



# **Green Communities**

A guidebook for developing clean water projects  
with Homeowners' Associations



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Homeowners' Associations

Produced by Washington Conservation District,  
with funding support from a FY14 Clean Water Fund Grant

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## **Background**

In 2014, the Washington Conservation District was awarded a \$50,000 Clean Water Fund Grant from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources to conduct audience research and develop clean water projects with Homeowners' Associations (HOAs) in Washington County.

HOAs include apartment, townhome and condominium complexes, as well as single-family residential associations. Though they can be a difficult audience to reach, HOAs control vast amounts of land in many developing communities and can include as many as 1000 households. HOAs tend to be some of the largest water-users in suburban communities and make landscaping decisions that can impact habitat and surface water quality.

The Washington Conservation District "Green Communities" grant included funding to conduct focus groups with HOA board members, property managers, and lawn care companies, and complete stormwater reduction projects with five HOA properties in Washington County.

This guidebook contains advice for working with HOAs to develop and implement clean water projects, based on feedback gathered during focus groups and subsequent project outreach.

## Barriers and Opportunities

In 2014, Washington Conservation District conducted three focus group sessions with HOA board members, property managers, and lawn care companies to identify opportunities for and barriers to developing clean water projects with HOAs. Groups ranged in size from 5-12 participants and all represented HOAs in Washington County, MN. Sample materials used for recruitment and execution of the focus groups are included in the appendices to this guidebook.

### **BARRIERS**

Focus group participants cited the following barriers to implementing clean water projects at HOAs:

#### **a. Lack of interest**

Clean water projects aren't a priority for most HOAs unless they encounter drainage or erosion problems. A notable exception exists for HOAs located directly adjacent to lakes or rivers, where water quality can have a direct impact on property values. Residents from those communities tend to be more supportive of clean water projects and practices.

#### **b. Member turnover and generational tension**

There are noticeable difference between HOAs that have a younger, more transient population, and those that have older, longer-term residents. HOAs with younger residents tend to have higher turnover, both among the residents and the board members. Additionally, these residents are often less-inclined to become involved in their HOA boards and committees. Clean water projects can take several years to develop and usually fall to the wayside if the project champion moves away during the process. Conversely, in HOAs comprised of mostly older, long-term residents, the same people often serve on the board for years, and can become weary of the work.

Property managers and lawn care providers noted other generational differences as well. According to some focus group participants, older residents worry mostly about the costs for projects and landscaping maintenance, while younger populations are more inclined to consider ecological impact as well. HOAs with older, retired residents tend to be more concerned about the appearance of their landscaping and more inclined to make complaints as well. One landscape professional even admitted to increasing the contract prices for HOAs with older, retired populations because it takes his crews longer to complete their tasks when the residents come outside to talk and request specific actions.

#### **c. Limited funding**

Most HOA decisions are made from a purely financial perspective. Though members are often interested in "doing something good," they usually aren't willing to contribute additional funding for voluntary conservation projects. HOAs are more likely to allocate their own funds to a project is it will address a significant irrigation, erosion or drainage issue.

#### **d. Maintenance**

Maintenance of clean water projects was one of the biggest barriers cited by HOA residents and property managers. Most grants and cost-share incentives offered by local governments include 10-20 year maintenance agreements, and HOAs are reluctant to make such a long-term commitment. During the WCD's project outreach, one HOA decided not to complete a clean water project, even with 100% of the costs covered, because members didn't want to assume the long-term maintenance cost.

In addition, most lawn care companies are unfamiliar with the maintenance required for practices such as raingardens and native plantings. This can lead to an additional expense if the HOA needs to hire a second contractor to maintain these practices.

#### **e. Conventional landscape aesthetics**

Most HOA residents view landscape aesthetics as a critical component in maintaining property values and a "good" reputation in their communities. The conventional suburban landscape aesthetic calls for perfect, weed-free lawns with tidy gardens and shrubs. Residents often have preconceived notions of how much fertilizer a lawn needs or how often it needs to be mowed. There is also little tolerance for grass that appears brown or is allowed to go dormant during the summer.

