



2022 Annual Report



Members of the East Metro Water Resource Education Program:

Bayport • Brown's Creek Watershed • Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed • Chisago County
Chisago Lake Improvement District • Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District
Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed • Cottage Grove • Dellwood • Forest Lake • Grant • Hugo
Isanti County • Isanti Conservation District • Lake Elmo • Middle St. Croix Watershed • Newport
Oak Park Heights • Oakdale • Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed • Rice Creek Watershed
South Washington Watershed Stillwater • St. Paul Park • Valley Branch Watershed
Washington Conservation District • Washington County • Willernie • West Lakeland • Woodbury

**East Metro Water Resource Education Program
2022 Annual Report**

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About the East Metro Water Resource Education Program

Background: The East Metro Water Resource Education Program (EMWREP) is a partnership hosted by Washington Conservation District that was formed in 2006 to educate community residents, businesses, staff and decision-makers about issues affecting local lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands and groundwater resources and to engage people in projects that will help to protect and improve the health of these water resources.

Over the past 17 years, the EMWREP program has grown from seven local government partners to 30. In 2022, five new members joined the partnership: Chisago County, Chisago Lake Improvement District, Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District, Isanti County, and Isanti Conservation District.

EMWREP Partnership Structure:

**Indicates members that are also in the Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership*

In 2023, EMWREP partners include:

- Cities and Townships: Bayport, Cottage Grove, Dellwood, Forest Lake, Grant, Hugo, Lake Elmo, Newport, Oakdale, Oak Park Heights, Stillwater, St. Paul Park, Willernie, and Woodbury, West Lakeland Township
- Counties: *Chisago, *Isanti, *Washington
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts: *Chisago, *Isanti, *Washington (host)
- Watershed Management Organizations: *Brown's Creek, *Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix, *Chisago Lake Improvement District, *Comfort-Lake Forest Lake, Rice Creek, Ramsey-Washington Metro, *South Washington, and *Valley Branch Watershed Districts, and the *Middle St. Croix Watershed Management Organization

EMWREP partners jointly fund the program based on a set formula, with fees determined by population (cities and counties) or taxable market value (watershed organizations). See [Appendix A](#) for more detail. The program funds 1.5 FTE, plus materials and other expenses.

Because there is considerable overlap in membership for the EMWREP and Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnerships (www.lsc1w1p.org), education staff is shared between the two programs.

EMWREP staff communicate regularly with local staff at partner organizations, council members, and board members; prepare an annual report detailing program activities; and provide data for partners' MS4 Permit reports. A steering committee comprised of representatives from each of the partner organizations meets twice a year to provide recommendations on the program budget and activities. EMWREP plans and reports are available on-line at www.mnwcd.org/emwrep.

Coordination and collaboration: The EMWREP partnership helps to strengthen relationships between member entities and allows for better coordination and less overlap in the management of local water resources.

EMWREP staff provide leadership for several regional partnerships including Watershed Partners; St. Croix Environmental Education Partnership (SWEEP); Blue Thumb – Planting for Clean Water; and Minnesota Water Stewards. In addition program staff regularly collaborate with nonprofit and citizen-led groups in the Twin Cities and Lower St. Croix regions.

Education Program staff:

- Angie Hong, Water Resource Education Senior Specialist, angie.hong@mnwcd.org
 - EMWREP (95%) – Overall program coordination, education and outreach
 - Lower St. Croix Partnership (5%) - Policy committee coordination
- Barbara Heitkamp, Water Resource Education Specialist, bheitkamp@mnwcd.org
 - EMWREP (50%) – Education and outreach
 - Lower St. Croix Partnership (50%) – Education and outreach

Additional staff support for education programming is provided by seasonal employees and contractors, as needed.

Funding for special programs:

Additional funding for special programs is provided through grants and partner contracts. Grant funds help to support contract services such as graphic design, videography, language interpretation, and youth education. In 2022, grants and special contracts included:

- \$10,000 grant from National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) to conduct focus groups and develop programming with emerging farmers.
- \$13,477 contract with Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District to support shoreline landowner survey and enhanced educational programming
- \$9380 from Washington County to support groundwater education
- Contract between South Washington Watershed District and Carpenter Nature Center to support youth watershed education (~\$25,000)
- Contract between Washington County and Washington Conservation District for aquatic invasive species (AIS) education (~\$3000 for education)

2022 EMWREP stats

- 739 Workshop Attendees**
 - + 525 additional views on YouTube
 - Tamarack Nature Preserve, with Wild Ones and Dr. Mohlenbrock (Feb. 15)
 - Sustainable lawns and gardens, a workshop for area churches (Feb. 22)
 - Spring Gardening for a Healthy Yard and Watershed, Wild Rivers Conservancy (March 16)
 - Glacial Valley Park - info webinar (April 26)
 - Glacial Valley Park - walking tour (May 24)
 - Buckthorn and Goats Workshop (May 3)
- Onward & Upward**

We've added five new partners, hired a second full-time educator, and are now working across the Lower St. Croix Watershed
- 60+ volunteers**

Water Stewards
Master Gardeners
AIS Detectors
Raingarden Adopters
- Media & Communications**

