



WEST METRO WATER ALLIANCE

**2018 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 and Mike Scanlan, Commissioner, Bassett Creek WMC; Doug Baines, Dayton, Elm Creek WMC; Catherine Cesnik, Plymouth, Elm Creek WMC; and Shelley Marsh, Brooklyn Center, and Ben Scharenbroich and Vanessa Strong, Plymouth, Shingle Creek, Elm Creek and West Mississippi WMCs. Other attendees include Mary Anderson and Sharon Meister, Watershed PREP Educators; and Dawn Pape, Lawn Chair Gardener. Diane Spector, Wenck Associates, serves as technical support for WMWA, and Amy Juntunen, JASS, serves as administrative support. In 2018 nine meetings were held. All WMWA member Commissioners and city staff 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.

Three 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.

The *Residential Snow and Ice Care* brochure is an educational piece designed to inform citizens of the chloride pollution problem and ways to reduce salt use.

## WATERSHED PREP

Watershed PREP is a program of WMWA and stands for Protection, Restoration, Education, and Prevention. 2018 was the sixth year of the program. Two 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 school grounds.



In 2018, 143 classes totaling 3,593 students participated in Lesson 1. Of those classes, 69 totaling 1,755 students also participated in Lesson 2. Since the inception of the program in 2013, a total of 566 classrooms and 14,782 students have participated in Lesson 1 and 4,370 students in 159 classes participated in Lesson 2. *Appendix A* details the students reached in lessons 1 and 2. The PREP educators also provided *Community Education and Outreach* at four school and community water-related events using the large model watershed "Enviroscape" for runoff education. Outreach activities are also described in *Appendix A*.

## UPDATED WORK PLAN

In 2015 the WMWA Work Plan was updated to reflect current practices. 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 parallel 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 2018 and 2019 budgets reflect these activities and were approved by the members on April 11, 2017 and January 16, 2018, respectively. The budgets are included in this report as *Appendix C*.

## 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 for WMWA, 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 in 2016 and 2017.

In 2018, 106 people submitted their Pledges online. Since the program launched in 2016 there are over 630 total pledges covering over 417 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 but the median pledge covers 200 square feet. Most of the pledges come from the metro area, but pledges have been received from 20 other states: Arkansas, Alabama, California, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

## RESILIENT YARD WORKSHOPS

In 2018, four Resilient Yard workshops and one Turf Alternative workshop, hosted by WMWA member cities and presented by Metro Blooms were held. Workshops took place in Plymouth, Champlin, Crystal, Brooklyn Center and Golden Valley. Attendees learned about raingardens, native plantings, and turf alternatives or "bee lawns" 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. Over 224 WMWA area residents attended the Resilient Yard workshop throughout the metro area and 50 attended the Turf Alternative workshop.

One of the barriers identified in attendees not installing practices is a lack of technical assistance. In 2018, WMWA offered to cover half of the \$100 cost for Blue Thumb consultants to provide personal on-site consultations to workshop attendees. Metro Blooms reported 35 on-site consultations with WMWA area residents, over double the on-site consultations performed in previous years.



Sherman Associates, owners of Autumn Ridge Apartments in Brooklyn Park, agreed to a 2018 budget and workplan which includes the design and installation of five raingardens, a permeable pavement system, a large native planting at the corner of the property and a new playground, pending application and receipt of grant funding from Hennepin County and the Shingle Creek Watershed Management Commission. A Resilient Yard workshop was held on site for residents in fall 2017 with the planting project occurring in fall 2018. (see flyer next page)

Surveys were sent by Metro Blooms shortly after the workshop and again at year-end with the following results:

#### *Post-Workshop Survey*

- 93% of respondents indicated they were likely or very likely to install native plants in their yard this year.
- 59% indicated they were likely or very likely to install a turf alternative in their yard this year.
- 60% indicated they were likely or very likely to install a raingarden in their yard in the next two years (many of the respondents who were unlikely noted they already had at least one).
- 97%+ rated the workshop experience, the presenters, and the information presented “above average” or “excellent.”
- Over 70% workshop attendees are educated, older, affluent white females.

#### *Year-End Survey*

- 24% of respondents have installed or are working on installing raingardens since the workshop.
- Another 30% plan to do so in the future (and 13% already had at least one raingarden before the workshop).
- 43% installed or began installing turf alternatives (on an average of 36% of their yards)
- Another 37% plan to do so in the future.

#### *Other practices attendees adopted after the workshop include:*

- Keeping leaves and grass clippings out of the street and storm drain (36%)
- Redirecting downspouts to a planted area (31%)
- Cleaning debris from a nearby storm drain (19%)
- Adjusting use of salt/sand for de-icing (14%)
- Pick up pet waste every day (14%)

The top two reasons residents gave for installing raingardens were decreasing runoff and beautifying their property/create native habitat. The two primary motivations for the residents who installed turf alternatives were creating habitat for pollinators and reducing dependence on irrigation, fertilizing and other inputs.

