

## Blue Thumb Calendar of Events

The growing season may be winding down, but people are still eager to learn about native gardens, raingardens and shoreline projects. Here are a few places we'll be promoting the Blue Thumb - Planting for Clean Water program in the next month:



### **Millstream Chautauqua - Marine** **Sept. 18, 7-9pm**

- Part of a monthly series, the evening will feature a presentation about mussels of the St. Croix River, as well as tips for homeowners to help keep the river clean.

### **Cottage Grove Public Works Open House** **Sept. 20, 3-7pm**

- Cottage Grove residents will enjoy public works displays and demonstrations as well as information about the Blue Thumb program and local cost-share grants.

### **Children's Waterfest - State Fair Park** **Sept. 26, 9am-3pm**

- I will be presenting several 30-min Blue Thumb lessons to fifth grade classes from around the metro area.

### **Liberty on the Lake Annual Meeting** **Stillwater, Oct. 8, 6-8pm.**

- I will be giving a short presentation about Blue Thumb and available cost-share grants. Liberty is managed by the same company as Legend's, where raingardens are popping up everywhere.

## Focus on Public Works

For many cities and counties, training public works staff is one of the most challenging aspects of meeting the MS4 permit requirements. Beginning this fall, EMWREP will be coordinating a Public Works Forum for cities in and around Washington County. The forum, which will meet seasonally, will feature information about topics such as street sweeping, winter salting and sanding, and storm pond maintenance. We will be kicking off the series with a hands-on Raingarden Maintenance workshop at the Cottage Grove Park and Ride on Wednesday, Oct. 17. More information to come soon!



Washington County employees pose for a picture after a hike at St. Croix Bluffs Park.

I am also available to help EMWREP partners with in-house staff trainings. At the Washington County Public Works training, held on Sept. 12, I led about fifty staff members on a hike through St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park, where we discussed invasive species, watershed connections and basic steps for preventing pollution. I will also be giving a short presentation on Oct. 15 at a public works training for Stillwater and Hugo staff.



## MS4 Toolkit Update

For the past two months I have been collecting stormwater education materials from around the country and determining what materials are needed here in Minnesota to help MS4's meet their education requirements. So far, 26 MS4's have completed surveys about their educational needs, identifying priority topics, target audiences and desired materials. Some of the toolkit materials requested include newsletter articles for the general public, brochures and posters for builders, developers and contractors, and sample workshops and training videos for public works staff.

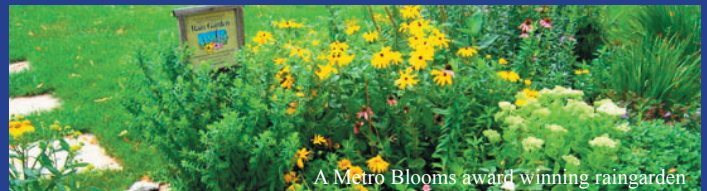
We have begun talking to production companies about creating two to three videos for the toolkits. Ideally, the videos would evolve into a public works training series, covering topics such as lawn care, illicit discharge detection, raingarden maintenance and hazardous materials storage.

## Welcome Nicole Serie!

Nicole is an intern with the HECUA program at the U of M and will be helping with the Blue Thumb program during the fall.

## EMWREP to partner with Metro Blooms

This coming spring, we will partner with Metro Blooms to host two raingarden workshops in the east metro. Metro Blooms has been incredibly successful in recruiting participants to their workshops - some have had more than 100 people - and according to their evaluations the majority of people who attend workshops go on to create their own raingardens. We will most likely hold one workshop in the Mahtomedi area and one in the Cottage Grove area to capture residents in the northern and southern parts of Washington County.



Coming soon...

## Stormwater U: Integrating Water Resource Protection into Comprehensive Planning

This November, EMWREP will partner with University of Minnesota - Extension to host a Stormwater U workshop for city and consulting planners. During the workshop, we will lead planners through their comprehensive plan updates, highlighting areas in which water resource protection can be incorporated. The goal is to send people back to their cities with the tools to create transportation, open space and growth plans that protect water resources and minimize non-point source pollution.

### Members of the East Metro Water Resource Education Program:

Brown's Creek Watershed District • City of Cottage Grove • City of Dellwood • City of Forest Lake • City of Lake Elmo • City of Stillwater • City of Willernie • Lower St. Croix Watershed Management Organization • Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization • South Washington Watershed District • Valley Branch Watershed District • Washington Conservation District • Washington County

