OUTREACH EVENTS

Summer Tour

When all told, nearly 250 people were involved in the MAWD Summer Tour this year and included many first-time guests, including those from the Legislative Water Commission and the Southwest Metro Local Leaders Water Institute. Networking and learning took place aboard a boat, on a bus tour, and right inside a watershed district office and learning center!

A huge thank-you to:

- Lower MN River WD for organizing the boat tour,
- Carver County WMO for organizing the morning stops of the bus tour,
- Riley-Purgatory Bluff Creek WD for organizing the afternoon bus stops and Friday’s technical training,
- Nine Mile Creek WD for hosting Friday’s leadership session at their headquarters!

For more photos, visit our Facebook page! Remember to “like” our posts so they will pop up in more news feeds!

www.facebook.com/pg/mnwd46/photos/
Legislative Water Commission Northeast Metro Bus Tour

The Legislative Water Commission asked three of our watershed districts to show them some examples of innovative stormwater management. Here is what they showcased. Thank you for sharing your stories!

Capitol Region WD
Forrest Kelly described the underground storage and stormwater reuse system built to moderate flows and irrigate a community ball field.

Ramsey Washington Metro WD
Tina Carstens highlighted the stormwater retrofits and outreach tools used at the Maplewood Mall. Senators Chuck Wiger and Chris Eaton had fun making music with the onsite cistern.

Rice Creek WD
The RCWD Board welcomed guests during the stops in their district. Phil Belfiori and Kyle Axtell, along with several city representatives showcased a new water treatment facility, various stream monitoring techniques, permeable pavement, and an iron-enhanced sand filter system that treats flows from a public ditch.
The Grand Forks Herald and the Bemidji Pioneer recently highlighted the Grand Marais Creek Restoration Project, completed by the Red Lake Watershed District. Administrator Myron Jesme discussed how more than a dozen funding partners, including the Clean Water Fund and the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, came together to reconnect the creek that had been cut off in 1905 with the construction of a drainage ditch that sent runoff more directly to the Red River. The 6.5-mile stream restoration project has a drainage area of 300-square-miles and used practices such as drop structures, toe wood installations, and native plantings to decrease sediment delivery and as a result, improved water quality and habitat. Video and story can be found here: www.bemidjipioneer.com/news/science-and-nature/4458059-creek-restoration-shows-success-minnesota-clean-water-fund

Please share your news stories with us and we will share on social media to keep our stories in the spotlight!
ADVOCACY EFFORTS

Over the past several months, MAWD has been busy advocating on behalf of watershed districts at meetings with various entities such as the Drainage Work Group, Clean Water Council, Legislative Water Commission, Board of Water and Soil Resources, etc. Here are some updates on two groups that are particularly active right now.

Drainage Work Group

Representatives:  Tim Dritz, MAWD Board of Directors, Yellow Medicine River WD
               Harvey Kruger, Heron Lake WD
               Emily Javens, MAWD Executive Director

Meeting Schedule:  2nd Thursday of the month, June - December

Summary of Efforts:  The Drainage Work Group (DWG) has resumed meetings with the close of the 2018 legislative session. We are currently working on the following priorities: (1) Finalize a charter that better describes member responsibilities and the process used to gain consensus within the group. (2) Finalize the 2019 Legislative Platform BEFORE Thanksgiving to allow it to be shared at various annual conventions. (3) Form a subcommittee that will prepare a communications plan and marketing materials that can be distributed to citizens, legislators, and the group’s members that describe items we are sending to the legislature for consideration.

Accomplishments:  Good news! Problem Solved!
Drainage Authorities now have a simple process to borrow money at 0% interest from the MN Department of Agriculture’s (MDA) Ag BMP Loan Program to purchase public drainage system buffer easements. Previously, separate applications were required for each individual landowner with signatures from every impacted landowner. Now, only two submittals are required: a copy of the order establishing the buffers and a spreadsheet with details of the parcels impacted. This improvement is a direct result of efforts to pass legislation to simplify the requirements for drainage authorities to do this. If the legislation had passed, a little less paperwork would have been required, but this administrative solution should work well for drainage authorities. Thanks to the MDA for working with us to find a solution!

