



Kids dip for aquatic invertebrates at an environmental field day at OH Anderson in Mahtomedi.

Project WET Teacher Training June 14 at Valley Branch ELC at Belwin

This summer we are partnering with Minnesota DNR's Project WET program and the Valley Branch Environmental Learning Center at Belwin Nature Conservancy in Afton to provide a full-day training workshop for K-5 teachers in Washington County.

This one-day workshop will train educators to incorporate Project WET activities into their curriculum and will engage participants in fun, hands-on indoor and out-door learning activities appropriate for K-5 students. It will also give teachers and opportunity to connect with their local watershed organizations and learn about resources and information available through EMWREP

program partners for watershed lessons in the classroom and water quality projects at local schools.

Please share the workshop flyer with teachers you know and consider coming yourself, as the lessons and activities are appropriate for both formal and informal settings. Project WET is correlated to Minnesota academic standards, and helps to improve student skills in science, math, reading, writing and social studies. Learn more about this national program at www.dnr.state.mn.us/projectwet/index.

Save the walleye...and then eat 'em!

This July is the 100 year anniversary of the St. Croix River Association, and we're using the occasion as an opportunity to get people involved in projects to clean up lakes, rivers and streams in the St. Croix Valley. We'll be partnering with SCRA, Lift Bridge Brewery and Minnesota beer distributors to get drink coasters out into bars and restaurants throughout the basin. The goal is to reach people that live, work or recreate in the St. Croix Basin but are not currently involved in our programs. The website and social media connected with the coasters will also provide a low-cost, easy way to provide information and advertise future events. During July, SCRA will also be leading a two-week paddle from the headwaters of the St. Croix River in Solon Springs, WI to the confluence with the Mississippi River in Prescott.



Artful Raingardens in the St. Croix Valley



Artful raingardens combine beauty and function with elements such as rainchains.

The Phipps Center for the Arts received a grant from the Velhurst Foundation for a project to inspire collaboration among artists, residents, organization, schools, businesses and communities to learn about, design, install and maintain raingardens throughout the St. Croix Valley. EMWREP has been part of the planning committee for this effort and we are hopeful that the events and activities planned will inspire more people to plant beautiful and functional landscapes that help to keep our water clean.

The project defines an “Artful Raingarden” as one that has both structural integrity and aesthetic appeal. The Phipps Center will have an Artful Raingardens exhibit on display from June 16 until July 17, with a kick-off event in Hudson’s Lakefront Park. The kickoff will include *Voices on the River* - a launch of handmade paper boats from the beach, *Are You Thirsty?* - a performance by Heart of the Beast Puppet Theater in the bandshell, and other activities. There will also be a Raingarden Festival on Sunday, June 26 that will include a variety of hands-on learning activities spread throughout the exhibit.

In addition to these and other community events planned, the project will include a raingarden design contest in which people will compete for seed money to



The Watersosity Exhibit at the Arboretum was another example of a project that combined art and nature.

install their Artful Raingarden design concepts. Entries will be judged on their function, benefit to local waters, and aesthetic appeal. Design concepts from the finalist will be displayed on a website, with the final winner chosen by popular vote.

Last Chance to Order Trees and Rain Barrels

The Washington Conservation District is selling bundles of bare-root saplings, 25 for \$32.50 and pre-assembled rain barrels for \$68. Pick-up is April 29, 8am-6pm and April 30, 8am-12pm at the County Fairgrounds. Download order forms at www.mnwcd.org.

Planting for Clean Water Workshops
April 12 - Scandia
May 21 - Stillwater

EMWREP partners have two upcoming Planting for Clean Water Workshops. The first, hosted by the Carnelian Marine Watershed District, will be held at Scandia Community Center on Tuesday, April 12 from 6-8pm. This free workshop will introduce people to the Blue Thumb - Planting for Clean Water workshop and provide information and resources for people interested in using native plants, raingardens and shoreline plantings to beautify their yards and prevent water pollution. Register with Tara Kline at tara.kline@mnwcd.org.

The second workshop will be held at Axdahl's Garden Center in Stillwater on Saturday, May 21 from 10am-12pm. Axdahl's is working with Brown's Creek Watershed District to install a demonstration raingarden on the corner of Hwy 15 and Hwy 12 and the workshop will provide information for local homeowners interested in installing a raingarden in their own yards. Register for this class at 651-439-3134 or info@axdahlfarms.com. The \$25 class fee includes a copy of the Blue Thumb Guide to Raingardens book (retail \$17.95) and a \$20 Axdahl's gift certificate.