Lawn care providers complained about HOAs that over-irrigate or leave their systems operating in the rain. Sometimes turf areas are too wet to mow, yet they receive complaints if they skip a scheduled mowing. Members of single-family HOAs said that they are forced to water their lawns to avoid being hassled by neighbors or fined by their associations.

Despite their high expectations, HOAs still tend to hire the lowest bidder for annual maintenance instead of working with more knowledgeable and experienced lawn care companies. Contractors complained that residents request specific services for their lawns, without having a real understanding of how turf grass grows or how fertilizers and chemicals impact the plants' natural life cycle.

Property managers frequently receive complaints about HOA landscaping and are reluctant to challenge the status quo. Residents worry that native prairie plantings will look like weeds and also fear that practices such as raingardens will fall into disrepair over time.

#### **f. Liability**

Some HOA board members expressed concerns about safety and liability concerns associated with clean water projects. They cited a variety of concerns, some realistic and others not, including: limited visibility for drivers caused by using taller prairie plants in boulevards and near roadways; the potential for children to drown in raingardens or be poisoned by eating iron-enhanced sand; increased numbers of ticks and mosquitoes near native plantings; and higher numbers of bees near pollinator-friendly plantings.

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

Though focus group participants cited many barriers to working with HOAs, conversations also highlighted three potential opportunities for engagement:

### **a. Reducing irrigation expenses**

HOA residents expressed interest in reducing their quarterly water bills and irrigation expenses. They were interested in conducting irrigation audits, installing rain sensors and system controllers, and exploring stormwater reuse projects.

### **b. Improving erosion and drainage problems**

There are also opportunities to partner with HOAs on clean water projects that can help to reduce erosion and drainage concerns, such as soggy lawns and failing retaining walls.

### **c. Working with developers during design and construction**

Several HOA residents complained about landscaping problems in their neighborhoods caused by poor design and construction during development. Complaints included poorly designed and installed irrigation systems; failure to create diagrams of irrigation systems in order to make future maintenance easier; improper selection of tree species and trees that were planted improperly; soil compaction during construction; and drainage issues caused by grading.

Cities and watershed management organizations could reduce future irrigation demand and encourage more sustainable landscaping by working more closely with developers during HOA design and construction.

## Tips for HOA outreach

The biggest challenge in working with HOAs is *finding the right person to talk to*. During initial outreach for its Green Communities project, Washington Conservation District mailed over 100 letters to HOAs and property management companies in Forest Lake and Woodbury but received virtually zero responses!

If you want to work with HOAs in your community, be prepared to spend a lot of effort on outreach.

- 1. Identify HOAs in your community.** If you don't already have a list of HOAs in your community, here are a few suggestions for how to get started. First, contact your local municipalities; many have lists of HOAs and property management companies for irrigation billing purposes. Another method is to search property tax records utilizing the keywords, "homeowners," "association," or "home owners." Finally, you can search for property management companies and look at their company websites to determine if they manage any HOAs in your area.
- 2. Utilize existing contacts.** Word of mouth is very powerful, and often pre-existing relationships lead to successful projects. Look first for HOAs that you or your organizational partners have worked with previously. Also, be sure to share information about your project or program through a variety of means, such as flyers at community events, articles in the local paper, and updates on social media. You can also reach out to partners from previous projects. For example, if your organization worked with a school recently, one of the parents or teachers might become a champion for a project in their HOA.
- 3. Call them.** By and far the most effective way to directly connect with and talk to HOAs, property managers and landscape companies is to call them directly on the phone. Advertisements, letters, and email will be ignored a vast majority of the time. Also, be cognizant of the fact that most property managers are very busy and spend most of the summer and winter fielding complaints from residents. The best time of year to call is in the fall, "after the growing season and before the plowing season." Be prepared with a succinct explanation of your project and request for their participation. You can also use the call as an opportunity to request contact information for the HOA board or landscaping committee.
- 4. Focus on the benefits to them.** When you reach out to HOAs for clean water projects, focus on the benefits to them. You may be most interested in reducing stormwater pollution to a nearby lake, but they will likely be more motivated by reducing their irrigation bill, beautifying existing landscaping, or repairing an erosion or drainage problem.
- 5. Keep the big picture in mind.** Most likely, working with HOAs is just one of many strategies your organization is using to protect water resources in your community. Share the good news about your projects and programs with HOA residents so that they understand how a project on their property fits into your larger overall efforts.



