



2011 Annual Report

Background: The East Metro Water Resource Education Program (EMWREP) is a partnership that was formed in 2006 to develop and implement a comprehensive water resource education and outreach program for the east metro area of St. Paul, MN. Current members of EMWREP include Brown's Creek, Carnelian-Marine-St Croix, Comfort-Lake Forest Lake, Rice Creek, Ramsey-Washington Metro, South Washington, and Valley Branch Watershed Districts, Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization, the cities of Cottage Grove, Dellwood, Forest Lake, Lake Elmo, Stillwater, and Willernie, West Lakeland Township, Washington County and the Washington Conservation District. The EMWREP region covers all of Washington County as well as the portions of Valley Branch and Comfort Lake - Forest Lake Watershed Districts that stretch into Anoka, Chisago and Ramsey Counties. A map and list of EMWREP partners can be found at www.mnwcd.org/cleanwater.

Purpose: The purpose of the EMWREP partnership is to educate the public and various other target audiences within the EMWREP region about the impacts of non-point source pollution on local lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands and groundwater resources and engage people in projects that will help to protect and improve water quality in the region.

Partnership Structure: EMWREP is guided by a steering committee comprised of representatives from each of the 17 partner organizations. The committee generally meets twice a year to provide recommendations on the program budget and activities. The EMWREP educator sends a quarterly e-newsletter to all partners' staff, council members and board members, and communicates one-on-one with individual partners on projects throughout the year. The EMWREP education plan is revised every two to three years to accommodate changing priorities and new target audiences. In addition, the EMWREP educator prepares an annual report on program activities and provides outreach data and statistics for partners' MS4 Permit reports. All EMWREP reports, plans, print materials and news articles are available on-line at www.mnwcd.org/emwrep.

Summary of 2011 EMWREP Education Programs:

A [map](#) of EMWREP priority areas for 2011 is included at the end of this report.

General Education Campaign: EMWREP engages in a number of activities aimed at increasing awareness of water resource issues, promoting a conservation ethic among local residents, and catalyzing behavior change. Many of these activities are accomplished in partnership with existing government, non-profit, and community based groups, as well through local media outlets. The general education campaign is also used to promote targeted outreach efforts and partner BMP programs.

Outreach activities in 2011 included community events, student programs, mailings, newspaper columns, press releases, city newsletter articles, websites and social media. EMWREP also took part in the WaterShed Partners Clean Water Minnesota media campaign and launched the “Save the Fish” marketing campaign.

Blue Thumb Program: The Blue Thumb – Planting for Clean Water® program (www.BlueThumb.org) is a dynamic coalition of more than 85 partner organizations working together to raise awareness about stormwater pollution and encourage homeowners to plant native gardens, raingardens and shoreline projects to protect surface and groundwater resources.

EMWREP uses Blue Thumb to promote partner BMP programs. This outreach is a critical component of an adaptive ecosystem management approach that connects outreach with project implementation and water monitoring. During 2011, EMWREP hosted Blue Thumb workshops in North St. Paul, Scandia, Stillwater and Woodbury, in addition to giving presentations in many other communities in the area, and participated in several local events, including the Family Means St. Croix Valley Garden Tour and the Phipps Artful Raingardens Project. Additionally, Blue Thumb partners had prominent exhibit space in the Eco Experience at the Minnesota State Fair. Outreach this year has resulted in 128 new projects being initiated within the eight EMWREP partner watersheds.

Go Wild!: Go Wild (www.mnwcd.org/gowild) is a new program, still under development, to engage rural property owners. The goal is to leverage public interest in birds and wildlife to engage people in planting and habitat improvement projects in targeted areas that will also reduce erosion and non-point source water pollution.

A key component of this program is collaborative outreach with local non-profits and sportsmen groups such as Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever and Audubon Minnesota. EMWREP hopes to support the outreach conducted by these groups, to help connect landowners with additional resources available through EMWREP partners, and to encourage projects that protect water as well as improving wildlife habitat.

