



WEST METRO WATER ALLIANCE

**2016 ANNUAL REPORT**



## **BACKGROUND**

In 2006 the Shingle Creek and West Mississippi Watershed Management Commission's Education and Public Outreach Committee (EPOC) invited the Education Committee of the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission to partner in developing joint education and outreach activities. Since that time this voluntary partnership has grown to include the Elm Creek Watershed Management Commission, the Three Rivers Park District, Hennepin County Department of Environment and Energy, and the Freshwater Society. The WMOs are designated as "members," the latter three organizations as "partners."

This alliance, the West Metro Water Alliance (WMWA), grew from a recognition that the individual organizations have many common education and public outreach goals and messages that could be more efficiently and effectively addressed and delivered collaboratively and on a wider scale.

## **MEETINGS**

WMWA meets monthly, as needed, on the second Tuesday, at Plymouth City Hall. Member representatives include Laura Jester, Administrator, Bassett Creek WMC; Doug Baines, Dayton, Elm Creek WMC; and Shelley Marsh, Brooklyn Center, and Ben Scharenbroich, Plymouth, Shingle Creek and West Mississippi WMCs. Partner attendees have included Denis Hahn, Three Rivers Park District; Mary Karius, Hennepin County; and Peggy Knapp, Freshwater Society. Other attendees include Mary Anderson, Sharon Meister, Tracy Leavenworth, and Jenny Schaut, Watershed PREP Educators; Dawn Pape, Lawn Chair Gardener; Michaela Neu and Tammy Schmitz, Mississippi WMO; and Dave Dahle, Eden Prairie. Diane Spector, Wenck Associates, serves as technical support for WMWA, and Amy Juntunen and Judie Anderson, JASS, serve as administrative support. In 2016 eleven meetings were held. All WMWA member Commissioners are welcome to attend meetings.

## **THE WMWA PROGRAM**

Goals of the WMWA program are to:

- Inform public about the watershed organizations and their programs.
- Provide useful information to public on priority topics.
- Engage public and encourage positive, water-friendly behaviors.

Two informational pieces have been developed by WMWA to support these goals. The *10 Things You Can Do Brochure* targets the general public. The brochure is distributed at all venues where the Commissions or member cities have a presence and also in the Watershed PREP classrooms. It is also available on the websites of the WMO member cities.

The *Maintain Your Property the Watershed Friendly Way* handbook targets small businesses, multi-family housing properties, and common interest communities such as homeowners' associations. It contains tips for specifying and hiring turf and snow maintenance contractors, and includes checklists for BMP inspections.

## WATERSHED PREP

Watershed PREP is a program of WMWA, and stands for Protection, Restoration, Education, and Prevention. 2016 was the fourth year of the program. Three contract educators with science education backgrounds are shared between the member watersheds. The focus of the program is two-fold - to present water resource-based classes to fourth grade students and to provide education and outreach to citizens, lake associations, other civic organizations, youth groups, etc. Goals of the program are 1) to have audiences gain a general understanding of watersheds, water resources and the organizations that manage them, and 2) to have audiences understand the connection between actions and water quality and water quantity. The ultimate goal is to make this program available to all fourth graders in the four WMWA watersheds and to other schools as contracted.

*Fourth Grade Program.* Three individual lessons meeting State education standards have been developed. **Lesson 1**, *What is a Watershed and Why do we care?*, provides an overview of the watershed concept and is specific to each school's watershed. It describes threats to the watershed. **Lesson 2**, *Water Cycle - More than 2-dimensional!*, describes the movement and status of water as it travels through the water cycle. **Lesson 3**, *Stormwater Walk*, investigates movement of surface water on schools grounds.



In 2016, 127 classes totaling 3,374 students attended lessons 1 and 2 (compared to 149 and 4,042, respectively in 2015, compared to 78 and 1,373, respectively, in 2014, and 37 and 931, respectively, in 2013.) *Appendix A* details the students reached in lessons 1 and 2.

*Community Education and Outreach.* The PREP educators also provided outreach at ten community and school events. Outreach activities are also described in *Appendix A*.