### **NATIVE PLANT SALES**

Minnesota Native Landscapes held native plant/seed sales prior to the Resilient Yard workshops. They reported the sales were successful but did not have definitive numbers.

### **WINTER MAINTENANCE TRAINING**

Winter Maintenance Training workshops were held at Plymouth City Hall on August 29 and at Crystal Community Center on September 26 with 50 and 32 attendees, respectively. Attendees learned how to adjust the use of salt de-icing products to be effective without over use.



*Sherman Associates, Autumn Ridge Residents, the City of Brooklyn Park, ACER, and Metro Blooms have worked collaboratively to*

## **RECREATE the LANDSCAPE**

**You're Invited to help plant a Pollinator Garden!**



**Come learn and experience the benefits of using green infrastructure to increase community resilience**

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2018**

**10AM**

**Meet at the Autumn Ridge Clubhouse**

For more information: Contact Kimberly Carpenter, Community Engagement Coordinator  
email: [kim@metroblooms.org](mailto:kim@metroblooms.org) phone: 612.919.4226 or  
Anastacia Silbernagel, Community Coordinator/Leasing Specialist  
Autumn Ridge Apartments Office: 763-533-8541 Direct: 612-655-9739

Visit our website to learn more about our organization <https://metroblooms.org/>

## **WMWA WEBSITE**

The WMWA website [www.westmetrowateralliance.org](http://www.westmetrowateralliance.org) 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 and newsletter subscriptions.

The website had 1216 unique visitors engaged in 1,413 individual sessions with an average of 1.6 pages viewed per session for a total of 2,261 page views on the website in 2018. The website metrics can be found in Appendix B

## **2018 MARKETING ACTIVITY**

*Water Links*. The members and their partners contribute to the WMWA eNewsletter *Water Links* which, through 2017, was published by the Hennepin County Department of Environment and Energy to a subscriber list of 2,200. In 2018, the County was unable to continue publishing the newsletter and due to privacy laws was unable to furnish the subscriber list.

In 2018 WMWA published newsletters in February, May and August through [www.mailchimp.com](http://www.mailchimp.com) to a subscriber list of 154. Articles included seasonal topics such as Environmentally Friendly Lawn Care, Managing Fall Yard Waste, Snow and Ice control, and recognition of resident installed rain and native gardens, as well as watershed project updates such as carp tracking and removal, city recognition for reduced salt use, upcoming subwatershed assessment projects, aquatic invasive species, new project installations, creek restorations, the Master Water Steward program, promotion of the *Pledge to Plant* campaign and Watershed PREP program, and city and watershed events.

*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, 2018, the WMWA Twitter page had 132 followers. The most well-received Tweet was “Right on @MonarchsJV” with a reach of 1,978 and 20 engagements. Overall there were 56 Tweets in 2018 with a reach of 13,012 and 268 engagements. The Facebook page had 145 likes and 154 posts resulting in 579 engagements.

*To learn more about WMWA, contact:*

*Diane Spector, Wenck Associates, 763.479.4280, [dspector@wenck.com](mailto:dspector@wenck.com)  
or Amy Juntunen, JASS, 763.553.1144, [amy@jass.biz](mailto:amy@jass.biz)*

# **APPENDIX**



## APPENDIX A – WATERSHED PREP / EDUCATOR ACTIVITY

**Table 1. 2017 Community education and outreach participation**

Date	Event	Location		Watershed	# of Attendees	
2/1	Sonnesyn Science Night	New Hope		Bassett	20 parents	30 kids
7/9	Gleason Lake-Stormwater walk	Plymouth	Lesson 3	Bassett	1 Class	17 kids
8/2	Plymouth Kids Fest	Plymouth		Bassett	3000 attendees	
11/8	Weaver Lake STEM Night	Maple Grove		Elm Creek	100 parents/kids	

*Community Education and Outreach.* The PREP educators provided outreach at 4 community and school events. Because of the nature of these events, it is difficult to keep a tally of the number of contacts made and citizens engaged.

**Table 2. Watershed PREP Program participation growth.**

Year	# Classrooms	# Students	# and Type of Schools
<i>Lesson 1</i>			
2013	63	1,679	13 in six districts; one charter school; one parochial school
2014	116	3,469	30 in seven districts; one magnet school; one parochial school
2015	122	3,183	36 in nine districts; two charter schools; five parochial schools
2016	107	2,850	29 in seven districts, one charter school, 5 parochial schools
2017	125	3358	12 in seven districts, one charter school, one parochial school
2018	143	3593	34 in eight districts, one charter school, two parochial schools
<i>Lesson 2</i>			
2013	14	390	Three in three districts; one charter school; one parochial school
2014	22	645	Five in three districts
2015	27	859	Six in five districts
2016	20	524	Five in three districts, one parochial school
2017	38	1,072	Seven in three districts, one parochial school
2018	69	1755	17 in five districts, one parochial school

\*Includes eight classrooms in the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District paid for by others.