In 2011, EMWREP completed preliminary audience research, hosted a bird habitat workshop in central Washington County, and participated in the Hugo Feed Mill Open House and MN Outdoor Youth Expo coordinated by the Wild Wings Hunt Club in Hugo. We also used city newsletters and websites to begin promoting services for rural landowners.

Blue Biz: The Blue Biz program consists of a website (www.cleanwaterMN.org/businesses) and outreach materials that partners can use to engage commercial property owners in BMP projects. The EMWREP educator also works with partners to target specific property owners as needed.

In 2011, two commercial entities identified in South Washington Watershed District's Hwy 61 subwatershed assessment - Target and the school district's service center – initiated infiltration projects. Plans are underway to work with two businesses in Stillwater in 2012 as well.

Stormwater U: Stormwater U is a technical training series for municipal staff and contractors, including engineers, planners, inspectors and public works. Stormwater U workshops are hosted in collaboration with University of Minnesota Extension and the Minnesota Erosion Control Certification Program.

This year, EMWREP collaborated on a Turf Management workshop and three raingarden design and installation courses for contractors during the spring, as well as two erosion control seminars during the summer. Presentations were also given at Woodbury and Washington County Public Works trainings.

NEMO: The Northland NEMO program (Non-point Education for Municipal Officials - www.northlandnemo.org) provides local elected officials and decision makers with resources and information to make informed decisions about land use and water quality in their communities. Northland NEMO is hosted by the University of Minnesota Extension and EMWREP is one of more than a dozen partner organizations. Program offerings include several basic presentations, as well as the interactive Watershed Game.

During the spring of 2011, EMWREP conducted a focus group session with local communities as part of the St. Croix Basin Minimal Impact Design Standards (MIDS) grant project and gave presentations to the West Lakeland Planning Commission and the Cottage Grove Environmental Planning Commission. EMWREP also helped to organize the third annual Workshop on the St. Croix River, which was attended by nearly 100 local decision makers.

MS4 Toolkit: EMWREP developed the MS4 Toolkit (www.cleanwatermn.org/MS4toolkit) with a grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The toolkit includes educational materials that partners can use to meet the six minimum control measures in the MS4 permit, such as brochures, posters, slide shows, training videos and more. In addition to the on-line materials, training videos for parks and public works staff and pop-up banners for community events are available partners to borrow. EMWREP continues to provide basic website maintenance for the MS4 toolkit and to occasionally add new materials to the kit as they are developed.

MS4 STORMWATER POLLUTION PREVENTION PROGRAM
Correlating Minimum Control Measures with EMWREP Programs and Audiences

1. Public Education and Outreach

- General Education Campaign (general public)
- Blue Thumb (homeowners)
- Go Wild! (rural landowners)
- Blue Biz (commercial property owners)

2. Public Participation

- General Education Campaign
- Blue Thumb
- Go Wild!
- Blue Biz

3. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination

- General Education Campaign
- MS4 Toolkit (multiple audiences)

4. Construction Site Storm Water Runoff Control

- Stormwater U (municipal staff and contractors)
- MS4 Toolkit

5. Post Construction Storm Water Management

- Stormwater U
- NEMO (local elected officials and decision makers)
- Blue Biz
- MS4 Toolkit

6. Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping in Municipal Operations

- Stormwater U
- MS4 Toolkit

2011 Program Activities and Highlights

Public Education: General public education and outreach activities in 2011 included community events, student programs, mailings, newspaper columns, press releases, city newsletter articles, websites and social media. EMWREP also took part in the WaterShed Partners Clean Water Minnesota media campaign and launched the “Save the Fish” marketing campaign.

Save the Fish: This summer, EMWREP worked with the St. Croix River Association and Lift Bridge Brewery to create the “Save the Fish” campaign. JJ Taylor Companies



distributed 100,000 drink coasters to bars and restaurants in the St. Croix Valley between June and July. Coasters directed people to the newly created www.stcroix360.com to sign up for an e-newsletter, be entered to win prizes, and learn about protecting water quality.

Community events: EMWREP reached more than 5000 people at local community events including:

- Power’s Lake Trees workshops, March 1-2 (65)
- Washington County Fair, Aug. 3-7 (5000)
- Cottage Grove Public Works Open House, Sept. 15 (500)
- Newport Community Buckthorn Pull, Oct. 29 (40)



Friends pose as native flowers at the 2011 Washington County Fair.

