



2013 Annual Report



Above: Angie Hong talks about public outreach and engagement during the St. Croix Workshop on the Water for local elected officials and decision makers.

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 •
West Lakeland • Woodbury • Washington Conservation District • Washington County

**East Metro Water Resource Education Program
2013 Annual Report**

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About the East Metro Water Resource Education Program

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 EMWREP partners 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, Willernie, and Woodbury, West Lakeland Township, Washington County and the Washington Conservation District.

Purpose: The purpose of the shared education program is to provide education about the impacts of non-point source pollution on local lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands and groundwater resources and to engage people in projects that will help to protect and improve water quality in the region. In addition to educating the public, EMWREP also provides training for city, county and watershed staff and local elected officials.

Partnership Structure: EMWREP is guided by a steering committee comprised of representatives from each of the 18 partner organizations. The committee generally meets twice a year to provide recommendations on the program budget and activities. During 2013, EMWREP staff included Angie Hong, full-time education specialist and coordinator for the program, Jenn Radtke, half-time education assistant, and Wendy Griffin, a Washington Conservation District natural resource specialist who provided 170 hours of support for rural education activities. The EMWREP coordinator 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 coordinator prepares an annual report on program activities and provides outreach data and statistics for partners' MS4 Permit reports. All EMWREP reports, plans, and education updates are available on-line at www.mnwcd.org/emwrep.

Coordination with Other Regional Education Efforts: One of the major benefits of the EMWREP program is that it has helped to strengthen relationships between Washington Conservation District, Washington County and the eight watershed management organizations and eight cities that constitute the partnership, which has resulted in better coordination and less overlap in the management of local water resources. By promoting partner's BMP programs, EMWREP has helped to increase the total number of water quality improvement projects implemented and to target these projects in priority areas.

EMWREP has also played a central role in the coordination and development of two regional education programs, Blue Thumb and WaterShed Partners. Blue Thumb is a partnership of more than 70 public and private entities in the Upper Midwest, developed to promote the use of native plantings, raingardens and shoreline plantings to conserve water resources and reduce runoff pollution. WaterShed Partners, which manages the Clean Water Minnesota media campaign, is a collaborative of more than 60 non-profit and public entities in the Twin Cities metro area that work together to educate the public about stormwater pollution. Additionally, EMWREP frequently partners with other organizations within the St. Croix River Basin for educational events and activities.

Accolades: In 2012, the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts recognized EMWREP as the Watershed Program of the Year.

2013 Executive Summary

General Education Campaign: During 2013, EMWREP continued to use a variety of strategies to educate the general public about stormwater pollution and other issues affecting the quality of surface and groundwater resources, and to inform them about partner programs and activities. Major strategies include more than 100 articles per year in local newspapers and community newsletters, ample use of social media, direct mailings to specific audiences, and participation in nearly 30 community events.

Though the impact of these larger public education and awareness raising efforts is often hard to measure directly, we know they greatly improve the success of our targeted outreach activities and are usually the initial gateway through which people learn about EMWREP partner organizations and engage at a higher level by attending a workshop, participating in a watershed planning process, or installing a clean water project on their property.

In 2013, EMWREP also initiated three new special education projects:

- 1) We collaborated with Chisago County to hold an Aquatic Invasive Species workshop in Scandia, attended by 75 people;
- 2) We created new educational materials and sent mailings to homeowners' associations and lawn care companies in Forest Lake and Woodbury; and
- 3) We held a focus group with representatives from area churches, which led to the creation of a new e-newsletter for congregations and plans for additional education activities in 2014.

Blue Thumb Program: The Blue Thumb – Planting for Clean Water program (www.BlueThumb.org) was developed by the Rice Creek Watershed District in 2006 and is now a dynamic coalition of more than 70 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 tools and resources, such as the website and print materials, to promote partner BMP programs and strengthen targeted outreach for neighborhood stormwater retrofit projects. In addition to giving presentations about the Blue Thumb program to several community groups and lake / neighborhood associations, EMWREP also conducted five workshops during the year:

- 1) A raingarden workshop in Scandia;
- 2) A prairie workshop in Afton;
- 3) A workshop for large lot owners in West Lakeland Twp.;
- 4) A raingarden maintenance workshop in Lake Elmo; and
- 5) A shoreline maintenance workshop in Forest Lake.

During 2013, EMWREP provided outreach support for stormwater retrofit projects near Casey Lake (Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District), Brown's Creek (Brown's Creek Watershed District), and Lily and McKusick Lakes (Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization). We also held Ice Cream Social / Raingarden Tours in Stillwater and Woodbury (South Washington Watershed District) to celebrate the completion of recent neighborhood stormwater retrofit projects.

The number of raingardens and other residential projects installed in Washington County continues to climb each year, at least in part, as a result of EMWREP education and outreach efforts. Conservation District staff conducted 240 site visits during 2013. 62 projects were installed with watershed cost-share funding, 45 projects were completed with only technical assistance, and an additional 115 new projects are still in progress. The WCD estimates that residential projects installed in 2013 will reduce phosphorus loading to area waters by 37 pounds per year.