Clean Water Council

Representatives:  Pam Blixt, former Minnehaha Creek WD manager

Meeting Schedule:  3rd Monday of the month

Summary of Efforts:  The Clean Water Council has been reviewing funding recommendations for how to spend Clean Water Funds in Fiscal Years 20-21. The state agencies have been presenting their proposals and the Budget and Outcomes Committee has been working on making a recommendation to the full council for their August 20th meeting. MAWD has been closely following the process and has met with the Association of MN Counties and the MN Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts to review proposals and offer feedback to the Council as deemed necessary.

Accomplishments:  The latest budget proposal for Clean Water Funds sets aside nearly 60% to be spent on implementation projects (if you include conservation easements and water and wastewater infrastructure projects). Watershed Districts will be eligible for the following: $33M – Surface and Drinking Water Protection / Restoration Projects Grants, $29.4M – “Fund the Plan” grants, $11.5M – Accelerated Implementation Grants, and $3M – Drainage Water Management Grants. The total fund is estimated to have $260M available in the next biennium.
MAWD committee work is coming up to speed this summer. So far, the governance subcommittees have met and completed their annual review of our governance documents. Next to meet: finance, annual meeting, and resolutions committees.

Governance Committee – Bylaws and MOPP Subcommittee

Representatives: Mary Texer, Chair, Capitol Region WD
Craig Leiser, Brown’s Creek WD
Gary Ewert, Heron Lake WD
Shirley Reider, Capitol Region WD
Jamie Beyer, Bois de Sioux WD
Andy Henschel, Shell Rock WD
John Hanson, Valley Branch WD
Emily Javens, MAWD

Summary of Efforts: The Bylaws and Manual of Policies and Procedures Committee (MOPP) met July 16, 2018 from 3:30 to 5:00 at the offices of the Capitol Region Watershed District. The committee reviewed both the Bylaws and the MOPP. In addition to cleaning up the language to make the documents consistent both internally and with each other, the committee recommends adding language to allow for Water Management Organizations (WMOs) to join MAWD with full voting rights. Dues would be allocated using the same formula as used for Watershed District Members. Additional guidance was also provided regarding per diem policies for the Board of Directors.

Governance Committee – Strategic Plan Subcommittee

Representatives: Mary Texer, Chair, Capitol Region WD
Craig Leiser, Brown’s Creek WD
Gary Ewert, Heron Lake WD
Shirley Reider, Capitol Region WD
Dan Money, Two Rivers WD
Michelle Overholser, Yellow Medicine River WD
Phil Belfiori, Rice Creek WD
Emily Javens, MAWD

Summary of Efforts: The Strategic Planning Committee met on July 23, 2018 from 3:30 to 5:00 at the offices of the Capitol Region Watershed District. The committee reviewed the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan and the 2016 MAWD Board of Directors Succession Plan to identify what has been accomplished and what remains outstanding. The committee decided that before writing a new Strategic Plan for 2020 to 2022 a new membership survey needed to be taken to identify membership priorities / needs. This survey would be announced at the 2018 Annual Meeting and administered in December 2018/January 2019. The results of the survey would be available to the MAWD Board by the March 2019 Board Meeting. The Strategic Planning Committee would have from April until the June 2019 Board Meeting to write a new Strategic Plan for review and approval by the Board no later than the September 2019 Board Meeting. The plan would be presented to the membership for a vote at the 2019 Annual Meeting.

Thank you to all committee members for their efforts to keep MAWD governance documents up to date!
MEMBER SERVICES

JOB POSTINGS

Don’t forget to advertise your job openings on our job board. Here is a screenshot from earlier this summer. Check out how active we were with hiring! In the past 31 days, we’ve had 374 hits on the job board page! Here is the link if you want to check the latest postings: www.mnwatershed.org/watershed-district-job-opportunities/

About Watershed Districts

WHAT IS A WATERSHED DISTRICT?
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MINNESOTA DRAINAGE
WATERSHED DISTRICT JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Here is a list of current watershed district job opportunities in Minnesota:

- Brown’s Creek Watershed District: Communications and Project Assistant
- Buffalo Red River Watershed District: Assistant District Administrator (Barnesville, MN)
- Chippewa River: Watershed Coordinator
- Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District: Seasonal Technician
- Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District: Watercraft Inspectors
- Coon Creek Watershed District: Water Resource Regulation Coordinator
- Minnesota Creek Watershed District: Permitting Assistant and Accounting Clerk
- Nine Mile Creek Watershed District: Summer Intern
- Valley Branch Watershed District: Seasonal Watercraft Inspector

Here is a list of job boards maintained by our partners:

- MN Association of Conservation District Employees
- MN Board of Water and Soil Resources

Good news! Money Saved!

