



Education Updates

April / May 2008

You are invited to enjoy a morning on the Mississippi River!

On Wednesday, June 11 from 8:30am to 12pm, members and friends of the Metro WaterShed Partners are invited to enjoy an educational tour of the Mississippi River aboard the Magnolia Blossom. Aboard the boat, you will be treated to coffee and hors d'oeuvres and will hear three speakers discuss issues of concern for local water management, including mussel reintroduction efforts on the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers and legislative updates from the capitol.

The Metro WaterShed Partners (WSP) is an innovative, dynamic coalition of over 40 public, private, and non-profit organizations in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. Through collaborative educational outreach, WSP provides opportunities for citizens to learn how to care for our water resources. I have been representing EMWREP on the WSP steering committee for the past two years. Some of our projects include the metro media campaign, which produces billboards, TV ads and other marketing outreach in the Twin Cities, the CleanWaterMN.org website, and an array of educational displays and interactive computer kiosks for use at special events.

We will meet at the Watergate Marina - 2500 Crosby Farm Rd., St. Paul, MN 55116. The Magnolia Blossom will be parked at one of the docks at 8:30am and will depart at 9am. [If you would like to join me on the boat next month, please call or send an e-mail to Angie Hong at 651-275-1136 x.35 or \[angie.hong@mnwcd.org\]\(mailto:angie.hong@mnwcd.org\) by May 30.](#)

Seen any good billboards lately?

Both the Blue Thumb Program and the WaterShed Partners sponsored billboard campaigns from mid-April to mid-May. A total of 30 boards were put up between the two campaigns. The EMWREP partners sponsored a Blue Thumb billboard located on Hwy 61 near 70th St. in Cottage Grove, while other Blue Thumb partners sponsored boards nearby along Hwy 35W and 35E heading south out of Forest Lake and along Hwy 694 near White Bear Ave. This week and next, the digital billboard on Hwy 36 near White Bear Ave. (facing westbound traffic) will also be showing the WSP and Blue Thumb images.

Our outreach is paying off with heightened awareness about the programs. [At this time last year, \[www.BlueThumb.org\]\(http://www.BlueThumb.org\) was getting 26 visits per day. Now it is averaging 83 visits per day - more than three times as many people learning about native gardens, raingardens and shoreline plantings!](#)



Look for new raingardens near Mahtomedi and St. Paul Park - Space still available for this Saturday's workshop!

On April 26, we had our first Metro Blooms raingarden design workshop, held in conjunction with the Mahtomedi Rite of Spring event. There were 60 people at the workshop, including folks from Mahtomedi, Stillwater, Lake Elmo, White Bear Lake, North St. Paul and even Marine. At the two hour workshop, people learned where, how and why to install raingardens at their homes. [The next workshop will be this Saturday, May 17 at the St. Paul Park City Hall. Direct friends, neighbors and city residents to register at \[www.metroblooms.org\]\(http://www.metroblooms.org\).](#)

Are your ears burning?

On April 15, I spoke at the 9th Annual St. Croix Basin Conference in River Falls about using the Blue Thumb Program and neighborhood parties as a strategy for community based social marketing.

On April 29, I spoke to about 90 cities from the Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition about the EMWREP program and our activities. [The EMWREP model is a great one for other communities to follow.](#)

New Blue Thumb materials now available

In addition to brochures, flyers, bookmarks, stickers, posters, banners and kiosks, the EMWREP program now has even more Blue Thumb display and education materials. New materials include two panels that can be set up on a standard easel or in combination with a larger floor display. One has pictures of native plants with strings that can be pulled out to show the length of the plant roots, while the other has flip-up photos of residential properties before and after installing Blue Thumb projects. There are also two digital photo frames that can be set to loop photos of plants, gardens or installation projects.

In addition to display materials, I've also created a kit for EMWREP partners, Master Gardeners and others to use for presentations and neighborhood parties. There is a basic PowerPoint presentation (also available in laminated posters for informal settings) and props for activities. Let me know if you would like to borrow anything.



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