APPENDIX A – WATERSHED PREP / EDUCATOR ACTIVITY

**Table 1. 2018 schools and students participating in Lesson 1: What is a Watershed?**

	Date	School	School District	City	Watershed	Classes	Students
1	1/9	Hassan	Elk River	Rogers	Elm	6	143
2	2/9	Lakeview Elementary	Robbinsdale	Robbinsdale	Shingle	3	67
3	2/12	Noble Academy	Charter	Brooklyn Park	W. Miss	3	75
4	2/13	Meadow Lake Elementary	Robbinsdale	New Hope	Shingle	4	92
5	2/22	FAIR School	Robbinsdale	Crystal	Shingle	3	66
6	3/7	Rush Creek	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	6	161
7	3/12	Plymouth Creek	Wayzata	Plymouth	Bassett	5	126
8	3/14	Greenwood Elementary	Wayzata	Plymouth	Bassett	5	124
9	3/21	Neill Elementary	Robbinsdale	Crystal	Bassett	3	74
10	3/26	Kimberly Lane	Wayzata	Plymouth	Bassett	4	107
11	4/4-5	Woodland Elementary	Osseo	Brooklyn Park	W. Miss	4	118
12	4/9	Birchview	Wayzata	Plymouth	Bassett	3	68
13	4/10	Sunset Hill	Wayzata	Plymouth	Bassett	4	110
14	4/10	Good Shepherd	Parochial	St. Louis Park	Bassett	2	42
15	4/12	Meadow Ridge Elementary	Wayzata	Plymouth	Elm	5	142
16	3/27	Gleason Lake	Wayzata	Plymouth	Minnehaha	5	91
17	4/19	Mary Queen of Peace	Parochial	Rogers	Elm	1	11
18	5/7	Oakwood	Wayzata	Plymouth	Minnehaha	3	78
19	5/8	Zachary Lane Elementary	Robbinsdale	Plymouth	Bassett	4	88
20	5/14	Dayton Elementary	Anoka-Hennepin	Dayton	Elm	3	89
21	6/4&5	Meadowbrook Elementary	Hopkins	Golden Valley	Bassett	4	120
22	9/11	Noble Elementary	Robbinsdale	Golden Valley	Bassett	3	62
23	9/24	Weaver Lake	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	4	117
24	10/1	School of Eng and Arts (SEA)	Robbinsdale	Golden Valley	Bassett	3	82
25	10/5	Palmer Lake	Osseo	Brooklyn Park	Shingle	3	82
26	10/10	Monroe Elementary	Anoka-Hennepin	Brooklyn Park	W. Miss	2	58
27	10/16	Birchview	Wayzata	Plymouth	Bassett	3	74
28	10/16	Oxbow Creek Elementary	Anoka-Hennepin	Champlin	W. Miss	7	189
29	10/23	Rice Lake Elementary	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	4	93
30	10/29-30	Basswood Elementary	Osseo	Maple Grove	Elm	6	183
31	11/8	FAIR School	Robbinsdale	Crystal	Shingle	2	44
32	11/12	Good Shepherd	Parochial	St. Louis Park	Bassett	2	50
33	11/14	Rogers Elementary School	Elk River	Rogers	Elm	4	93
34	11/20	Dayton Elementary	Anoka-Hennepin	Dayton	Elm Creek	3	75
35	11/26-30	Meadowbrook	Hopkins	Golden Valley	Bassett	5	121
36	12/13&14	Earle Brown	Brooklyn Center	Brooklyn Center	W. Miss	8	168
37	12/19&20	Robbinsdale Spanish Immersion	Robbinsdale	Robbinsdale	Bassett	4	110

