

What works with Homeowners' Associations?

As the East Metro area has transitioned from rural farming communities to more developed suburbs, many of the new houses, condominiums and apartments built are part of larger Homeowners' Associations (HOAs). These HOAs present both an opportunity and a challenge for water resource protection. On the one hand, it can be hard to change landscape practices that impact water resources because outdoor spaces are managed collectively, not by individual renters or homeowners. On the other hand, because HOAs have such a large footprint, changes in lawn care practices, as well as in-the-ground projects, make a big difference for surface and groundwater resources.



Above: Water's Edge HOA in Hugo

Green Communities Grant: This year the Washington Conservation District received a Clean Water Grant from the Board of Water and Soil Resources to conduct audience research in order to identify barriers and opportunities to working with HOAs. The grant also includes funding for clean water projects at up to six HOAs in Washington County.

Focus Groups Completed: This fall, EMWREP facilitated three focus group sessions with key HOA stakeholders: resident board members; staff from property management companies; and irrigation contractors and lawn care providers that work with HOAs. During the sessions we asked the groups about the decision-making processes in their HOAs, and also talked about desires and expectations for outdoor spaces at HOAs, current problems they are experiencing, and opportunities for change.

Though we have not yet had time to fully review notes from the focus group sessions, there were a few commonalities between all three groups that stood out.

- 1) All three groups expressed a desire to reduce the amount of water being used for irrigation.
- 2) The groups also talked about the importance of planning and budgeting for maintenance, both for in-the-ground practices like raingardens and native plantings, as well as of mechanical components like irrigation rain sensors. In addition, many people complained about bad decisions made during the building and construction process; low quality irrigation systems and poor-choice or incorrectly planted trees and shrubs were two frequent complaints.
- 3) Happily for us, many of the focus group attendees said they would be interested in scheduling a site visit with the WCD and exploring potential landscape changes to protect water resources.

In the coming year, the WCD will follow up with interested HOAs about potential projects and EMWREP will work on developing a guidebook with strategies for educating and engaging HOAs.

Another successful workshop on the St. Croix River



Above: Networking time at the end of the workshop.

On July 29, EMWREP and partners conducted their fifth “Workshop on the St. Croix” for local officials and decision makers. This year’s workshop focused on the multiple values of a healthy St. Croix River watershed and included case study presentations from local communities that are rural, agricultural, developing and full developed.

- There were 119 participants including 12 presenters
- 21 Minnesota cities, 9 Wisconsin cities, and 5 MN & WI counties participated
- Participants highly valued the program (avg 4 on a 5 point scale in evals)
- Being on the river was important and enhanced participant learning!
- Participants most liked content about Minimal Impact Development Standards (MIDS) and how to communicate with peers and constituents
- Local leaders strongly indicated they would be sharing the program and information at their local councils, commissions, and meetings

Making the Invisible Visible

Nov. 12, 8 —11:30 am

Kay Fredericks Ballroom, 3rd floor of Klas Center
Hamline University Campus

This year’s WaterShed Partners Roundtable will focus on the innovative ways that metro area groups are drawing attention to clean water projects and efforts than might otherwise go unnoticed. To RSVP for this free event, email Jana Larson at jl Larson25@hamline.edu.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION:

Christie Manning, Macalester College Sustainability, Behavior Change, and Making the Invisible Visible

PANELISTS:

Fred Rozumalski, Barr Engineering
Sandy Spieler, Heart of the Beast Theater
Anna Eleria, Capitol Region Watershed District
Angie Hong, East Metro Water Resource Education Program

WaterShed Partners is a coalition of over 60 public, private, and non-profit organizations in the Twin Cities area that uses collaborative education and outreach to inspire people to protect water quality in their watersheds.

MIDS Workshop for Attorneys

Dec. 16, 8:30am-noon

Washington Conservation District
455 Hayward Ave., Oakdale

In the next two years, several Washington County communities will be considering whether or not to integrate Minimal Impact Design Standards (MIDS) into their local ordinances. This winter the Washington Conservation District and Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization will host a workshop about MIDS for attorneys who advise local governments.

The workshop will be presented by Jean Coleman, an attorney from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency who has worked extensively on land use issues with local governments and is an author of the MIDS model ordinance.

There is no fee to attend this workshop. To register, contact Mike Isensee at misensee@mnwcd.org or 651-330-8220 x22.

St. Croix Garden Tour



Above: A native planting along Brewer's Pond in Stillwater at the Richtman gardens.

Of the nine gardens on the FamilyMeans St. Croix Valley Garden Tour this summer, three featured raingardens and native plantings established with help from our partners.

The Johnsons built raingardens and planted a small prairie with assistance from Valley Branch Watershed District. The Tangens planted natives along their pond and built raingardens with assistance from the Brown's Creek Watershed District and the Richtmans also worked with BCWD on raingardens and a native planting along Brewer's Pond. Approximately 850 people attended this year's tour.

WaterShed Partners Education Events

This year's WaterShed Partners Mississippi River Workshop focused on the impacts of nitrates on the river and efforts to decrease nitrate pollution in Minnesota.



WaterShed Partners also developed new educational exhibits for the Minnesota State Fair in the DNR and Eco Experience Buildings.

Lake & Neighborhood Parties

Thanks to enthusiastic community members, EMWREP had beautiful neighborhood events this summer in Lake Elmo (hosted by the Jurans and Grabowskis), Forest Lake (hosted by the Haiders), and Chisago City (hosted by the Spences).



Left: A neighbor's daughter poses in monarch wings near the Juran backyard raingarden. Center: A view of the shoreline planting along Forest Lake at the Haider home. Right: Neighbors gather in the Spences' garage to learn about Comfort Lake.

Door-hangers in Woodbury

After hearing from field staff that many homeowners in the Colby Lake neighborhood of Woodbury were leaving grass clippings in the streets, EMWREP designed and distributed approximately 750 door-hangers in the area this summer reminding people to sweep up their grass clippings and advising them of other water-friendly lawn care practices.

South Washington Watershed District, Woodbury and Washington Conservation District recently installed 25 right-of-way raingardens in the neighborhood to reduce runoff pollution to Colby Lake.

My lawn is
GREENER
Than Your Lawn



**Tips for Healthy
and "Green" Lawn
Care Practices**



Above: Neighbors gather at a Lily Lake Association picnic in August to talk about how they can improve water quality in the lake.

Below: Angie Hong and Jenn Radtke show people how to look for invertebrates in the lake at Cottage Grove Ravine Park. The event was co-organized by Friends of the Mississippi River.



Teachers Tour Conservation Projects around Stillwater

This August, the St. Croix River Association partnered with Earth Partnership for Schools to put on a week-long training for teachers from local schools in Minnesota and Wisconsin. On Day 2 of the training - "Follow the Water-Drop" - EMWREP staff took the teachers on a tour of conservation and water quality improvement projects in the Stillwater area.

We visited Lily Lake and raingardens in the surrounding neighborhoods, the ravine and stream flowing out of Lake McKusick, the Trinity Lutheran Church parking lot, Nor Olson's prairie near Silver Creek and Bruce Goldstrand's grassed waterway in Stillwater Twp.



Members of the East Metro Water Resource Education Program:

Brown's Creek Watershed • Carnelian Marine - St. Croix Watershed
Comfort Lake - Forest Lake Watershed • Cottage Grove • Dellwood
Forest Lake • Lake Elmo • Middle St. Croix Watershed
Ramsey - Washington Metro Watershed • Rice Creek Watershed • Stillwater
South Washington Watershed • Valley Branch Watershed • Willernie • Woodbury
West Lakeland • Washington Conservation District • Washington County

