



Education Updates

February 2008

Stormwater Best Management Practices:

Washington Water Consortium - March 5, 2-4pm at the Washington County Bldg.

With a June 2008 deadline looming, comprehensive planning is weighing heavy on the minds of cities throughout the Twin Cities metro area. Our December Stormwater U workshop focused on incorporating water resource protection into all aspects of the comprehensive plans and was well attended by communities in Washington County. This month, we used the water consortium meeting to follow up with city planners and decision makers who had attended the workshop and to bring them together with watershed staff and managers.

At the meeting we reviewed the list of policy statements created during the comp plan workshop and prioritized topics for further discussion and assistance. As a result, we will be focusing on the following five topics at upcoming consortium meetings:

- 1) Planning for, financing, implementing and maintaining stormwater best management practices
- 2) Protecting groundwater recharge areas and preventing groundwater contamination
- 3) Incorporating watershed requirements at a local level (clarifying city roles vs watershed roles in water management)
- 4) Utilizing LID (Low Impact Development); and
- 5) Techniques for promoting water conservation at a community level

In most ways, the consortium will continue to function as it always has, both as a forum to bring together the people working on water resource protection at the city, watershed, county and regional level and as a means to stay up-to-date on current research and knowledge in the field. Recognizing, however, that comprehensive planning is a top priority for most of our local cities, we will spend a portion of each consortium meeting discussing the ways in which cities can write policies, create implementation strategies and (later) develop ordinances to support water resource protection in their communities.

At the next consortium meeting on March 5, we will focus on stormwater best management practices (BMP's). Mark Doneux, from Capitol Region Watershed District, will speak about a collaborative project involving several cities and the watershed district to finance and install BMP's to reduce stormwater pollution to Como Lake, while Rusty Schmidt, of the Washington Conservation District will talk about utilizing raingardens at a community-wide scale and planning for maintenance needs.

Stormwater U:

Pond Management - Outfalls and Inventories

Tue., March 18, 7:30-11:30am at the Stillwater Library

The first of a series, this workshop will be a working session for streets superintendents and MS4 coordinators. We will have a panel of three cities to compare and contrast the software programs they use for pond inventories and a presentation from Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed District and Barr Engineering about how to plan and budget for pond maintenance. Registration is on-line at www.extension.umn.edu/Stormwater, cost \$30.

So many educational opportunities this spring!

The Blue Thumb Guide to Raingardens: Contractor training program

Wed. March 19, 8am-noon - Roseville
Wed., April 2, 8am-noon - West. St. Paul

For the past two years, the Washington Conservation District has partnered with Rice Creek Watershed District (RCWD) to host a workshop for contractors, designers, nursery owners and other landscape professionals. Last year's workshop was incredibly successful with a sold-out crowd of 90.

This year EMWREP will be partnering with Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association (MNLA), RCWD and Dakota SWCD to present two workshops focusing on residential raingardens, including beginner installation info, tips for plant selection, costs to install and maintain and pre-planting preparation. Participants will receive a copy of the newly published Blue Thumb Guide to Raingardens (retail value - \$17.95). Registration is on-line at www.mnla.biz/march.htm, cost \$25.

Metro Blooms:

Homeowner raingarden workshops

Sat., April 26, 11:30am-1:30pm- Mahtomedi
Sat., May 17, 10am-12pm - St. Paul Park

EMWREP is teaming up with Metro Blooms to host two raingarden design courses for homeowners. The workshops will teach attendees how to design and install rain gardens, effectively use native plants, trees and shrubs and employ eco-friendly lawn care practices including redirecting downspouts and minimizing or eliminating fertilizers. Attendees will receive a packet of support material.

Four special native plant sales, open to all participants, will be held at various times and locations around the metro area to help participants complete their gardens. Participants can register on-line at www.metroblooms.org, cost \$10.

Tuesdays in the Park

Beginning on March 4, 7-8:30am at St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park

Explore the natural beauty of Washington County Parks the first Tuesday of the month, March through October. The outings, jointly sponsored by Washington County Parks, Sierra Club and the East Metro Water Resource Education Program, will have a different theme each month. Join an early morning bird hike, dip for pond bugs with your kids or enjoy the prairie in bloom on a warm summer evening. Parking at county parks is free the first Tuesday of the month.

On March 4, feel the crisp morning air and see the river in the new morning light. We will begin the hike with a passage from Aldo Leopold's Sand County Almanac. Following the St. Croix River, we'll look for signs of returning migrants as well as tracks in the snow or mud. Meet at the main parking lot at the top of the hill. We will hike down alongside the boat ramp road to the river and then follow the old rail bed along the bluff. Bring binoculars if you have them and wear warm clothes and boots as it may be snowy or muddy.

All trips are free. RSVP to outing leader Angie Hong (952-261-9599 or algoodri@hotmail.com). Visit www.mn.sierraclub.org/outings for the most up-to-date trip information.

Members of the East Metro Water Resource Education Program:

Brown's Creek Watershed District • City of Cottage Grove • City of Dellwood • City of Forest Lake • City of Lake Elmo • City of Stillwater • City of Willernie • Lower St. Croix Watershed Management Organization • Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization • South Washington Watershed District • Valley Branch Watershed District • Washington Conservation District • Washington County