Rural Outreach: During 2013, EMWREP offered several programs specifically designed to engage rural property owners. These included a full-day workshop for horse owners, three water testing clinics for homeowners with private wells, and two buckthorn workshops. In addition, EMWREP also provided outreach support for several targeted implementation projects, including:

- Washington Conservation District - Turf to Prairie;
- Washington Conservation District – Top50P!; and
- South Washington Watershed District’s - Trout Brook.

Because previous audience research has shown us that many rural property owners are more interested in creating wildlife habitat or managing invasive species than in protecting surface water quality, we’ve adapted our messages and workshops for these audiences accordingly. Though we still talk about protecting water resources, we usually use other topics as the hook to engage rural property owners.

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. During 2013, EMWREP initiated conversations with Tamarack Village Shopping Center in Woodbury about a potential stormwater reuse project on their property.

Stormwater U: Early after the EMWREP partnership was created, we worked with staff from Minnesota Extension and the Minnesota Erosion and Stormwater Management Certification Program to develop Stormwater U, a technical training series for municipal staff and contractors, including engineers, planners, inspectors and public works. Past workshops have included Designing for Volume Control, Protecting Water Resources through Comprehensive Planning, Stormwater Pond Management, Turf Management, Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination and Winter Snow and Ice Management.

In 2013, EMWREP:

- Hosted a Stormwater U workshop in January in Cottage Grove, *What is in your Stormwater BMP Toolbox?*;
- Presented at the Stormwater U *Lessons Learned* workshop in February;
- Collaborated with MECA (Minnesota Erosion Control Association) to hold an outdoor erosion control field seminar in Cottage Grove at the site of a new housing development; and
- Hosted a workshop on Street Sweeping for Nutrient Reduction.

NEMO: The Northland NEMO program (Non-point Education for Municipal Officials) 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 ten to twenty partner organizations. Program offerings include several basic presentations, as well as the interactive Watershed Game.

During 2013, EMWREP collaborated with several other partners to hold its fifth *Workshop on the Water* for St. Croix Basin communities in both Minnesota and Wisconsin. Over 120 people attended. In September we held a workshop for Washington County communities to introduce the Minimal Impacts Design Standards Community Assistance Package developed as part of a three-year grant project. Representatives from ten cities and the county attended. After the workshop, we met one-on-one with the communities who attended to discuss how they might incorporate the new package into their ordinances and zoning code in the future. An accelerated implementation grant from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources will allow the Washington Conservation District to continue working with these communities in 2014.

MS4 Toolkit: EMWREP developed the MS4 Toolkit (www.cleanwatermn.org/MS4toolkit) several years ago 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. The Metro WaterShed Partners MS4 work group is currently discussing strategies for updating the MS4 Toolkit and website.

General Education Campaign

Minimum Control Measure Addressed

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public education & outreach	<input type="checkbox"/> Construction site runoff controls
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public participation & involvement	<input type="checkbox"/> Post-construction storm water management
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illicit discharge detection and elimination	<input type="checkbox"/> Municipal pollution prevention & good housekeeping

Audience: General Public

Program Goals:

1. Provide education on water resource issues and stormwater pollution prevention for people living and working in the east metro area.
2. Collaborate with state and local government as well as non-profit and community groups to carry out educational activities.
3. Utilize master gardeners and other citizen volunteers to help conduct education and outreach.
4. Promote EMWREP partners and their BMP (Best Management Practices) programs.
5. Engage community members and other stakeholders in TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) and Non-Degradation Plan processes.

Educational Goals:

Learning

1. Increase the overall understanding and awareness of water resources and storm water runoff among the general public.
2. Increase understanding of the connection between individual actions and water resource quality among the general public.
3. Increase awareness of storm water best management practices among the general public.
4. Increase understanding of the roles that cities, watershed agencies, counties and conservation districts play in managing water resources.

Behavior Change

1. Engage the public in the prevention of storm water pollution at home.
2. Increase the utilization of storm water best management practices and adoption of desirable clean water practices among the general public.
3. Engage the public and other stakeholders in creating and implementing watershed, TMDL and Non-Degradation plans.
4. Unite government, non-profit and community based organizations with a common clean water theme.
5. Develop leaders among citizens and other water related organizations that can carry water resource education to the general public.

Water Quality Improvement

1. Reduce and prevent non-point source pollution of surface and groundwater resources.
2. Maintain adequate groundwater and drinking water resources.