**Total: 143 3593**

APPENDIX A – WATERSHED PREP / EDUCATOR ACTIVITY

**Table 3. 2018 schools and students participating in Lesson 2: The Incredible Journey**

	Date	School	School District		Watershed	Classes	Students
1	1/8	Hassan	Elk River	Rogers	Elm	6	142
2	2/8	Lakeview Elementary	Robbinsdale	Robbinsdale	Shingle	3	65
3	2/21	FAIR School	Robbinsdale	Crystal	Shingle	3	66
4	2/28	Rush Creek	Osseo	Maple	Elm	6	170
5	3/19	Neill Elementary	Robbinsdale	Crystal	Bassett	3	75
6	4/19	Mary Queen of Peace	Parochial	Rogers	Elm	1	11
7	5/1	Forest Elementary	Robbinsdale	Crystal	Shingle	4	108
8	5/30&31	Meadowbrook Elementary	Hopkins	Golden	Bassett	4	121
9	9/10	Noble Elementary	Robbinsdale	Golden	Bassett	3	61
10	10/5	Palmer Lake	Osseo	Brooklyn	Shingle	3	82
11	10/9-10	Oxbow Creek Elementary	Anoka-	Champlin	W. Miss	7	193
12	10/12	Monroe Elementary	Anoka-	Brooklyn	W. Miss	2	58
13	10/22	Rice Lake Elementary	Osseo	Maple	Elm	4	94
14	10/25-	Basswood Elementary	Osseo	Maple	Elm	6	178
15	11/2	Rogers Elementary	Elk River	Rogers	Elm	4	92
16	11/7	FAIR School	Robbinsdale	Crystal	Shingle	2	44
17	11/16	Dayton Elementary	Anoka-	Dayton	Elm Creek	3	76
18	11/26-	Meadowbrook Elementary	Hopkins	Golden	Bassett	5	119
<b>Total</b>						<b>69</b>	<b>1755</b>

**Evaluation:**

The educators evaluate the success of the Fourth Grade Program by surveying students and teachers about the quality of the program, the learning that was observed, and the performance of the educators. Much of the feedback occurs during and right after the presentations in spontaneous comments.

## APPENDIX B – WEBSITE/SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY

### Likes

Daily data is recorded in the Pacific time zone.

1W 1M 1Q



Start: 1/1/2018

End: 12/30/2018

Total Page Likes as of Today: 145

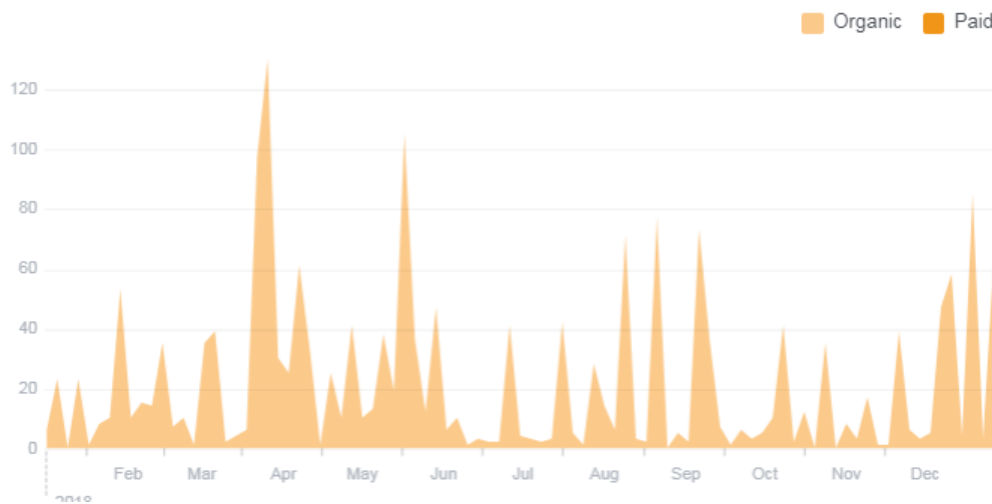


**BENCHMARK**  
Compare your average performance over time.

Total Page Likes

### Post Reach

The number of people who had any posts from your Page enter their screen. This number is an estimate.



**BENCHMARK**  
Compare your average performance over time.

Organic

Paid

APPENDIX C – BUDGET

	2017				2018				2019
	Revenue	Carry Over	Expense	Balance	Budget	Revenue <sup>3</sup>	Expense	Balance	Budget <sup>4</sup>
Admin/Tech Services Routine tasks, website, social media, meetings, etc	\$15,360	\$360	\$13,631	\$1,729	\$16,000	\$8,000	\$10,069	\$-340	\$12,000
Special Projects <sup>1</sup>	9,910	3,910	2,856	7,054	8,000	4,000	3,916	7,138	8,000
Watershed Prep	25,961	7,961	11,252	14,709	18,000	9,000	14,659	9,050	16,000
Resilient Yards <sup>2</sup> Metro Blooms workshops	10,677		10,947	-270	<i>Billed directly to cities</i>			<i>Billed directly to cities</i>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$61,908</b>	<b>\$12,231</b>	<b>\$38,686</b>	<b>\$23,222</b>	<b>\$42,000</b>	<b>\$21,000</b>	<b>\$28,644</b>	<b>\$15,848</b>	<b>\$36,000</b>