## CONNECTING WITH PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMPANIES

In addition to calling property managers directly, there are a few strategies your organization could use to connect with property management companies in your area.

There are three professional associations in Minnesota for property managers to earn continuing education credits, network, and attend trainings and conferences. These organizations all offer opportunities for marketing through magazines, websites, and events. Your organization could sponsor a “lunch and learn,” host a table at an annual conference, or co-sponsor a training that provides continuing education credits. Associations in Minnesota include:

- CAI: Community Associations Institute – Minnesota Chapters [www.cai-mn.com](http://www.cai-mn.com)
- IREM: Institute of Real Estate Management <http://www.iremnm.org/>
- CIC Midwest <http://www.mmha.com/cic-midwest>

## Trouble-shooting during project development

You've reached out to HOAs in your community and found a couple willing to work with your organization on clean water projects. Now what? As is the case with any other project, be prepared for additional challenges during the design and installation process. Below are suggestions for trouble-shooting a few common problems in HOA projects:

- 1. Think about utilities, space, and project feasibility before you create a design for your project.** Though HOA properties may appear to be a wide-open canvas, it is often difficult to find space for stormwater retrofits in locations where they'll provide water quality benefits. Right-of-way areas close to roads tend to be crowded with buried utilities so be sure to determine the locations of gas, electric, and fiber optic lines before you begin the design process.
- 2. Consider offering maintenance assistance.** The effort and cost required to maintain clean water projects can be a significant barrier for HOAs. Consider offering short or long-term assistance to help HOAs maintain their projects once they're installed. Offering a property tax credit or reduction in stormwater utility fee could also help to offset the cost of additional maintenance.
- 3. Design for easier maintenance.** When designing landscaping projects for HOAs, limit the number of species you use, include edging and other "cues for maintenance," and prepare a simple, easy-to-read planting plan for the HOA and landscape maintenance company. The Washington Conservation District also provided maintenance timelines and "how-to" booklets, in addition to meeting one-on-one with HOA representatives, property managers, and landscapers after their projects were complete.
- 4. Stay inside the box.** Though you may like the aesthetic of a wild and woolly native garden, consider the existing landscaping when designing a clean water project for an HOA. Try to match the look of existing gardens on the property or place your project near a natural area where it will blend in better.
- 5. Consider offering cost-share assistance for water conservation projects.** Feedback from focus groups and site visits indicates that HOAs are interested in repairing and upgrading their irrigation systems to use less water. However, the up-front cost to conduct irrigation audits and implement necessary changes is a major barrier.
- 6. Set reasonable expectations.** When working with HOAs, be sure to set reasonable expectations for how long projects will take to complete, how much maintenance will be required (especially in the early years), and what plantings will look like early on, as well as when they are fully mature.
- 7. Celebrate your success!** There may be 1000 people living in an HOA, but chances are that less than ten of them will know about your clean water project once it's complete. Plan a special event to celebrate the completion of your project and use the event as an opportunity to educate residents and gain community buy-in. This will help to ensure long-term support for the project, especially if there is turn-over on the HOA board.

## A Case Study: Evergreen Country Homes in Woodbury

Evergreen Country Homes is located off of Radio Dr. in Woodbury, northeast of the Tamarack Nature Preserve. In 2015, the association approached Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District to ask for advice in dealing with drainage problems on their property. Due to compacted clay soils and a berm along the edge of their land, there was standing water whenever it rained and the lawn rarely dried out enough for people to walk on it.

When Washington Conservation District designer Tara Kline came out for a site visit, she realized that there could be an opportunity to change the landscaping so that more water would soak into the ground – good for the people in the neighborhood – and less would runoff into the nature preserve – good for the tamarack bog. Working with board members from the association, Kline put together a design that replaced around 3,325 square feet of turf with native plants.