Activities used to reach goals:

Maintaining and developing educational partnerships: EMWREP continues to work collaboratively with governmental, non-profit, private and citizen partners to engage the public, promote and execute events and activities, and develop and distribute educational materials and resources. EMWREP works with partners in both the Twin Cities Metro area and the St. Croix River Basin. Some of these many partners include:

- Local units of government: In addition to the 18 partnering entities within EMWREP, we also work closely with other LGUs outside of Washington County
- Non-profits: St. Croix River Association, Friends of the Mississippi River, Family Means, local nature centers, sportsman groups
- Private partners: EMWREP occasionally teams up with corporations such as 3M and Blue Cross – Blue Shield to provide education for employees and their families
- Citizens: Master Gardeners, church members and other community leaders

Community events: EMWREP participated in dozens of local community events, either by helping to plan, sending materials, staffing a table or giving a presentation:

- Forest Lake Home Show – March 16
- St. Croix Basin Conference – April 8 (River Falls)
- Mahtomedi Rite of Spring – April 27
- Go Green Trail Run – May 4 (Battle Creek Park)
- St. Peter UCC Environmental Fair – May 11 (Stillwater)
- Explore Your Parks Day – June 1 (Lake Elmo Regional Park)
- Waterfest – June 1 (Lake Phalen)
- Landscape Revival – June 1 (Roseville)
- Master Gardener Plant Sale – June 2 (Lake Elmo)
- Belwin Bison Release – June 15 (Afton)
- Family Means St. Croix Garden Tour – July 13-14 (Stillwater)
- Tamarack Swamp Nature Preserve Tour – July 16 (Woodbury)
- Our Water, Our Future – July 16 (Century College)
- Washington County Fair – July 31 – Aug. 4
- Heritage Day – Aug. 6 (Lake St. Croix Beach)
- Tri-Lakes Day – Aug. 10 (Lake Elmo)
- Minnesota State Fair – Aug. 22 – Sept. 2
- Taco Daze - Sept. 7 (Scandia)
- Blue Cross Blue Shield Carefest – Sept. 10
- Cottage Grove Public Works Open House – Sept. 19
- Washington County Paper Shredding Event - Sept. 20
- North St. Paul History Cruz – Sept. 20
- Newport Community Buckthorn Pull – Oct. 26



Above: Kids practiced fishing at the Cottage Grove Public Works Open House.



Right: At the Belwin Bison Release, children learned about root depth using our native plant display.

Student Programs: EMWREP participated in the following children's education events:

- Da Vinci Festival, Stillwater ISD - Jan. 5 (2500 K-12 students and parents)
- MN Youth Outdoor Expo, Hugo, May 18-19 (2500 children and parents)
- OH Anderson Field Day, Mahtomedi – May 10 (100 3rd-5th grade students)
- Cottage Grove Safety Camp – July 9 (200 children, ages 8-11)

Special Mailings: EMWREP helped to produce and deliver special mailings for several partners during the year. This included:

- Mailings to Comfort Lake – Forest Lake and Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watersheds to promote the Aquatic Invasive Species workshop and watershed cost-share programs (February)
- Mailing to the Casey Lake neighborhood (North St. Paul) for a neighborhood raingarden project (April)
- Letter to churches in the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed for a Green Churches project (April)
- Washington Conservation District newsletter (April & November)
- Letter to select homes in Brown's Creek Watershed for a neighborhood raingarden project (May)
- Mailing to Homeowner Associations and lawn care companies in Forest Lake and Woodbury (July)
- Comfort Lake – Forest Lake Watershed District newsletter (September)

Newspaper articles: EMWREP coordinator Angie Hong writes regularly for several local papers. Read the articles on-line at www.eastmetrowater.areavoices.com. In 2013, articles appeared in the following papers:



Forest Lake Times (13,029 readers)

Scandia Country Messenger (1075 readers)

- Jan. 8 - MAWD award
- Jan. 25 - Wild Ones Native Plant Conference
- Feb. 5 - *Preventing Groundwater Contamination* (Sealing abandoned wells)
- Feb. 19 - AIS Workshop
- Feb. 23 - Horse workshop
- March 11 - *Pimp Your Downspout* (Rain barrel sale)
- April 9 - Scandia Raingarden Workshop
- April 16 - Well Water Testing Clinic
- Aug. 12 - *Incentive grants for lake and river friendly landscaping*
- Aug. 31 - *Going Up North* (lakeshore landscaping)
- Sept. 5 - *Saving Goose Lake*
- Sept. 11 - *Stopping the phosphorus train* (Broadway Ave. project)
- Oct. 29 - *Reducing agricultural water pollution*

South Washington County Bulletin

(8616 readers in Cottage Grove, St. Paul Park, Newport and Grey Cloud)

- Jan. 8 - MAWD award
- Jan. 15 - *Reducing mercury*
- Jan. 25 - Wild Ones Native Plant Conference