Earlier this year, Yellow Medicine River WD was able to obtain software licenses for ArcGIS products at significantly reduced costs. MAWD shared that information with members and at least two more WDs were able to save a significant amount of money!

From Comfort Lake Forest Lake WD: “Just wanted to let you know that we applied for this grant and received two advanced licenses with all extensions for $600 each ($1,200 total, no added hidden fees or anything). Not quite the deal Yellow Medicine received, but I think it’s based on your WD’s annual budget and perhaps some other considerations that ESRI staff weighs. We are still pretty excited about the grant. Definitely enabled us to purchase the software sooner than we otherwise would have. We appreciate that email you sent out about this last month, otherwise I’m not sure we would have heard about the program!”

From Heron Lake WD: “Jan Voit explained... To purchase the software that is available through this grant opportunity, the cost would be $12,000. Through the grant, the HLWD can get this software for $200 per computer per year. That is a savings of $11,800.”

Please continue to share these types of stories with MAWD staff and we will get them out to all members!
LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Guest speakers at the MAWD Summer Tour included several involved in this past year’s legislative efforts. Look for more updates on this summer’s legislative efforts in future publications.

Representative Dario Anselmo (left) was the chief author of the chloride legislation that provided limited liability protections to trained commercial chloride applicators.

Sue Nissen (right) was a volunteer deeply engaged in helping push this legislation forward. In her own words: the MAWD resolution “was pivotal in several of the strategies we used and was just plain an energy booster! I would like to share that story with the watersheds and encourage them to have their voices heard.”

Representative Peter Fischer (not pictured), as chief author, gave an update to attendees on the coordinated watershed management bill that we diligently worked on during the last legislative session.

REMINDER – Resolutions are due to the MAWD Office by October 1

The 2018 Resolutions packets have been emailed to the administrators – please see them for more information.

TRAINING UPDATES

UPCOMING CONFERENCES


UPPER MIDWEST INVASIVE SPECIES CONFERENCE: October 15-18, Rochester. Expected to be the largest invasive species conference in North America this year. [https://www.umisc.net/](https://www.umisc.net/)

MINNESOTA WATER RESOURCES CONFERENCE: October 16–17, Saint Paul. See innovative, practical, and applied water resource engineering solutions, management techniques, and current research. [https://ccaps.umn.edu/minnesota-water-resources-conference](https://ccaps.umn.edu/minnesota-water-resources-conference)

2018 BWSR ACADEMY: October 29-31, Breezy Point. Provides high quality training for local government staff that maintains and improves the delivery of natural resource work and meets the shared expectations of BWSR and local resource management boards. [http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/academy/](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/academy/)

MINNESOTA GROUND WATER ASSOCIATION FALL CONFERENCE: November 15, St. Paul. Abstracts are being accepted on regional groundwater planning until September 1, 2018. [http://www.mgwa.org/](http://www.mgwa.org/)

MAWD ANNUAL CONVENTION: November 29 – December 1, Alexandria. Stay tuned for more details!
UPCOMING MEETINGS

The following meetings are scheduled (or will be scheduled soon):

- August 30, 2018  Local Government Water Round Table (St. Paul)
- September 5, 2018 Annual Meeting Committee (Little Canada)
- September 10, 2018 Finance Committee Meeting (Hopkins)
- September 21, 2018 MAWD Board of Directors Meeting (St. Cloud)

Thank you to everyone who attended the 2018 MAWD Summer Tour!

See you next year!

For more information on any of the news items presented, please contact Emily Javens, MAWD Executive Director, at (612) 790-0700 or exec.mawd@gmail.com.