The swale features “thirsty” shrubs like dogwood that soak up lots of water, as well as plants like cup plant, joe pyweed, blue flag iris, and sedges that provide both beauty and habitat. Importantly, Kline also put a lot of effort into creating a design that would be easy for a landscaping company to maintain. There are only a few species of plants and they are grouped in clumps, instead of being scattered throughout the planting. This makes it easier to identify and control weeds. The planting also has in-laid brick edging along its length, which makes it easier to mow around and helps to maintain a tidy appearance.

Though the project ultimately improves the shared outdoor space at Evergreen Country Homes, it also provides a public benefit by reducing runoff pollution to Tamarack Nature Preserve. For this reason, the association was able to tap into special grant funds through the Washington Conservation District, as well as cost-share assistance from the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District.

After the project was complete, Washington Conservation District organized a celebration event for residents at Evergreen Country Homes that included food and refreshments, as well as a tour of the newly planted garden.

The project cost \$19,772 to design and install and will capture 0.34 pounds of phosphorus per year. Funding was provided by the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District (\$11,4000), Evergreen Country Homes (\$6,672), and a Minnesota Clean Water Fund grant (\$1700).



Right: Tara Kline leads neighbors of Evergreen Country Homes on a tour of their newly planted vegetated swale in October 2016.

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

Though HOAs control large amounts of land in many growing communities, it can be challenging to conduct outreach and develop effective clean water projects with these communities. Given the effort required to do outreach and complete HOA projects, it may be prudent to focus your efforts on HOAs located in high-priority areas where projects are vital to achieving water quality improvement goals.

If water conservation is a goal for your organization, consider developing an incentive program for HOAs to provide funding assistance for irrigation audits, controller upgrades, and sprinkler and system repairs.

Cities and watershed management organizations can also help to influence HOA landscaping by working more closely with developers during the design and construction of new multi-unit properties.

When working with HOAs on clean water projects, take care to plan (and potentially provide assistance) for future maintenance, be wary of buried utilities and other feasibility concerns, stay within the bounds of conventional landscaping aesthetics, and celebrate your successes with everyone in the community.






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## Projects installed through the Washington Conservation District “Green Communities” FY14 Clean Water Fund grant

In 2014, Washington Conservation District received a \$50,000 Clean Water Fund grant from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources to develop clean water projects for Homeowners’ Associations (HOAs) in Washington County. Through this grant, the WCD was able to install five projects with a total phosphorus reduction of 1.95lbs.

HOA	Watershed	BMP Type	P Reduction	Area (sf)	Grant Amounts
Evergreen Country Homes		Vegetated Swales (2)	.23lb/yr TP .11lb/yr TP	2,275 sf 660 sf	CWF: \$1,700 WD: \$11,400 LO: \$6,672
Lakeridge Townhomes		Raingarden & Bioinfiltration	.08lb/yr TP .03lb/yr TP	150 sf 200 sf	CWF: \$550 WD: \$12,112 LO: \$3,488
Powers Lake Townhomes		Vegetated Swale	.14lb/yr TP	600 sf	CWF: \$700 WD: \$700 LO: \$2,752
Tanners Lake Townhomes		Shoreline Buffer	.27lb/yr TP	3,094 sf	CWF: \$1,350 WD: \$8,934 LO: \$0
Heritage Glen		Plant Buffer/ Vegetated Swale	1.2lb/yr TP	5,200 sf	CWF: \$6000 WD: \$6000 LO: \$4,998

CWF: Clean Water Fund (\$5000/lb of P removed)

WD: Watershed District Match

LO: Landowner Match



Left: A newly installed raingarden at Lakeridge of Woodbury Townhomes near Carver Lake, October 2016.

## HOA Board Member Focus Group Invitation Letter

August 20, 2014  
Washington Conservation District  
455 Hayward Ave N  
Oakdale, MN 55128

[HOA BOARD MEMBER]  
Address  
City, State, Zip

Dear [HOA BOARD MEMBER],

You are invited to join us for a focus group discussion about the role of Homeowners Associations (HOAs) Board Members' in irrigation, lawn care and landscaping decisions. We are interested in any and all opinions and experiences and sincerely appreciate your time and input. ***To thank you for your time, you will be compensated \$25 cash.***

The Washington Conservation District in conjunction with the East Metro Water Resource Education Program is conducting research to determine the best approaches for communicating with HOA's, to discover how HOA's make decisions about lawn care and irrigation needs, what members of an HOA are looking for in their landscaping, as well as barriers to considering or adopting the following: clean water practices, lower-impact lawn care practices, or stormwater reuse projects. At the end of the focus group we will also share opportunities for grants to have clean water practices installed in the common areas of your Homeowner's Association.