Student Programs: EMWREP participated in several water education programs during 2011 for K-12 students:

- Da Vinci Festival, Stillwater ISD - Jan. 8 (2500 K-12 students and parents)
- MN Youth Outdoor Expo, Hugo, May 21-22 (50 K-12 students and parents)
- OH Anderson Field Day, Mahtomedi – May 13 (100 3rd-5th grade students)
- Children’s Water Festival, St. Paul – September 28 (175 5th grade students)



Project WET Teacher Training: EMWREP sponsored a teacher training at Valley Creek ELC in June. Twenty-five teachers from South Washington School District attended.

Left: April Rust, MDNR, instructs a group of teachers on watershed science for their classrooms.

Storm Drain Stenciling: On July 18, EMWREP worked with Minnesota Conservation Corps to stencil storm drains in downtown Stillwater.

Targeted Mailings: Postcards and/or letters were sent to 2540 residences during the year to advertise workshops and opportunities, including:

- 2000 homeowners in RWMWD near Battle Creek Lake and Tamarack Swamp
- 300 homeowners in VBWD near Silver Lake
- 180 homeowners in MSCWMO near Lily Lake
- 60 landowners in southern Washington County identified by the Top50P! project

Newspaper articles: The EMWREP educator writes weekly articles (52 per year) for several local papers. These articles can be found on-line at the East Metro Water blog <http://eastmetrowater.areavoices.com>. In addition, the articles were printed in the following papers:



- Valley Life - 49,000 readers in Stillwater, Bayport, Oak Park Heights, Stillwater Township, Afton, Lakeland, Marine, Hugo, Lake Elmo, Houlton, Somerset and New Richmond.
- Lillie Reviews –34,392 readers in Oakdale, Lake Elmo, North St. Paul, Maplewood, White Bear Lake, White Bear Township, Gem Lake, Western Mahtomedi, and Landfall. (Articles are occasionally printed in Lillie owned papers outside the EMWREP area as well, reaching another 83,608 readers.)
- South Washington County Bulletin – 8616 readers in Cottage Grove, St. Paul Park, Newport and Grey Cloud.
- Oakdale Patch – on-line newspaper with 6700 monthly readers, 312 facebook followers and 270 Twitter followers
- Stillwater Patch - on-line newspaper with 6434 monthly readers, 613 facebook followers and 302 Twitter followers
- Woodbury Patch – on-line newspaper with 8243 monthly readers, 813 facebook followers and 393 Twitter followers

Press releases: Several other papers print press releases and news articles from EMWREP one to five times per year, including:

- Hugo Citizen - 10,000 readers
- Forest Lake Times – 13,029 readers
- Scandia Messenger – 1075 readers
- Woodbury Bulletin – 7811 readers
- Pioneer Press – 185,736 weekday readers

City newsletter articles: Information about water resources and EMWREP partner activities reached more than 175,000 people through community newsletters in 2011:

- Afton (pop. 2800)
 - [March](#) – Go Wild! Program; WCD Tree Sale; Septics and flooding info; Bird Workshop
 - [April](#) – Rain barrel sale; Buckthorn grants
 - [June](#) – Artful Raingardens; St. Croix River Paddle
 - [July](#) – St. Croix Garden Tour; St. Croix Paddle; Artful Raingardens; Save the Fish
 - [Sept.](#) – Native plant sales
 - [Oct.](#) – Fall leaf raking
- Bayport (pop. 3200)
 - [March](#) – Green Streets grant project
- Baytown (pop. 1970) - “Baytown Neighbors” goes to 140 households)
 - [May](#) – Well water testing
- Cottage Grove (pop. 34,000)
 - [April](#) – Blue Star Award
 - [July](#) – Car washing
 - [Aug.](#) – Phosphorus in the Mississippi River
- Lake Elmo (pop. 7647)
 - [April](#) – WCD tree and rain barrel sale; septic systems
 - [Sept.](#) – Blue Star Award; Stormwater pollution prevention
- Lake St. Croix Beach (pop. 1051)
 - [March](#) – Go Wild!
 - [April](#) – Axdahl’s Raingarden workshop; pesticide use
 - [July](#) – Lawn care
- Lakeland (pop. 1830)
 - [March](#) – Go Wild!
 - [May](#) – Phosphorus and St. Croix
 - [July](#) – Summer calendar of water events
 - [Aug](#) – Save the Fish
 - [Sept](#) – Fall native plan sales
- Mahtomedi (pop. 8000)
 - [April – June](#) – Axdahl’s Raingarden Workshop
 - [July – Sept](#) – Stormwater pollution
 - [Oct – Dec](#) – Rake for Lakes Sake
- Newport (pop. 3715)
 - [Spring](#) – Stormwater pollution prevention
- Oak Parks Heights (pop. 4724)
 - [Second quarter](#) – Axdahl’s Raingarden Workshop
 - [Third quarter](#) – Calendar of summer water events; Groundwater protection
- Oakdale (pop. 27,300)
 - [Sept – Nov.](#) - Fall yard care

- Stillwater (pop. 18,000)
 - [Spring](#) – Axdahl’s raingarden workshop
- West Lakeland (pop. 3547)
 - [March](#) – Go Wild!; Blue thumb spring events
- Woodbury (pop. 57,345)
 - [Feb](#) – Blue Thumb workshop
 - [Aug](#) – Native plant sale
 - [Oct.](#) – Fall yard care



Websites and Social Media: EMWREP uses several websites to provide information and resources for the public and also uses social media, such as facebook, twitter and the East Metro Water blog to reach people in the community:

- Between Jan. 1 and Nov. 1, 2011, the Washington Conservation District website (www.mnwcd.org) received 10,118 visits from 4,832 visitors. EMWREP programs and partners are featured on several pages within the website, including www.mnwcd.org/cleanwater, www.mnwcd.org/emwrep, www.mnwcd.org/gowild and www.mnwcd.org/water_blue_thumb. WCD has 74 followers on facebook.
- The Blue Thumb website (www.BlueThumb.org) received 24,873 visits from 17,926 visitors. Blue Thumb has 526 friends on facebook.
- The Clean Water Minnesota website (www.cleanwatermn.org) received 3661 visits from 2880 visitors.
- The East Metro Water Blog (www.eastmetrowater.areavoices.com) averages 92 readers per week.

Clean Water Minnesota Media Campaign: EMWREP is one of 65 partners in the WaterShed Partners, an innovative, dynamic coalition of public, private and non-profit organizations in the Twin Cities metro area that work collaboratively to teach residents how to care for area waters. WaterShed Partners coordinate the Clean Water Minnesota Media Campaign, maintain the www.cleanwatermn.org website and MS4 Toolkit, and have prominent exhibit space in the DNR Building at the Minnesota State Fair.



2011 Media Campaign activities included [Public Service Announcements](#) on television (Cable & Channel 45), at sporting events (MN Twins Radio & St. Paul Saints TV), and on Minnesota Public Radio. During 2011 WaterShed Partners also began developing the new [Minnesota Clean Water Challenge](#), which will help communities to engage their citizens in stormwater pollution prevention efforts such as building raingardens, sweeping up grass clippings, redirecting downspouts and using less fertilizer. The Clean Water Challenge will also provide a way for communities to track and measure the impact of their outreach. Media activities in 2011 generated more than 6 million impressions.



Blue Thumb: During 2011, EMWREP hosted Blue Thumb workshops in North St. Paul, Scandia, Stillwater and Woodbury, in addition to giving presentations in many other communities in the area. EMWREP also participated in several local events, including the Family Mean St. Croix Valley Garden Tour and the Phipps Artful Raingardens Project. Additionally, Blue Thumb partners had prominent exhibit space in the Eco Experience at the Minnesota State Fair. Outreach this year has resulted in 128 new projects being initiated.

Workshops, meetings and presentations: In 2011, 375 people attended EMWREP sponsored Blue Thumb workshops, open houses and presentations.

