

Welcome CURA research assistant Kay Qualley!

Kay is an environmental horticulture student at the University of Minnesota who will be helping us to improve our Blue Thumb outreach to local communities. Prior to returning to school, Kay managed a landscape design firm in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and she is excited to be working on a project that combines her horticultural knowledge and experience with a passion for water resource protection.

For the next three months, Kay will be investigating the success of our Blue Thumb outreach efforts in the southern half of the county and developing recommendations for how we can better connect with some of those “hard to reach” audiences. She will be interviewing residents and setting up a series of focus groups as well. Don’t be surprised if you get a call from her soon!

This project is supported through student research assistance provided by Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization, a program of the University of Minnesota’s Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA). To reach Kay, you can leave a message with me or e-mail her at qual0065@umn.edu.



Spending time outdoors in Washington County

People who live in Minnesota love spending time outdoors, especially in the summertime. Our “Tuesdays in the Park” series is designed to educate people about local water resource issues by engaging them in fun, nature activities. The outings happen the first Tuesday of every month, when admission is free at Washington County parks.

Last month, I took a group of families pond dipping at Cottage Grove Ravine Park, where we found an array of creepy crawlies, including several hundred tadpoles, dragonfly nymphs and aquatic snails.

We also had a booth with Blue Thumb information at the grand opening of Big Marine Park on June 7, and are helping to plan the Million Shades of Autumn: Healthy Waters and Heritage Fair at William O’Brian State Park on Sept. 27 and 28.

If you would like to join the next Tuesday hike (July 1 at Big Marine Park, 6-7:30pm), call or e-mail me at 651-275-1136 x.35 or angie.hong@mnwcd.org.

Blue Thumb Party Time

In addition to this year's Metro Blooms workshops in Mahtomedi and St. Paul Park, there have been Blue Thumb neighborhood parties in Baytown Twp, Stillwater, Mahtomedi and Woodbury as well. Several of the people who attended these parties are now working with staff from the WCD and local watershed districts to design plantings for their yards. We are also co-hosting a Blue Thumb Intro Workshop with Carpenter Nature Center this fall - Sept. 18.



CNC planted a raingarden in 2006 with help from WCD and Master Gardeners.

New contract updates

EMWREP partners will soon be receiving an updated contract to sign, which will continue the program from May 2009 until Dec. 2012. The EMWREP steering committee met in April and recommended a few modifications to be included in the new contract. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Storm Pond Inspection Workshop

The next workshop in our Stormwater U series is scheduled for July 31, 8am-3pm at the North St. Paul Community Center and will cover visual inspections for stormwater ponds. This workshop will be the second in the Stormwater Pond Management series, which we are planning in partnership with RWMWD, U of M Extension, MPCA and Met Council. The first workshop, held this spring, dealt with outfalls and inventories.

At the July 31 workshop, participants will spend time outdoors at the Franklin St. pond in North St. Paul, using a visual inspection worksheet created by the U of M. There will also be presentations from North St. Paul, Chaska and Rochester on their stormwater pond inspection procedures and time for roundtable discussions at the end.

I will be sending out the flyer and registration information early next week. I would like for as many east metro communities as possible to attend, so please register early, before the workshop fills!

Lights, camera, action!

I am working with Dirt Time videographer James Swirsky to create two training videos for public works staff. The videos, which will cover parks maintenance and raingarden maintenance, will be part of the MS4 Toolkit and will be available for any partners to use. We hope to shoot in late July or early August. Budding actors are welcome!

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