The focus group will be held on **Tuesday, September 30 from 6:30-8:00pm** at the Washington Conservation District office. The address is 455 Hayward Ave N., Oakdale, MN 55128.

We hope you are able to join us; however participation is voluntary and will not affect in any future grant opportunities (positively or negatively). Please be assured that any ideas or views expressed in the focus groups are confidential and we will not release any information specifically about you or your HOA without your permission.

To sign-up or for more information, please call or email Jenn Radtke using the contact information below. Again, we will compensate you **\$25 cash** for your time. We only have a limited number of invitations so please do not hesitate to sign up today!

Sincerely,

**Jenn Radtke**, Education Assistant  
East Metro Water Resource Education Program  
651-330-8220 x 44  
[jradtke@mnwcd.org](mailto:jradtke@mnwcd.org)

## Property Manager Focus Group Invitation Letter

August 20, 2014  
Washington Conservation District  
455 Hayward Ave N  
Oakdale, MN 55128

Property Manager  
Association Management  
Address  
City, State, Zip

Dear Property Manager,

You are invited to join us for a focus group discussion about the role of Property Management Companies in irrigation, lawn care and landscaping decisions for Homeowners Associations (HOAs). We are interested in any and all opinions and experiences and sincerely appreciate your time and input. ***To thank you for your time, you will be compensated \$40 cash.***

The Washington Conservation District in conjunction with the East Metro Water Resource Education Program is conducting research to determine the best approaches for communicating with HOAs, to discover how HOAs make decisions about lawn care and irrigation needs with their Property Management companies, what members of an HOA are looking for in their landscaping, as well as barriers to considering or adopting the following: clean water practices, lower-impact lawn care practices, or stormwater reuse projects.

The focus group will be held on **Thursday October 2, 2014 from 12:00-1:30pm** at the Washington Conservation District office. The address is 455 Hayward Ave N, Oakdale, MN 55128. Lunch will be included.

We hope you are able to join us; however participation is voluntary and will not affect in any future grant opportunities (positively or negatively). Please be assured that any ideas or views expressed in the focus groups are confidential and we will not release any information specifically about you or the property management company without your permission.

For more information, please call or email Jenn Radtke using the contact information below. Again, we will compensate you \$40 cash for your time.

Sincerely,

Jenn Radtke, Education Assistant  
East Metro Water Resource Education Program  
651-330-8220 x 44  
[jradtke@mnwcd.org](mailto:jradtke@mnwcd.org)

## Landscape Company Focus Group Invitation Letter

August 26, 2014  
Washington Conservation District  
455 Hayward Ave N  
Oakdale, MN 55128

To Whom It May Concern:

You are invited to join us for a focus group discussion about what Homeowner's Associations (HOAs) want in their irrigation, lawn care and landscaping services. We are interested in any and all opinions and experiences and sincerely appreciate your time and input. ***To thank you for your time, you will be compensated \$40 cash.***

The Washington Conservation District in conjunction with the East Metro Water Resource Education Program is conducting research to determine the best approaches for communicating with HOAs, to discover how HOAs make decisions about lawn care and irrigation needs with their Property Management companies, what members of an HOA are looking for in their landscaping, as well as barriers to considering or adopting the following: clean water practices, lower-impact lawn care practices, or stormwater reuse projects.

The focus group will be held on **Tuesday October 7, 2014 from 7:30-9:00am** at the Washington Conservation District office. The address is 455 Hayward Ave N, Oakdale, MN 55128. A full breakfast will be included.

We hope you are able to join us; however participation is voluntary. Please be assured that any ideas or views expressed in the focus groups are confidential and we will not release any information specifically about you or your landscape company without your permission.

For more information, please call or email Jenn Radtke using the contact information below. Again, we will compensate you \$40 cash for your time.