Feb. 5 - *Preventing Groundwater Contamination* (Sealing abandoned wells)
 Feb. 23 - Horse workshop
 Feb. 27 - *Keeping pharmaceuticals out of our water*
 March 11 - *Pimp Your Downspout* (Rain barrel sale)
 April 16 - Well Water Testing Clinic
 April 30 - *Both the forest and the trees*
 May 13 - *Mississippi Water Walk*
 May 21 - *Dandelion Wars*
 June 4 - *Give me a home where the buffalo roam* (prairie workshop)
 June 20 - *More big rainstorms*
 July 15 - *What to ask for from your lawn care provider*
 Aug. 20 - Buckthorn workshop
 Aug. 28 - *Salt water on the menu*
 Oct. 2 - *For the love of fall*
 Oct. 9 - *Mississippi River Sojourn*
 Oct. 24 - *Where have all the bees gone?*
 Oct. 29 - *Reducing agricultural water pollution*
 Nov. 1 - *Whistling Well Farm*
 Nov. 7 - *Calling Tim the Tool Man*

Hugo Citizen (10,000 readers)

Jan. 8 - MAWD award
 Jan. 25 - Wild Ones Native Plant Conference
 Feb. 5 - *Preventing Groundwater Contamination* (Sealing abandoned wells)
 Feb. 23 - Horse workshop
 March 11 - *Pimp Your Downspout* (Rain barrel sale)
 April 16 - Well Water Testing Clinic
 May 21 - *Dandelion Wars*
 July 15 - *What to ask for from your lawn care provider*

Oakdale- Lake Elmo & Maplewood – North St. Paul 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 an additional 83,608 readers.)

Jan. 8 - MAWD award
 Jan. 25 - Wild Ones Native Plant Conference
 Feb. 5 - *Preventing Groundwater Contamination* (Sealing abandoned wells)
 Feb. 27 - *Keeping pharmaceuticals out of our water*
 March 11 - *Pimp Your Downspout* (Rain barrel sale)
 April 9 - *Let's chat about scat*
 May 13 - *Mississippi Water Walk*
 May 21 - *Dandelion Wars*
 May 21 - VBWD meetings
 June 4 - *Give me a home where the buffalo roam* (prairie workshop)
 June 20 - *More big rainstorms*
 July 15 - *What to ask for from your lawn care provider*
 Aug. 20 - Buckthorn workshop
 Oct. 9 - *Mississippi River sojourn*
 Oct. 16 - *Reducing agricultural water pollution*
 Oct. 24 - *Where have all the bees gone?*
 Dec. 2 - *Regaining a Sense of Wonder*

Woodbury Bulletin (7811 readers)

- Jan. 8 - MAWD award
- July 8 - Tamarack Tour
- Sept. 10 - Woodbury raingarden tour and ice cream social

Stillwater Gazette (6,966 readers)

- Jan. 8 - MAWD award
- Feb. 19 - AIS Workshop
- Aug. 20 - Buckthorn workshop
- March 11 - *Pimp Your Downspout* (Rain barrel sale)
- May 21 - VBWD meetings

Valley Life (48,000 readers in Stillwater, Bayport, Oak Park Heights, Stillwater Township, Afton, Lakeland, Marine, Hugo, Lake Elmo, Houlton, Somerset and New Richmond)

Oakdale Patch (974 Facebook / 816 Twitter)

Stillwater Patch (2893 Facebook / 1325 Twitter)

Woodbury Patch (2898 Facebook / 1773 Twitter)

- Jan. 2 - *Having kids can be hazardous to your health*
- Jan. 7 - *Don't be a drip* (water conservation)
- Jan. 15 - *Reducing mercury*
- Jan. 22 - *Reading the landscape* (Wild Ones Native Plant Conference)
- Jan. 28 - *Things they don't tell you when you buy a horse* (Horse Workshop)
- Feb. 5 - *Preventing Groundwater Contamination* (Sealing abandoned wells)
- Feb. 13 - *California dreaming on a winter day*
- Feb. 19 - *Aliens invade the St. Croix Valley*
- Feb. 27 - *Keeping pharmaceuticals out of our water*
- Feb. 28 - *Community Thread mixes raingardens and volunteerism*
- March 8 - *The garbage boat sails away*
- March 10 - *Crazy carp tournament*
- April 1 - *How to carry a baby across a river*
- April 9 - *Let's chat about scat*
- April 15 - *Well water testing clinics*
- April 19 - *Gardening in the snow*
- April 29 - *Journey on two wheels*
- April 30 - *Both the forest and the trees*
- May 13 - *Mississippi Water Walk*
- May 21 - *Dandelion Wars*
- May 29 - *VBWD Local lakes study*
- June 4 - *Give me a home where the buffalo roam*
- June 10 - *Big Backyards*
- June 20 - *More big rainstorms*
- June 28 - *Behind the scenes gardens*
- July 8 - *Tamarack Tour*
- July 15 - *What to ask for from your lawn care provider*
- July 22 - *Protecting the St. Croix*
- July 31 - *Going up north*
- Aug. 5 - *Ice cream and raingardens*
- Aug. 14 - *Rush River rambles*
- Aug. 21 - *Digging for treasure*
- Aug. 28 - *Salt water on the menu*

