



Left to right: Lanya Ross - Met Council, Don Scheel - VBWD, Angie Hong - EMWREP, Don Pereira - SWWD

Meeting New People at Washington County Fair

Thanks to everyone who helped to ensure another great year at the Washington County Fair! This year's Washington Conservation District and Washington Water Consortium booth featured a mini-yard display, complete with a lawn mower donated by Lowe's, a pear tree donated by Abrahamson Nurseries and raingarden plants donated by Dragonfly Gardens, in addition to the ever popular watershed "dot" map and stormwater model.

According to the unofficial dot tally, our booth was visited by residents from across Washington County, although the most visitors were from Valley Branch, South Washington, Brown's Creek, Middle St. Croix and Carnelian-Marine St. Croix Watersheds.

New this year were daily walking tours of the raingardens outside Building D that were installed last summer. The raingardens are a joint project of the Washington Conservation District and the Master Gardeners in Washington County and are looking fabulous this summer in spite of the drought. Around

50 people toured the gardens during the "Walk and Talks,"

and many more visited them on their own or with Master Gardeners during other times of the day. Interpretive signs installed last year with funding from the Valley Branch Watershed District and flyers created by the Master Gardeners helped to carry the message about raingardens to the public.

The Washington County Fair is one of the best times for us to reach the general public with information about land and water conservation and watershed protection. It is never too early to begin planning for next year's fair. If you have ideas or suggestions next year's booth, please share them with Angie (angie.hong@mnwcd.org).



Jay Riggs - WCD and Lynn Keller - Master Gardener give a walking tour of the fairground raingardens



Coming soon to a lawn near you...Ron Detzler was the lucky winner of an electric lawn mower donated by Lowe's of Oak Park Heights.

EMWREP Updates and Priority Projects

In July, EMWREP partners met to review the first year of the education program and discuss priorities for '07-'08. With the addition of LSCWMO in November '07, EMWREP will be fully funded for the first time, including \$10,000 for educational materials. If we acquire new partners in the upcoming year, the current contract calls for a proportionate reimbursement for all current members. However, most of the partners expressed a desire to forgo a reimbursement and instead use additional revenue to fund a special project, such as an internship or a durable indoor/outdoor educational display.

One of our major priorities for the fall will be to educate city staff and elected officials about how to include water resource protection into their comprehensive plan updates. We are currently planning a second installment of the Stormwater U series to be held the first week of November. The workshop will be targeted at city planners and will cover topics such as new watershed regulations, open space protection, linking water resources and transportation, reducing impervious surfaces and incorporating infiltration into new development projects. Meanwhile, we will work with University of Minnesota Extension to develop complimentary NEMO presentations for elected officials.

Another priority for the upcoming year will be to coordinate public works trainings, possibly in conjunction with UMEx, including a raingarden maintenance workshop to be held sometime in late September or early October.

Finally, we would like to continue our Blue Thumb outreach with the general public and hope to host a series of three raingarden how-to workshops in the spring of '08. These workshops will most likely happen in Forest Lake, Stillwater and Cottage Grove to reach the major population centers in the county.

Welcome to our newest partner:

Lower St. Croix Watershed Management Organization

Next Stop on the Blue Thumb Party Tour - Klawitter Pond

On July 19, Bonnie Juran of Lake Elmo invited a dozen of her neighbors to her home on Klawitter Pond to see her new raingarden and learn about the Blue Thumb - Planting for Clean Water program. Bonnie, a Master Gardener in Washington County, showcased an impressive garden of native perennials as well as a backyard raingarden funded by a cost-share grant from the WCD.

At the party, many of her neighbors lamented the decrease in water quality in Klawitter Pond over the past 15 years. Some remembered swimming in the lake, now green from algal growth, and were interested in learning how they could help to get the lake back in the blue. Valley Branch WD recently initiated a cost-share grant program to help homeowners install landscaping projects that improve water quality and many of Bonnie's neighbors have already contacted Rusty Schmidt to schedule a site visit for their homes.



An aerial photo of Klawitter Pond shows forested land directly adjacent to the lake, as well as a new housing development and Hwy 36 nearby, both of which contribute Stormwater runoff to the lake.

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