Denise Stephens' daughter helps to plant a raingarden. Stephens was awarded Brown's Creek Watershed District Conservationist.

Upcoming Blue Thumb Events - Spring 2011

Living Green Expo: May 7-8 at the State Fair Grounds
- Join Blue Thumb along with more than 300 other exhibitors, workshops, and activities. The goal of the expo is to provide tips, resources and products to help people live green everyday. Learn more at www.livinggreenexpo.mn.



WaterFest: May 21, 10am-2pm at the Lake Phalen Pavillion
WaterFest is a celebration of our clean lakes and an opportunity for hands-on learning about the water quality, wildlife, and special ecological features of our beautiful watershed, sponsored by Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District, the cities of St. Paul, Maplewood, and North St. Paul plus other partners.

Landscape Revival: June 4, 9am - 3pm at the Roseville Rainbow Foods Pavillion
Expo: With exhibits & 5 minute "stand-up" seminars by 10 local conservation organizations.
Market: Purchase MN native plants and accessories from a variety of local growers all in one spot.

EMWREP Upcoming Presentations, Workshops and Events

- Apr. 12, 6pm **Blue Thumb workshop for CMSCWD - Free**
Scandia Community Center
Register: tara.kline@mnwcd.org or 651-275-1136 x.28
- Apr. 14, 8am **Woodbury Public Works Training**
- Apr. 19, 12pm **Sustainable Landscaping Presentation**
FIS Global - Woodbury
- Apr. 26, 5-6:30pm **Environmental Center Open House**
MS4 Public Meeting
- Apr. 29, 8am-6pm **WCD Tree and Rain Barrel Pick-up**
Washington County Fairgrounds
- Apr. 30, 8am-noon **WCD Tree and Rain Barrel Pick-up**
Washington County Fairgrounds
- May 7 **Mahtomedi Garden Club Plant Sale**
- May 13, 8am-noon **Environmental Field Day**
OH Anderson Elementary, Mahtomedi
- May 18, 7:30pm **Blue Thumb presentation**
White Bear Lake Unitarian
- May 19, 6:30pm **Izaak Walton League presentation**
Mahtomedi
- May 21, 10am-noon **Raingarden Workshop - \$25 (includes book and gift certificate)**
Axdahl's Garden Center, Stillwater
Register at 651-439-3134 or info@axdahlfarms.com
- May 21, 1-4pm **Minnesota Youth Outdoor Expo**
Wild Wings, Hugo
- May 22 **Millstream Day - Marine**
- June 4, 12-3pm **Washington County Parks Day**
Lake Elmo Regional Park
- June 8, 8:30am-12:30 **WaterShed Partners Mississippi River Boat Tour**
RSVP to Jana Larson, jlarson25@gw.hamline.edu

Three Cool Activities You Should Know About

Env. Center Open House

Tuesday, April 26 5-6:30pm - Open House & MS4 Public Meeting Washington County Environmental Center

In addition to household waste drop-off and the free product reuse room, we will be handing out free soil test kits and will have information for people about assistance for raingardens and habitat projects. Visitors will also be able to order rain barrels to pick up on April 29 and 30 at the County Fairgrounds.

Washington County, South Washington Watershed District and Cottage Grove will be using this open house as their Annual MS4 Public Meeting. During the event, there will be a slide show looping photos from clean water projects around the county and copies of the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans will be available.

North Market Place

Brown's Creek Watershed District North Market Place Outreach

Last year, BCWD worked with EOR to identify high priority locations for raingardens in the North Market Place neighborhoods of Stillwater, which drain to Long Lake. BCWD would like to install 134 raingardens in these neighborhoods to help reduce nutrient loading to the lake.

Over the next two weeks, we will be knocking on doors and doing an informal survey of people in the area to determine how interested they are in installing raingardens and what incentives might be needed to get enough people on board for the project.

Clean Water Challenge

WaterShed Partners - Clean Water Minnesota Media Campaign Clean Water Challenge

The Metro WaterShed Partners are working to develop a new media campaign approach, modeled after the Minnesota Energy Challenge, that can better measure the impact of education and outreach. The project will include a website with specific actions that people can take to protect water and computer kiosks that can be used at community events.

Citizens will be encouraged to take the Clean Water Challenge and pledge which steps they will take to protect water. Communities will also be able to compete against one another. WSP will use mass marketing strategies to promote the campaign.

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 • Washington Conservation District • Washington County