Sept. 3 - *The great (never-ending) Minnesota get-together*
 Sept. 5 - *Saving Goose Lake*
 Sept. 11 - *One year later at Oak Glen*
 Oct. 2 - *For the love of fall*
 Oct. 9 - *Mississippi River sojourn*
 Oct. 16 - *Reducing agricultural water pollution*
 Oct. 24 - *Where have all the bees gone?*
 Nov. 1 - *Whistling Well Farm*
 Nov. 7 - *Calling Tim the Tool Man*
 Nov. 20 - *Holey Pavement*
 Nov. 21 - *Stopping the Zebra*
 Dec. 2 - *Regaining a Sense of Wonder*
 Dec. 10 - *Winter Fish Tale*
 Dec. 17 - *Swamp Stories*
 Dec. 24 - *As the water drop rolls*

*Press releases were also sent to the Pioneer Press and Star Tribune throughout the year.

City newsletter articles: Information about water resources and EMWREP partner activities reached more than 175,000 people through community newsletters in 2013. Below are some of the topics covered in these newsletters:

- Afton (pop. 2800) – [newsletter](#)
 - Jan – WCD tree and rain barrel sale
 - June – VBWD meetings for lakes and Kelle’s Creek; impacts of triclosan
 - September – Turf to Prairie grant
 - October – fall leaves impact water quality
 - December – impacts of road salt
- Bayport (pop. 3200) – [newsletter](#)
 - April – raingarden clean-up event
 - September - fall leaves impact water quality; raingarden at City Hall
- Baytown Twp. (pop. 1723) – no newsletter
- Birchwood (pop. 875) - [newsletter](#)
 - Winter – road salt
 - Spring – road salt, Blue Thumb
- Cottage Grove (pop. 34,000) - [newsletter](#)
 - June – lawn care tips
- Dellwood (pop. 1063) – annual Mayor’s Letter, not posted on-line
- Denmark Twp. (pop. 1737) – no newsletter
- Forest Lake (pop. 18,957) - [newsletter](#)
 - Summer – prairie and “Big Backyard” workshops
 - Fall – leaves and water quality, RCWD cost-share program
 - Winter – road salt; WCD tree sale
- Grant (pop. 4026) – twice yearly, not posted on-line
- Hugo (pop. 14,000) - [newsletter](#)
 - Fall – water conservation
- Lake Elmo (pop. 7647) - [newsletter](#)
 - Spring – septic system care; spring cleaning to keep waterways clean

- Fall – leaves impact water quality
- Lake St. Croix Beach (pop. 1051) - [newsletter](#)
 - Jan – septic systems, road salt
 - March –groundwater, road salt
 - April – “Good bug, bad bug”, raingarden myths, lawn care
 - July - Algae blooms, “Good bug, bad bug”
 - October – septic systems
 - November – septic systems
- Lakeland (pop. 1830) - [newsletter](#)
 - Jan – WCD tree and rain barrel sale
 - Feb. - WCD tree and rain barrel sale
 - June – prairie workshop at Belwin
 - Aug. – lawn clippings
- Lakeland Shores (pop. 355) – [newsletter](#)
 - Spring – MSCWMO
 - Winter – Low impact development – MIDS community assistance project
- Mahtomedi (pop. 8000) - [newsletter](#)
 - April – June: water conservation
- Maplewood (pop. 39,337) – only current month’s newsletter posted on-line
- Marine on St. Croix (pop. 700) – no 2013 newsletters posted on-line
- May Twp. (pop. 761) – twice annually, not posted on-line
- Newport (pop. 3435) - [newsletter](#)
 - Fall – community buckthorn pull
 - Winter – community buckthorn pull
- North St. Paul (pop. 11,694) – [utility newsletter](#)
 - October – leaves and water quality
- Oakdale (pop. 27,726) – only current newsletter posted on-line
- Oak Parks Heights (pop. 4724) - [newsletter](#)
 - Fourth quarter – leaves and water quality
- Pine Springs (pop. 408) – no newsletter or website
- Scandia (pop. 3934) - [newsletter](#)
 - Fall – leaves impact water quality
- Stillwater (pop. 18,000) - [newsletter](#)
 - 2013 – Raingarden tour and ice cream social
- Stillwater Twp. (pop. 3000) - [newsletter](#)
 - February – WCD tree and rain barrel sale
- St. Mary’s Point (pop. 370) – no newsletter
- West Lakeland (pop. 3547) - [newsletter](#)
 - May – “Big Backyard” workshop
 - June – special mailer for “Big Backyard” workshop
 - Fall - buckthorn
- Willernie (pop. 511) – Mayor’s letter sent occasionally, none in 2013

- Woodbury (pop. 57,345) - [newsletter](#)
 - June – lawn watering and rain sensors
 - July – grass clippings
 - Sept. – Colby Lake raingarden tour and ice cream social
 - November – special clean water insert

Cable Access Programming: In February of 2013, EMWREP worked with White Bear Lake Suburban Cable Commission to film a 30-min segment about Blue Thumb – Planting for Clean Water. Watch it on-line at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Mc1r16Yoxg>.