- Presentation (West Lakeland Columbine Garden Club), Feb 17 (15 people)
- Workshop (Silver Lake, North St. Paul), Feb. 28 (13)
- Lily Lake Open House (Stillwater), March 7 (40)
- Workshop (Oakdale & Woodbury), March 8 (43)
- Workshop (Scandia), April 12 (34)
- Presentation (FIS in Woodbury), April 19 (15)
- Env. Sustainability Workshop (Woodbury), April 22 (50)
- Presentation (White Bear Lake Unitarian in Mahtomedi), May 18 (25)
- Presentation (Izaak Walton League in Mahtomedi), May 19 (15)
- Workshop (Axdahl's in Stillwater), May 21 (25)
- Presentation (Heritage Glen HOA in Woodbury), Oct. 18 (50)
- Presentation (Lion's Club in Stillwater), Nov. 1 (50)



Axdahl's Garden Center worked with BCWD to build two raingardens and then hosted a Blue Thumb workshop.

Community Events: EMWREP reached around 300,000 people at local community events and Blue Thumb partner events.

- Master Gardener Spring Fling, March 12 (300)
- Lakes Area Expo (Forest Lake), April 30 (50)
- Master Gardener Plant Sale (Lake Elmo), June 5
- St. Croix Valley Garden Tour (Stillwater and Lake Elmo), July 16-17 (850)
- Artful Raingardens Project, June – July
- Minnesota State Fair, Aug. 25-Sept. 5 (295,000)



Visitors at the State Fair were amazed by the lengths of native plant roots.



The Artful Raingardens Exhibit kicked off with a performance by Heart of the Beast Puppet theater.



The Grabowski home in Lake Elmo (VBWD) was featured on the St. Croix Valley Garden Tour.



The Zemcuznicov home in Stillwater (BCWD) was also featured on the tour.

Go Wild!: During 2011, EMWREP completed preliminary audience research to help develop outreach efforts for rural landowners, hosted a bird habitat workshop in central Washington County, participated in the MN Outdoor Youth Expo and the Hugo Feed Mill Open House and used city newsletters and websites to begin promoting services for rural landowners.

Bird Habitat Workshop: EMWREP collaborated with “Bird Chick” Sharon Stiteler on a workshop at Gander Mountain in Woodbury on March 29. The workshop was geared towards rural landowners with 5-10 acres looking to improve bird habitat.



Sharon Stiteler “Bird Chick” is a well-known author and blogger.

MN Outdoor Youth Expo: Wild Wings Hunt Club in Hugo sponsored the MN Outdoor Youth Expo on May 21-22. EMWREP led a bird habitat scavenger hunt and wildflower hike for the event and used the opportunity to meet representatives from local sportsmen groups.

Hugo Feed Mill Open House: We provided information for horse owners and others at this event on March 7.

Promotions: During 2011, EMWREP began promoting services for rural owners, focusing on projects that improve wildlife habitat and are also good for water quality. Information was posted on the county’s WashNET site from January 28 – February 3. Articles were also published in several city newsletters, and a new page was created on the Conservation District website – www.mnwcd.org/gowild.

Next Steps: We plan to organize two workshops for woodland landowners in 2012, as well as a landscaping workshop for people with 3-5 acres and two events for horse owners and boarders.

Blue Biz: In 2011, two commercial entities identified in South Washington Watershed District’s Hwy 61 subwatershed assessment - Target and the school district service center – initiated projects. Two businesses in Stillwater are interested in projects as well.

Stormwater U: This year, EMWREP collaborated on a Turf Management workshop and four raingarden design and installation courses for contractors during the spring, as well as two erosion control seminars during the summer. Presentations were also given at Woodbury and Washington County Public Works trainings.

Turf Management Workshop: This course, offered on February 8, was held in Maplewood in conjunction with the Ramsey – Washington Metro Watershed District. The workshop was geared toward private turf management contractors and covered topics such as mowing, watering, fertilizers and weed control.

