



Education Updates

November 2007

Blue Thumb wins the Governors' Award!

The Blue Thumb - Planting for Clean Water program has been recognized for its innovation and leadership in promoting practices that will improve water quality in the State of Minnesota. The judging panel, composed of representatives from city, county and state government, as well as private industry, chose to recognize the Blue Thumb program with a MnGREAT award, reserved for programs that demonstrate commitment and leadership in pollution prevention. Judging criteria for the annual award include benefits to the environment, innovation, ability of the program to serve as a model, motivation and economic benefits.

The award will be officially presented to the Blue Thumb team at an awards banquet on February 27.



Forest Lake focus group to discuss native shorelines

On Tuesday, Dec. 4, I will be assisting Ellie Rogers, an intern with Great River Greening, in conducting a focus group session with residents who live on Forest Lake. The goal of the focus group discussion will be to determine what attitudes and opinions the residents have about native shorelines versus shorelines with mowed lawn, riprap or beach.

A focus group session is an evaluation method that brings a small group of 6-8 people together to discuss a topic in a semi-structured format. During our session next week, we will show pictures of shoreline yards with and without native plantings and ask people to share their most and least favorite aspects of living on Forest Lake. Based on the information gathered from the focus group, I hope to work with EMWREP partners and the Blue Thumb program to develop marketing strategies to encourage lakeshore homeowners throughout the area to convert their yards to native plantings.

Integrating Water Resources into Comp Plan Updates - Dec. 13 Workshop

Be sure to register for the comprehensive planning workshop on Thursday, Dec. 13 and encourage communities in your area to do so as well. During the interactive workshop, we will be drafting policies to include in local comp plans in order to protect ground and surface water resources. Registration limited to 50 people.

Public Works Forum to discuss storm ponds

The vision for the 2008 Washington County Public Works forum is beginning to take shape. Along with Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District, we are planning a year-long forum series focusing on storm ponds. Starting with planning and design and moving on to monitoring, daily upkeep and long-term maintenance plans, the forum sessions will involve different people from city and county public works departments, including planners, engineers, public works supervisors and streets maintenance crews. We will be working with University of Minnesota Extension and other regional and statewide entities to ensure that the end product of our discussion series is usable for other communities in Minnesota. Final outcomes may include an addition for the MN State Stormwater manual, a field guidebook or a training module. The first session will likely begin in February or March.



Stop by and check out the Blue Thumb holiday tree outside the Washington Conservation District office.

Neighborhood Sustainability Conference - Mar 8

The Twin Cities Neighborhood Sustainability Network is planning a conference for March 8 at Augsburg College in Minneapolis. The goal of the conference is to gather 800 citizens involved in block clubs, neighborhood and lake associations, schools and churches to develop community projects for energy conservation and renewable energy, watershed education and restoration and other sustainability efforts. Similar conferences held in 2002 and 2004 attracted 500 people each. I have been working with the planning team to suggest watershed related projects and topics and will continue to work with them to ensure that as many people as possible from the east metro are invited to the event.

EMWREP Updates

The EMWREP advisory board has decided to meet twice per year, in May and Nov., and to designate one representative per partner organization to vote on decisions.

A letter is being sent to all partners describing our current

budgetary excess and the advisory board's recommendation to use the additional funds for educational materials in 2008.

The EMWREP advisory board will be modifying the 2009 contract to include provisions for additional staff and a flexible materials budget.

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