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:

- **Washington Conservation District:** In 2013, the WCD website (www.mnwcd.org) received 9,627 visits from 6,007 visitors. The WCD has 150 Facebook friends and EMWREP has 75 Twitter followers.
- **Blue Thumb – Planting for Clean Water:** The website (www.BlueThumb.org) received 23,548 visits from 18,710 visitors. Blue Thumb has 835 Facebook friends and 212 Twitter followers.
- **WaterShed Partners:** The Clean Water Minnesota website (www.cleanwatermn.org) received 2,799 visits from 2,380 visitors. StormDrain Goalie, a new social media initiative of WaterShed Partners has 522 Facebook friends.
- **East Metro Water Blog:** The blog (www.eastmetrowater.areavoices.com) had 7,358 visits in 2013.

In 2013, we found that social media often helped us to amplify our media outreach and gain additional exposure. For example, the Star Tribune wrote a feature article about the neighborhood raingarden retrofit project in Colby Lake, Woodbury, after learning about the project via Twitter.

WaterShed Partners: 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 coordinates the Clean Water Minnesota Media Campaign, maintains the www.cleanwatermn.org website, the MS4 Toolkit, and the StormDrain Goalie program, and has prominent exhibit space in the Eco Experience and DNR Buildings at the Minnesota State Fair.



In April, WaterShed Partners hosted a social media training for Minnesota water educators with Jamie Millard, a social media consultant that specializes in working with non-profit and government organizations. In June, WaterShed Partners coordinated their 7th Annual Boat Trip on the Mississippi River. Presenters talked about the State of the Mississippi River Report, progress on Asian Carp prevention, and the new Atlas 14 guidelines developed to reflecting changing rainfall patterns in Minnesota. In November, WaterShed Partners held a roundtable discussion to address the question of how water educators can best evaluate the impact of their work.

The 2013 WaterShed Partners and Media Campaign annual report can be found at www.cleanwatermn.org.

Special Projects



Above: Over 70 people attended a workshop on aquatic invasives in March.

Aquatic Invasive Species Workshop: EMWREP partners CLFLWD and CMSCWD collaborated with Chisago County to host a workshop about aquatic invasive species on March 9 at the Scandia Community Center. More than 70 people attended to learn about identifying, managing, and preventing the spread of invasive species such as curly leaf pondweed, zebra mussels and carp.

Outreach to Homeowners Associations and Lawn Care Companies: In 2013, EMWREP began developing education and outreach materials specifically for homeowners associations (HOAs) and people who hire lawn care companies to maintain their yards. New materials included a

one page fact sheet *What to ask for from your lawn care provider*, as well as a new webpage on the Washington Conservation District website. A special mailing was also sent to HOAs and lawn care providers in Forest Lake and Woodbury during the summer.

The Washington Conservation District recently received a Clean Water grant from the Board of Water and Soil Resources, which will allow EMWREP to spend additional time conducting interviews and focus groups to learn how to better connect with these “hard-to-reach” audiences. During 2013, EMWREP also developed door hangers, which will be distributed to the Colby Lake neighborhood in Woodbury in 2014.

Pond Dipping at Cottage Grove Ravine Park: On September 26, EMWREP collaborated with Friends of the Mississippi River to hold an outdoor event at Cottage Grove Ravine Park. Approximately 30 people turned out to dip for aquatic invertebrates in the lake, hike around the shoreline wetlands with FMR ecologist Karen Schik and learn about water quality and habitat health in the park.

Valley Branch Watershed District Public Meetings: During 2013, EMWREP provided support for partner Valley Branch Watershed District as they organized a series of public meetings around WRAPS (watershed restoration and protection strategy) underway in the watershed and to update the District’s 10-yr plan. Public meetings were held for Kelle’s Creek and lakes WRAPS on June 4 and 6. The Plan Update meeting was held on Oct. 30.



Lake Association Meetings: EMWREP attended lake association meetings for Bone Lake (Scandia) and Silver Lake (North St. Paul) to talk about watershed district programs and discuss opportunities for involvement.

Above: Valley Branch watershed residents talked in small groups during a plan update meeting.

Church Focus Groups: In October, EMWREP held a focus group session with representatives from congregations in Washington County and RWMWD that have completed or are going to complete clean water projects at their churches. Participants included pastors, facilities managers and congregation members. Attendees expressed an interest in a monthly clean water e-newsletter, online resources, a maintenance workshop for grounds-keeping staff, and a Church Raingarden Tour.

Evaluation: Though the impact of public education and awareness raising efforts is often hard to measure directly, we know they greatly improve the success of our targeted outreach activities and are usually the initial gateway through which people learn about EMWREP partner organizations and engage at a higher level by attending a workshop, participating in a watershed planning process, or installing a clean water project on their property.