Sincerely,

**Jenn Radtke**, Education Assistant  
East Metro Water Resource Education Program  
651-330-8220 x 44  
[jradtke@mnwcd.org](mailto:jradtke@mnwcd.org)

## Focus Group Screener – HOA Board Member

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm calling in behalf of the Washington Conservation District. We are interested in your opinions and will offer you \$25 for your time if you qualify.

1. Are you a member of a Homeowner's Association Board?  
 YES continue  
 NO – Thank and terminate  
 NOT SURE – Ask to speak to someone who does & repeat the question
  
2. Does your board have contracts for the installation and maintenance of irrigation systems and/or lawn care for your HOA?  
 YES continue  
 NO – Thank and terminate  
 NOT SURE – Ask to speak to someone who does & repeat the question
  
3. Great, you qualify. We are hosting a focus group that will be on Tuesday, September 30 2014 at 6:30pm at the Washington Conservation District in Oakdale and will last 1.5 hours. We will pay you \$25 to participate and will have refreshments. Can you be there? **(Accept no more than 12 for 8 to show)**  
 YES – Take down contact information  
 NO – Thank and terminate

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Company: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Company: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_



## Focus Group Screener – Property Manager

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm calling in behalf of the Washington Conservation District. We are hosting a focus group and are interested in your opinions and will offer you \$40 for your time if you qualify.

1. Are you a Property Management Company that serves HOAs in Washington County?  
 YES continue  
 NO – Thank and terminate  
 NOT SURE – Ask to speak to someone who does & repeat the question
  
2. Do you set up or make recommendations for installation and maintenance of irrigation systems for HOAs?  
 YES continue  
 NO – It's OK  
 NOT SURE – Ask to speak to someone who does & repeat the question
  
3. Great, you qualify. We will be hosting a focus group will be on Tuesday, October 7, 2014 at 7:30am at the Washington Conservation District in Oakdale and will last 1.5 hours. We will pay you \$40 to participate and will serve lunch. Can you be there?  
**(Accept no more than 12 for 8 to show)**  
 YES – Take down contact information  
 NO – Thank and terminate

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Focus Group Screener – Landscape Company

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm calling in behalf of the Washington Conservation District. We are hosting a focus group and are interested in your opinions and will offer you \$40 for your time if you qualify.

1. Do you set up contracts for lawn care/landscaping with Homeowners Associations or Property Management Companies in Washington County?  
 YES continue  
 NO – Thank and terminate  
 NOT SURE – Ask to speak to someone who does & repeat the question
2. Do you set up or make recommendations for installation and maintenance of irrigation systems for HOAs or Property Management Companies?  
 YES continue  
 NO – It's OK  
 NOT SURE – Ask to speak to someone who does & repeat the question
3. Great, you qualify. The focus group will be on Tuesday, October 7, 2014 at 7:30am at the Washington Conservation District in Oakdale and will last 1.5 hours. We will pay you \$40 to participate and will serve breakfast. Can you be there? **(Accept no more than 12 for 8 to show)**  
 YES – Take down contact information  
 NO – Thank and terminate

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Informed Consent for HOA Board Member Focus Group

You are invited to participate in a focus group discussion for HOA Board Members in Washington County. The goal of this group is to determine the best approaches for communicating with HOA's, to discover how HOA's make decisions about lawn care and irrigation needs, what members of an HOA are looking for in their landscaping, as well as barriers to considering or adopting the following: clean water practices, lower-impact lawn care practices, or stormwater reuse projects. This study is being conducted by Jenn Radtke & Angie Hong, (East Metro Water Resource Education Program - EMWREP) and Andy Schilling (Washington Conservation District - WCD). Funding for this study is provided by the Clean Water Fund.

You have been invited to participate in this study because you are an HOA Board Member in Washington County. Participation in this study is voluntary. If desired, participation in this focus group may remain confidential. Participation in this discussion and any ideas or opinions expressed will neither negatively nor positively affect ability to receive grants and funding currently or in the future.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will participate in a focus group with members of other HOA Boards in Washington County. The focus group will be led by the above mentioned persons. The focus group will last 90 minutes and refreshments will be served.