## UPDATED WORK PLAN

In 2015 the WMWA Work Plan was updated to reflect current practices. The last plan, created in 2010, had become outdated. The updated Work Plan identified the following activities:

1. Facilitate information availability and sharing.
2. Reschedule professional opinion survey to measure knowledge and attitudes about water resources to 2019.
3. Provide Coordinated Communication, Media Relations, and Information Sharing that more closely parallels what the NPDES Permit education and public outreach minimum measure require. Components include identifying priority issues every year, developing a communications plan that identifies educational goals by stakeholder, establishing measurable goals, and identifying responsible parties.
4. Develop county-wide or regional activities. At this time WMWA does not have the capacity to undertake these activities.
5. Pursue and obtain funding for education and public outreach activities.
6. Support and expand in scope and reach the Watershed PREP program.

WMWA's 2016 and 2017 budgets reflect these activities and were approved by the members on March 10, 2015 and March 8, 2016, respectively. The budgets are included in this report as *Appendix B*.

### **SPECIAL PROJECT**

At WMWA's request, Metro Blooms/Blue Thumb submitted a proposal for a project that would encourage residents to replace impervious surface and turf grass with native plantings to benefit clean water by reducing stormwater runoff. The project includes the additional benefit of creating habitat for pollinators. An agreement between Metro Blooms and the Shingle Creek Commission, as fiscal agent, to move the project forward was approved.

Phase one of the project began with creation of a name, tag line and logo. The project was promoted in the Blue Thumb space at the State Fair where the public voted to name the campaign, *Pledge to Plant for Pollinators and Clean Water*.

Phase two included a roll out of the Pledge campaign on the Metro Blooms and WMWA websites where citizens can enter the square footage of their new plantings, creation of a Pledge to Plant banner for events, and a social media campaign that began in May 2016. The Campaign was promoted at the State Fair and other area events.

As of December 31, 2016, over 250 people had submitted the Pledge online covering approximately 25 acres, although several submissions did not specify an area to be planted, so it may be more. The total includes a few larger prairie restoration projects. Most of the Pledges come from the metro area, but Pledges have been received from Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, Ohio, Wisconsin, Indiana and California.



### **RAINGARDEN WORKSHOPS**

In 2016, three Green Yard/Raingarden Workshops, hosted by WMWA member cities and presented by Metro Blooms were held. Workshops took place in Plymouth, Champlin, and Brooklyn Park. Attendees learned about raingardens and other practices, like stormwater recapture and reuse with rain barrels, diversion of downspouts away from impervious surfaces, and use of pervious pavers for driveways and patios.

## WMWA WEBSITE

A new website, [www.westmetrowateralliance.org](http://www.westmetrowateralliance.org), went live in January 2016. The website serves as a repository for documents and information for access by member cities and citizens, lists local events WMWA is participating in and/or otherwise promoting, stores Watershed PREP information for schools, and collects information for the Pledge to Plant campaign.

## 2016 MARKETING ACTIVITY

*Water Links.* The members and their partners contribute to the WMWA eNewsletter *Water Links*, which is published by the Hennepin County Department of Environment and Energy. Three issues were published in 2016. Articles included seasonal topics such as Environmentally Friendly Lawn Care, Managing Fall Yard Waste, and Snow and Ice control, as well as project updates including grants received, restoration projects, city and watershed events, and the new buffer law.

*Seed Packets.* One of the priority messages in 2016 was the role of native vegetation in improving stormwater infiltration and reducing other negative environmental impacts. To help promote this message, WMWA and the member Commissions handed out 360 packets of native seeds at community events and in Watershed PREP classrooms. A short educational message was printed on the seed packets.



*Plymouth Home Expo.* Bassett Creek, Shingle Creek, and Elm Creek booths were combined into a large area and included a WMWA focus area at the 2016 Expo, April 8 and 9. There were over 120 direct contacts at the booths. A “Planting in native clay soil” handout was available at the Shingle Creek and Elm Creek booths and doggy-doo bags were provided at the Bassett Creek booth. Over 900 residents visited the event.

*Social Media.* In May 2016 WMWA contracted with Dawn Pape, Lawn Chair Gardener, LLC, to create a social media campaign for the Pledge to Plant campaign and WMWA in general on Facebook and Twitter. As of December 31, 2016, the WMWA Facebook page had 88 likes and the Twitter page had 37 followers. The most well-received posts had nearly 500 engagements.