During 2013, EMWREP did not conduct surveys or other behavioral research to measure learning or behavior change. However, conversations with attendees at public events seem to indicate that people are more aware of surface and groundwater issues in their communities and practices such as raingardens than they were eight years ago. Metro WaterShed Partners are currently discussing tools for evaluation and EMWREP looks forward to using these tools once they are developed.

Knowledge gained during our church focus group will help us to develop appropriate educational tools and resources for this audience and to maximize the public education value of clean water projects installed by area congregations.

Blue Thumb

Planting for Clean Water

Minimum Control Measure Addressed

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public education & outreach	<input type="checkbox"/> Construction site runoff controls
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public participation & involvement	<input type="checkbox"/> Post-construction storm water management
<input type="checkbox"/> Illicit discharge detection and elimination	<input type="checkbox"/> Municipal pollution prevention & good housekeeping

Audience: Homeowners

Program Goals:

1. Promote native gardens, raingardens and shoreline plantings in targeted areas within EMWREP partner communities.
2. Coordinate Blue Thumb outreach with partner BMP programs and TMDL implementation.
3. Coordinate with landscapers, nurseries, Master Gardeners, and others to conduct outreach and implement projects.
4. Publicize and utilize demonstration gardens created by the program to increase educational benefit. Create signage, conduct tours and highlight demonstration projects.

Educational Goals:

Learning

1. Provide a visible “hook” to discuss and encourage people to think about stormwater and water resources.
2. Increase understanding of native plants, raingardens and shoreline stabilization as best management practices for clean water.

Behavior Change

1. Engage the public in preventing non-point source water pollution.
2. Increase the utilization of native plantings, raingardens and shoreline stabilization by local residents.

Water-quality Improvement

1. Reduce and prevent non-point source pollution of surface and groundwater resources.
2. Maintain adequate groundwater and drinking water resources.

Activities used to reach goals:



Regional collaboration: The Blue Thumb partnership includes more than 70 public and private entities - nurseries, landscaping companies, watershed agencies, cities, non-profits and citizen groups. The collaborative nature of the program ensures a consistent message for the public and maximizes the outreach efforts of all program partners. EMWREP continues to play a lead role in the partnership by serving on the regional steering committee.

EMWREP uses Blue Thumb tools and resources, such as the website and print materials, to promote partner BMP programs. These tools also help us to strengthen outreach for targeted stormwater retrofit projects. In 2013, EMWREP also helped to coordinate and teach a full-day professional training for Blue Thumb partners on how to plan, promote and conduct educational workshops.

Workshops: EMWREP holds community workshops to promote native gardens, raingardens and shoreline plantings. These workshops are open to interested community members and are promoted through flyers, press releases and community newsletters. In 2013, EMWREP conducted five workshops:

- Raingarden workshop in Scandia, hosted in partnership with Prairie Restorations, Inc.
 - 28 homes (individuals or couples) attended;
 - Participants came from BCWD, CLFLWD, CMSCWD, MSCWMO, RCWD, RWMWD, SWWD and VBWD.
- Prairie workshop in Afton, hosted in partnership with Belwin Conservancy
 - 10 homes attended;
 - Participants came from BCWD, CMSCWD, MSCWMO and VBWD.
- A workshop for large lot owners in West Lakeland Twp., organized in partnership with Master Gardeners
 - 40-50 people attended
- Raingarden maintenance workshop in Lake Elmo
 - The workshop was for homeowners who had raingardens installed on their properties during city road projects in 2009-12;
 - 5 homes attended.
- Shoreline maintenance workshop in Forest Lake
 - The workshop was for shoreline landowners in CLFLWD and CMSCWD who completed restoration projects on their properties;
 - 11 homes attended.



Above: Local landowners learn about the prairie at Belwin Conservancy.



Above: Recent BMP project participants learn how to maintain their shoreline plantings.

Neighborhood Parties: Three of the workshops listed above were hosted by homeowners.

Presentations: In addition to workshops, EMWREP gave presentations to the following groups in 2013:

- Trillium Garden Club – Stillwater (Feb. 13)
- Tii Gavo Homeowners Association – Scandia (March 6)
- Goose Lake residents – Scandia (April 17)
- Bone Lake association – Scandia (May 30)

Targeted homeowner outreach: During 2013, EMWREP provided outreach support for the following partner projects:

- Casey Lake neighborhood stormwater retrofits (Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District)
- Neal Ave. neighborhood stormwater retrofits (Brown's Creek Watershed District)
- Lily and McKusick Lake neighborhood stormwater retrofits (Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization)

We also organized tours of recently completed neighborhood stormwater retrofits near Colby Lake (South Washington Watershed District) and Lily and McKusick Lakes (Middle St. Croix WMO) to celebrate and showcase these projects. Approximately 200 people attended each of these events.



Above: A collage of photos from gardens featured on the Stillwater raingarden tour.

Integration with partner BMP programs: EMWREP continues to integrate Blue Thumb education and outreach with partner BMP programs.

Promotional materials: EMWREP has created a suite of print materials and brochures to promote Blue Thumb practices. We also have interactive displays, digital photo frames, posters and banners that we use ourselves and loan out to other for use at community education events.