Notes about the focus group will be taken by one of the facilitators. You may choose how much or how little you want to speak during the group. You may also choose to leave the focus group at any time.

*We sincerely appreciate your time and input. To thank you for your time, we will provide each participant with \$25 cash to thank you for your time. This will be handed to you at the conclusion of the focus group.*

Participating in this study may benefit you directly by providing you with information about possible clean water projects that can be done in your community. We do not envision any significant risks related to participation in this study. Participants are welcomed to openly share their ideas, experiences and questions with the group.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact one of the facilitators.

Your signature on this consent form indicates your agreement to participate in this study.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep if requested.

I have read the consent form and all of my questions about the study have been answered. I agree to participate in this study.

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Informed Consent for Property Manager Focus Group

You are invited to participate in a focus group discussion for HOA Property Managers in Washington County. The goal of this group is to determine the role of property management companies in lawn care and irrigation decisions, what members of an HOA are looking for in their landscaping, as well as barriers to considering or adopting the following: clean water practices, lower-impact lawn care practices, or stormwater reuse projects. This study is being conducted by Jenn Radtke & Angie Hong, (East Metro Water Resource Education Program - EMWREP) and Andy Schilling (Washington Conservation District - WCD). Funding for this study is provided by the Clean Water Fund. Tara Kline, Natural Resource Specialist for the WCD, will also be assisting with the focus group.

You have been invited to participate in this study because you are a property manager of an HOA Board in Washington County. Participation in this study is voluntary. If desired, participation in this focus group may remain confidential. Participation in this discussion and any ideas or opinions expressed will neither negatively nor positively affect ability to receive grants and funding currently or in the future.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will participate in a focus group with other property managers of HOA Boards in Washington County. The focus group will be led by the above mentioned persons. The focus group will last 90 minutes and lunch will be served.

Notes about the focus group will be taken by one of the facilitators. You may choose how much or how little you want to speak during the group. You may also choose to leave the focus group at any time.

*We sincerely appreciate your time and input. To thank you for your time, we will provide each participant with \$40 cash to thank you for your time. This will be handed to you at the conclusion of the focus group.*

Participating in this study may benefit you directly by providing you with information about possible clean water projects that can be done to benefit the communities of the HOAs you work with. We do not envision any significant risks related to participation in this study. Participants are welcomed to openly share their ideas, experiences and questions with the group.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact one of the facilitators.

Your signature on this consent form indicates your agreement to participate in this study.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

I have read the consent form and all of my questions about the study have been answered. I agree to participate in this study.

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Informed Consent for Landscape Company Focus Group

You have been invited to participate in a focus group discussion for Landscape Companies in Washington County. The goal of this group is to determine the role of landscape companies in lawn care and irrigation decisions for HOAs, what members of an HOA are looking for in their landscaping, as well as barriers to considering or adopting the following: clean water practices, lower-impact lawn care practices, or stormwater reuse projects. This study is being conducted by Jenn Radtke & Angie Hong, (East Metro Water Resource Education Program - EMWREP) and Andy Schilling (Washington Conservation District - WCD). Funding for this study is provided by the Clean Water Fund.

You have been invited to participate in this study because you are a landscape company who has a contract with an HOA in Washington County. Participation in this study is voluntary. If desired, participation in this focus group may remain confidential. Participation in this discussion and any ideas or opinions expressed will neither negatively nor positively affect ability to acquire contracts currently or in the future.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will participate in a focus group with other landscape companies who provide services in Washington County. The focus group will be led by the above mentioned persons. The focus group will last 90 minutes and breakfast will be served.

Notes about the focus group will be taken by one of the facilitators. You may choose how much or how little you want to speak during the group. You may also choose to leave the focus group at any time.

*We sincerely appreciate your time and input. To thank you for your time, we will provide each participant with \$40 cash to thank you for your time. This will be handed to you at the conclusion of the focus group.*

Participants are welcomed to openly share their ideas, experiences and questions with the group.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact one of the facilitators.

Your signature on this consent form indicates your agreement to participate in this study.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

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I have read the consent form and all of my questions about the study have been answered. I agree to participate in this study.

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_