	22,354	357	9,721	51	1,247	8	207	35,239

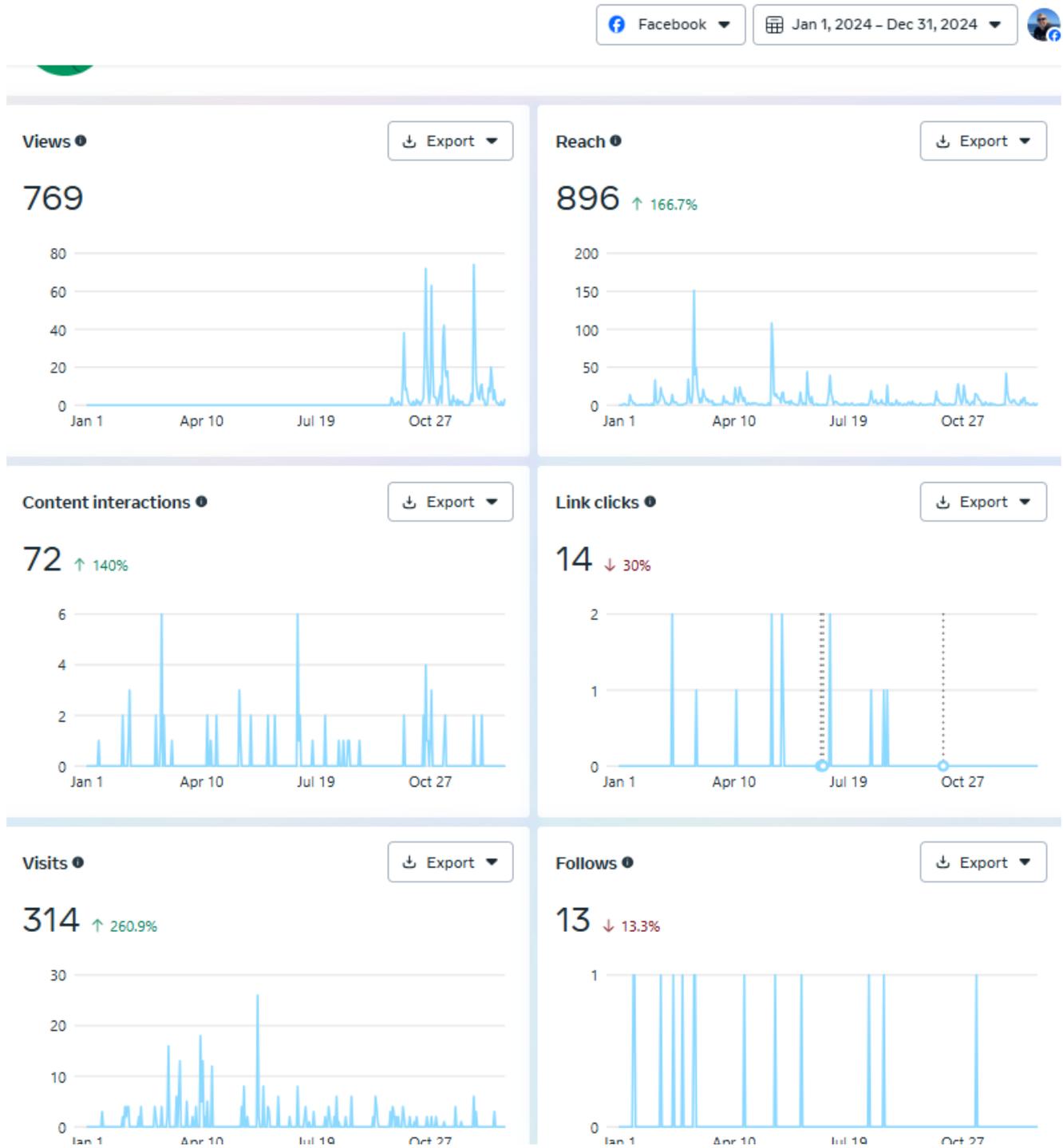
Table 3. Event Tabling

Events

Date	Event	Location	Watershed	# of Attendees
2/17	Community Connections Fair	Minneapolis	SC	20
4/27	Maple Grove Arbor Days	Maple Grove	EC/SC/WM	50
5/22	Dayton Open House	Dayton	EC	25
9/21	Brooklyn Park Open House	Brooklyn Park	SC/WM	15
Total				90