Evaluation: The number of raingardens and other residential projects installed in Washington County continues to climb each year, at least in part, as a result of EMWREP education and outreach efforts. Conservation District staff conducted 240 site visits during 2013. 62 projects were installed with watershed cost-share funding, 45 projects were completed with only technical assistance, and an additional 115 new projects are still in progress. The WCD estimates that residential projects installed in 2013 will reduce phosphorus loading to area waters by 37 pounds per year.

Rural Outreach

Minimum Control Measure Addressed

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public education & outreach	<input type="checkbox"/> Construction site runoff controls
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public participation & involvement	<input type="checkbox"/> Post-construction storm water management
<input type="checkbox"/> Illicit discharge detection and elimination	<input type="checkbox"/> Municipal pollution prevention & good housekeeping

Audience: Rural landowners

Program Goals:

1. Find creative ways to engage rural landowners in projects that improve habitat and also reduce erosion and non-point source water pollution.
2. Promote projects on sensitive and highly erodable lands, such as steep slopes, ravines and bluff tops; encourage buffer plantings on streams, lakes and wetlands; and help people to restore wetlands and natural stream corridors.
3. Coordinate outreach with partner BMP programs and TMDL implementation.

Educational Goals:

Learning

1. Increase awareness about watersheds and water resource issues in the East Metro, as well as the causes of non-point source water pollution.
2. Increase awareness of and knowledge about wildlife habitat requirements.
3. Increase public knowledge about forest, prairie and wetlands systems, including;
 - a. The roles that plants, animals and non-living components such as soil and water play in ecosystems; and
 - b. The threats posed by invasive species, habitat fragmentation and degradation and loss of natural processes.
4. Educate local residents about how to improve existing and create habitat on their property to attract wildlife and reduce runoff pollution.

Behavior Change

1. Engage private property owners in projects that will improve habitat and reduce non-point source water pollution. Specific actions may include:
 - a) Removing buckthorn and other invasive plant species, especially on steep slopes, ravines and bluff tops, and in floodplains and drainage paths.
 - b) Planting native trees, shrubs and plants, especially on steep slopes, ravines and bluff tops, and in floodplains and drainage paths.
 - c) Repairing ravines, gullies and other erosion areas with native plants that also provide habitat.
 - d) Establishing buffer plantings on streams, lakes and wetlands.
 - e) Restoring wetlands and natural stream corridors.

Water-quality Improvement

1. Reduce and prevent non-point source pollution of surface and groundwater resources.
2. Maintain adequate groundwater and drinking water resources.

Activities used to reach goals:

Collaboration with local non-profits and sportsmen groups: EMWREP continues to seek out opportunities for collaboration with local non-profits and sportsmen groups in order to better reach rural landowners. In 2013, we hosted an activity station at the Minnesota Outdoor Youth Expo, held at Wild Wings hunt Club in Hugo, and also attended the Hugo Feed Mill open house.

Horse owner's workshop: EMWREP collaborated with Minnesota Extension and Hagberg's Country Feed, LLC to put on a full-day workshop for people who own and board horses in Washington County. Washington County has the most horses of any county in Minnesota and, though we know that there are many opportunities for conservation projects, horse owners and boarders generally do not qualify for agricultural assistance programs because they are not considered producers. Workshop topics included:

- Pasture management;
- Reducing runoff and BMP programs;
- Composting manure;
- Pharmaceuticals in groundwater ;
- Phosphorus in horse feed; and
- Hoof care.

Roughly 25 people attended, including folks from Baytown, Grant, Marine, May Twp., Stillwater Twp., West Lakeland and Woodbury.



Above: Horse owners learned about pasture management from Minnesota Extension expert Kirshona Martinson.

Nitrates Water Testing Clinics: During the spring, EMWREP worked with Washington County and the Minnesota Department of Health to hold three water testing clinics for rural landowners with private wells:

- Denmark Twp. – May 6
- Scandia – May 8
- Cottage Grove – June 24

In addition to conducting on-site analysis of well water samples to determine nitrate levels, EMWREP also used the clinics as an opportunity to distribute information about conservation programs and practices.

Buckthorn Workshops: On Sept. 11 and 12, EMWREP held buckthorn workshops in Denmark Twp. and Lake Elmo. During the workshops, landowners learned about best practices for removing and managing buckthorn and also took home information about other conservation programs and practices. Several attendees signed up for site visits after the workshop. In addition, EMWREP participated in Newport's annual community buckthorn event at Bailey School Forest on Oct. 26.

Support for targeted implementation projects: During 2013, EMWREP provided outreach assistance for several targeted implementation projects, including:

- Washington Conservation District – Turf to Native project: EMWREP created a mailing that was sent to 250 priority landowners with an acre or more of turf in areas draining to the St. Croix River. We also promoted the project through a variety of other means, including contacting previous workshop participants, creating flyers and writing articles for local papers and city newsletters.