To learn more about WMWA, contact:  
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or Amy Juntunen, JASS, 763.553.1144, [amy@jass.biz](mailto:amy@jass.biz)

# **APPENDIX**

## 2016 School Visits

### Lesson 1: What is a Watershed and Why do we Care?

	Date	School	School District	City	Watershed	# of Classes	# of Students	Funded By
1	1/12	Shirley Hills Primary	Westonka	Mound	Minnehaha	1	25	PSC Trial
2	1/25	St. Alphonsus	Parochial	Brooklyn Ctr	Shingle	1	30	WMWA
3	1/26	Hilltop Primary	Westonka	Minnetrista	Minnehaha	3	90	PSC Trial
4	2/5	Lakeview Elementary	Robbinsdale	Robbinsdale	Shingle	3	69	WMWA
5	2/8	Palmer Lake	Osseo	Brooklyn Park	Shingle	4	80	WMWA
6	2/22	Hassan	Elk River	Rogers	Elm	5	124	WMWA
7	2/23	Zachary Lane Elementary	Robbinsdale	Plymouth	Bassett	3	78	WMWA
8	3/9	Forest Elementary	Robbinsdale	Crystal	Shingle			WMWA
9	3/11	Good Shepherd	Parochial	St. Louis Park	Bassett	2	50	WMWA
10	3/15	Sacred Heart	Parochial	Robbinsdale	Shingle	1	20	WMWA
11	3/17	Gleason Lake	Wayzata	Plymouth	Minnehaha	2	48	Plymouth
12	3/22	Oakwood	Wayzata	Plymouth	Minnehaha	4	110	Plymouth
13	3/24	Plymouth Creek	Wayzata	Plymouth	Bassett	5	115	WMWA
14	4/5	Mary Queen Of Peace	Parochial	Rogers	Elm	1	8	WMWA
15	4/27	Rush Creek	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	7	196	WMWA
16	5/2	Earle Brown Elementary	Brooklyn Center	Brooklyn Ctr	W. Miss	6	156	WMWA
17	5/12	Kimberly Lane	Wayzata	Plymouth	Bassett	4	104	WMWA
18	6/7	St. Vincent de Paul School	Parochial	Brooklyn Park	W. Miss	2	48	WMWA
19	10/5	Basswood Elementary	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	6	171	WMWA
20	10/5	FAIR School	Robbinsdale	Crystal	Shingle	4	108	WMWA
21	10/12	Rice Lake	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	4	114	WMWA
22	10/13	Champlin Brooklyn Park Acade	Anoka-Hennepin	Champlin	W. Miss	5	148	WMWA
23	10/14	Rogers Elementary School	Elk River	Rogers	Elm	10	265	WMWA
24	10/17	Oxbow Creek Elementary	Anoka-Hennepin	Champlin	W. Miss	6	179	WMWA
25	10/25	School of Engineering and Arts (SEA)	Robbinsdale	Golden Valley	Bassett	3	78	WMWA
26	10/27	Woodland Elementary	Osseo	Brooklyn Park	W. Miss	4	123	WMWA
27	11/21	Monroe Elementary	Anoka-Hennepin	Brooklyn Park	W. Miss	4	118	WMWA
28	11/21	Sonnescyn Elementary	Robbinsdale	New Hope	Shingle	2	75	WMWA
29	12/20	Robbinsdale Spanish Imm.	Robbinsdale	New Hope	Bassett	5	120	WMWA
30	Conflict	Jackson Middle School (8th gr.) Expert day	Anoka-Hennepin		W. Miss			WMWA
31		Birchview	Wayzata		Bassett			WMWA
32		Sunset Hill	Wayzata		Bassett			WMWA
33		New Millennium	Mpls		Bassett			WMWA
34	9/27	Weaver Lake Science Math & Tech	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	?	?	WMWA
35		Elm Creek Elementary	Osseo		Elm			WMWA
36		Meadow Lake	Robbinsdale		Shingle			WMWA
37		Noble Academy	Charter		W. Miss			WMWA
<b>Total:</b>						<b>107</b>	<b>2850</b>	