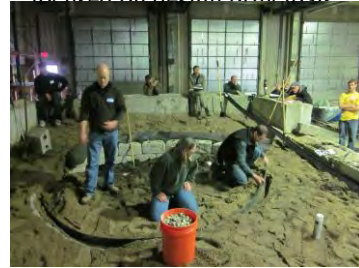
- 65 participants attended from companies in the east metro

Raingarden Design and Installation: EMWREP collaborated with Blue Thumb program partners on a series of raingarden workshops for city staff and contractors.

- Workshop 1 – The first workshops focused on design considerations and maintenance of raingardens.
 - 30 Blue Thumb partners attended on Feb 11.
 - 45 independent contractors attended on Feb. 15.
- Workshop 2 – The second workshops were held at the Hedberg indoor training center in Plymouth, allowing participants to practice installing techniques using real equipment and tools.
 - Two sessions were held with around 20 participants at each.



The first set of workshops focused on design principals



The second workshop allowed hands-on experience.

Erosion Control Field Seminars: On August 9, EMWREP collaborated with the Minnesota Erosion Control Association to



City staff and contractors visited an active construction site in Cottage Grove.

hold two outdoor field seminars for city staff and contractors. The sessions began at Cottage Grove Ravine, where participants learned about a project underway to build a new road, bridge and city hall. Part two of the seminar took place at a McDonalds in Woodbury that was under reconstruction. Discussion at this location focused on the constraints of working in a small site. 37 people attended.

Presentations: Woodbury and Washington County requested presentations for their Public Works trainings.

- Woodbury – April 14 – We focused on preventing stormwater pollution during common activities and viewed the Lawn Care video created for the MS4 Toolkit.
- Washington County – Sept. 14 – We talked about Blue Thumb – Planting for Clean Water and encouraged county employees to help promote the program to the public and use it themselves.

NEMO: During the spring of 2011, EMWREP conducted a focus group session with local communities as part of the St. Croix Basin Minimal Impact Design Standards (MIDS) grant project and gave presentations to the West Lakeland Planning Commission and the Cottage Grove Environmental Planning Commission. EMWREP also helped to organize the third annual Workshop on the St. Croix River, which was attended by nearly 100 local decision makers.

MIDS Focus Group: A focus group session was held on April 27 with representatives from eight local communities in Washington County. The goal of the session was to learn what support the cities need to implement the St. Croix TMDL plan and to identify training needs as well. Some of the findings included:

- Local cities are already taking many steps to reduce phosphorus.
- Public education plays an important role in helping cities to reduce phosphorus.
- Communities in Washington County are very different and face very different challenges in reducing phosphorus.
- Agriculture is a big part of the problem that cities don't have control over.
- Cities need to lead by example.
- Funding is a major barrier to meeting the TMDL goal. Other barriers included:
 - Lack of public support
 - Lack of support from public works staff.
 - Stormwater regulations only apply to MS4 communities.
 - Staffing
 - Lack of participation from agricultural producers in the area.
- With more funding, cities would:
 - Do more public education.
 - Build demonstration and CIP (capitol improvement projects)
 - Establish stronger ordinances and enforcement
- Cities have support from their public officials to implement stormwater management activities but not funding.
- Most cities have amended their ordinances to meet new watershed requirements.
- Cities desire support from the WCD and watersheds to:
 - Work with agricultural producers in the area.
 - Meet MS4 permit requirements.
 - Conduct special workshops or presentations at regularly scheduled council meetings.
 - Provide materials and support for public education.

Workshop on the St. Croix River: 85 local officials and 25 staff attended the third annual workshop on the water held on June 29. During the workshop, participants learned about aquatic and terrestrial invasive species, Lakeland's new vegetation management ordinance, techniques for public education, funding opportunities and the MIDS pilot project. People who attended reported that they learned a lot and value these regional workshops.



Amy Carolan and Jenny Shillcox discussed Lakeland's new ordinance.

Presentations: West Lakeland and Cottage Grove requested presentations for their planning commission and environmental planning commission in the spring. Both talks focused on activities underway in the region to protect and restore water resources, as well as action that the communities can take leadership on.

MS4 Toolkit: In 2011, EMWREP continued to use materials from the MS4 Education Toolkit for education and outreach to a variety of audiences about non-point source water pollution.

EMWREP Outreach Priorities for 2011