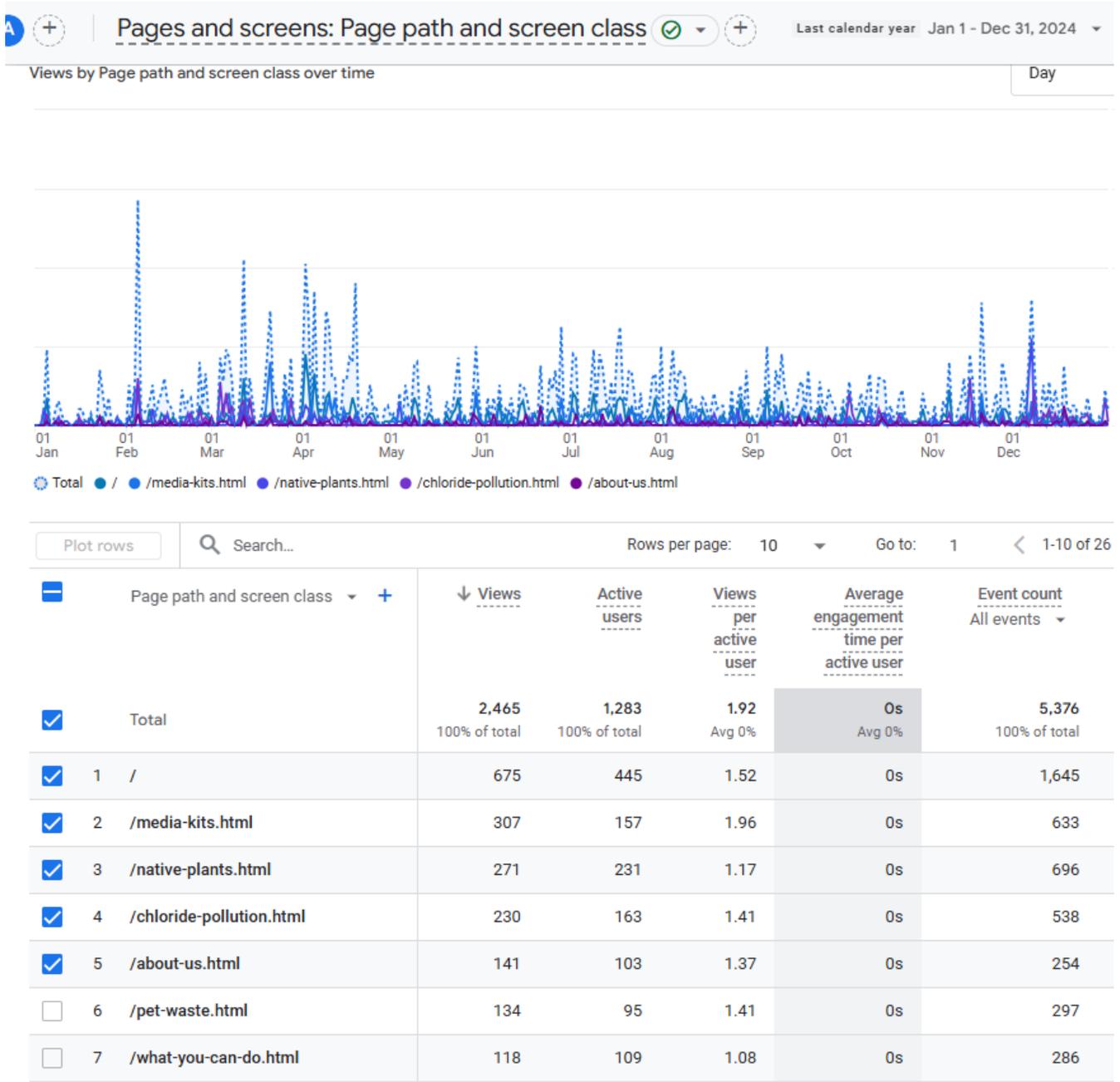
APPENDIX B –SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY

Facebook likes grew in 2024 to a total of 239 followers. In 2024 there were 95 posts with a reach of 896, resulting in 769 views, 72 engagements, 13 new followers and 314 visits to the WMWA Facebook Page.



APPENDIX B – WEBSITE ACTIVITY

The website had 1,267 users engaged with an average of 1.94 pages viewed per session for a total 2,465 page views over 1,626 sessions on the website in 2024.



APPENDIX C – BUDGET

	2022	2023					2024			
	Balance	Budget	Revenue	Expense	Realloc	Balance	Budget	Revenue	Expense	Balance
Admin/Tech Services	\$11,293	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$10,521	\$-6,771	\$6,001	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$7,692	\$10,309
Special Projects	20,440	16,000	16,000	12,000		24,440	12,000	12,000	12,000	24,440
Watershed Prep	976	8,000	\$8,000	\$15,747	+6,771	\$0	20,000	20,000	8,907	11,093
TOTAL	\$32,708	\$36,000	\$36,000	\$37,858		\$30,440	\$44,000	\$44,000	\$44,000	\$45,842

	2025
	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, created eight media kits in 2024 that 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** – February 2024. The goal of the chloride reduction campaign is to decrease the amount of chloride pollution entering Hennepin County (specifically WMWA+RBWMO territory) bodies of water. To accomplish this, public perception must change, and awareness of proper salting practices must increase.
2. **Blue Thumb Partnership** – March 2024. 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. **AIS Prevention** – June 2024. The June 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.
4. **Pet Waste** – July 2024. 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.
5. **Drought Focus** – August 2024. 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.
6. **Fall Lawn Care** – September 2024. 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.
7. **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).
8. **Chloride Consultations and City Survey** – December 2024. This media kit highlights chloride consultations that WMWA is conducting and encourages residents to follow best management practices. The media kit also contains a survey for member cities to understand how effective these media kits have been and what we can do to improve them

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