### Lesson 2: The Incredible Journey

Date	School	School District	Watershed	# of Classes	# of Students
16-17 Feb	Palmer Lake	Osseo	Shingle	4	82
26-27 Apr	Rush Creek	Osseo	Elm	7	196
16-May	Earle Brown	Brooklyn Center	W. Miss	6	156
5-Apr	Mary Queen of Peace	Parochial	Elm	1	15
21-Nov	Sonnescyn Elementary	Robbinsdale	Shingle	2	75
<b>Total</b>				<b>20</b>	<b>524</b>

### Other

Date	Event	Location	Watershed	# of Attendees
5/24	Basswood Science Night	Maple Grove	Elm Creek	
4/8	Plymouth Home & Garden	Plymouth	BC, SC, EC	1100
5/24	Fernbrook Nature Night	Maple Grove	Elm Creek	
7/28	Plymouth Kids Fest	Plymouth	BC, SC, EC	
4/16	Brooklyn Center Clean Up	Brooklyn Center		
	HC Nature Fest			
6/4	New Hope City Days	New Hope	SC	
9/17	New Hope Farmers Market	New Hope	SC	
9/20	Coon Rapids Dam TRPD Nature	Brooklyn Park	WM	
9/29	HC Enviro Edu Conversation	Brooklyn Center		



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O		
1	<b>WMWA 2015 Operating Budget (mirrors 2014 budget)</b>																
2												<b>Actual 2014</b>					
3	<b>Revenue</b>			<b>BC</b>	<b>EC</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Total</b>		<b>RECD</b>	<b>Pending</b>	<b>Total</b>				
4	Member Reimbursement Admin/Tech Servs																
5		Routine tasks, coordinate newsletter, etc.		3,750	3,750	3,750	3,750		15,000		15,260.48	145.80	15,114.68				
6		Annual Report, Newsletter, Social Media															
7																	
8	Member Reimbursement - Special Projects			1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500		6,000		6,000.00		6,000.00				
9																	
10	Watershed PREP			4,500	4,500	4,500	4,500		18,000		9,244.72	774.00	10,018.72				
11		Fourth Grade Initiative															
12		Public Outreach															
13																	
14	Green Yard Workshops - Metro Blooms			3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	2,500	14,500		11,250.00		11,250.00				
15																	
16	<b>Total Revenue</b>			<b>9,750</b>	<b>9,750</b>	<b>9,750</b>	<b>9,750</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>39,000</b>		<b>41,755.20</b>	<b>628.20</b>	<b>42,383.40</b>				
17																	
18	<b>APPROVED 2016 BUDGET</b>											<b>Actual 2015</b>					
19	<b>Revenue</b>			<b>BC</b>	<b>EC</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>WM</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Total</b>		<b>Income</b>	<b>Expense</b>	<b>Balance</b>				
20	Member Reimbursement Admin/Tech Servs																
21		Routine tasks, coordinate newsletter, etc.		3,750	3,750	3,750	3,750		15,000		15,000	15,691	691				
22		Annual Report, Newsletter, Social Media															
23																	
24	Member Reimbursement - Special Projects			1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500		6,000		6,000	6,000	0				
25											<i>from 2014 budget carryover; 2015 budget is unspent</i>						
26																	
27																	
28	Watershed PREP			4,500	4,500	4,500	4,500		18,000		18,000	11,840	6,160				
29		Fourth Grade Initiative									<i>includes MWMO mini grant expense outside grant</i>						
30		Public Outreach															
31																	
32	Green Yard Workshops - Metro Blooms			3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	2,500	14,500		7,800	7,800	0				
33	<i>(not included in services agreement)</i>																
34																	
35	<b>Total Revenue</b>			<b>12,750</b>	<b>12,750</b>	<b>12,750</b>	<b>12,750</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>53,500</b>		<b>46,800</b>	<b>41,331</b>	<b>5,469</b>				
36																	
37	The cost to develop written materials such as the <i>Ten Things</i> brochure is shared by the members. Each watershed																
38	organization and/or member city is invoiced for the number of items they purchase for their use/distribution.																