People reached to date through social accounts in 2022:

 - TikTok - 3.3 million
 - Instagram - 896k
 - East Metro Water blog - 32k
 - Facebook - 27k
 - YouTube - 16K

Weekly articles published in Stillwater Gazette - Valley Life

Monthly articles in Forest Lake Times + occasional articles in Country Messenger, Hugo Citizen, and LowDown newspapers
- 300 New Site Visits**

Washington Conservation District staff meet with people to plan clean water and habitat projects
- Many new resources!**

mnwcd.org/emwrep-resources

 - Displays for events
 - Animated videos
 - Fact sheets & booklets
 - Spanish, Somali, and Hmong language resources
- 1020 Storm Drains Adopted in Chisago & Washington Counties**

East-Metro Water Resource Education Program

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Audience: General Public, Urban and Rural Landowners, Youth

Program Goals:

1. Educate the public about nonpoint source water pollution, groundwater conservation, and basic watershed ecology and management.
2. Build partnerships with state and local government, non-profit organizations, and community groups.
3. Engage citizen volunteers to help conduct education and outreach.
4. Motivate urban and rural landowners to practice behaviors that protect water resources.
5. Train and assist urban and rural residents to complete projects on their land that reduce runoff pollution, conserve groundwater, and increase infiltration.
6. Support EMWREP partners in meeting MS4 Stormwater Permit public education and public engagement requirements.

Educational Objectives:

Citizens will learn:

1. That nonpoint source water pollution comes from a variety of land uses - residential, commercial, and agricultural.
2. That common pollutants impacting surface and groundwater resources in the east metro area include phosphorus, sediment, nitrates, *E. coli*, chloride, and mercury.
3. That a watershed includes all of the land draining to a lake, stream or river, and that Watershed Districts and Watershed Management Organizations are special-purpose local units of government charged with managing the resources of a given watershed to prevent flooding and protect water quality.
4. That surface and groundwater resources interact.
5. That area residents can help to prevent nonpoint source water pollution through a variety of behaviors, including raking leaves and grass clippings out of the street, using less fertilizers and chemicals on lawns and gardens, covering bare soil during landscaping and construction, picking up pet poop, replacing failing septic systems, using less salt for winter maintenance and water softening, disposing of household waste properly, and using less electricity.
6. That landowners can help to reduce runoff pollution, conserve groundwater, and increase infiltration by installing best management practices such as habitat plantings, raingardens, and shoreline plantings; repairing erosion; and managing drainage around homes, farms, and commercial buildings.

Remember:

Scoop the poop!

Please pick up poop in your yard and on city streets.

Dog poop can contain harmful bacteria. Protect our water and help keep our city clean.

Don't forget to bring a bag.



PUBLIC EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT: ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. MS4 Stormwater Education Support for MS4 Permit Compliance

The MS4 General Permit requires permittees to educate the public about illicit discharge detection and elimination (IDDE), pet waste, and winter salt and deicing materials. In addition, permit holders must identify two additional stormwater education priorities within their communities. The permit also requires at least one opportunity for public input on the stormwater program each year and one public participation activity.

To support partners in meeting these requirements; EMWREP will continue to conduct educational programs and activities throughout the year and will also deliver monthly emails with print materials, videos, and social media graphics, and other content for partners to use in their communications.

In addition, EMWREP staff have created and uploaded educational materials to the [MPCA Stormwater Wiki – MS4 Toolkit](#) and [EMWREP Resources page](#) for partners to access at any time.

At the end of each calendar year, EMWREP will prepare an annual report that summarizes education activities throughout the year and also evaluates the effectiveness of outreach efforts.

Stormwater related priorities for EMWREP (partners can choose different priorities for themselves if needed)

1. Reducing stormwater runoff through landscape changes to commercial, residential, and public properties (ie. Installing raingardens or converting turf to native plantings)
 - May include public projects, completed with support from community residents, or landowner-led projects, completed with encouragement and/or support from EMWREP partners.
2. Encouraging residents to keep leaves and grass clippings out of roadways, ditches, and drainage pathways in order to reduce nutrient inputs to stormwater runoff
 - May include promotion of the Adopt a Drain program.

2022 Calendar of Public Education messaging

During 2022, EMWREP provided partners with a variety of education materials including newsletter articles, social media graphics, and videos to be used in public education activities, and shared these messages in print and social media communications.

- **January – Salt pollution**
 - Partner resource to share: [SMART salting video](#)
 - News articles:
 - [Salt continues to pollute Minnesota lakes and streams](#) – Jan. 20
“Once concentrations are high enough, the chloride becomes toxic to fish and invertebrates and can prevent lakes from turning over in spring and fall.”
 - TikTok videos:
 - [Impervious surfaces](#) (1/3/22) – 148.7k views, 257 shares
 - [5 ways to green cities](#) (1/4/22) – 29k views, 128 shares
 - [Road salt](#) (1/14/22) – 174k views, 997 shares

- **February – Salt pollution**
 - Partner resources to share: SMART salting flyer and printable stickers
 - Info about SMART Salting certification workshops on Feb. 9, 16, and 23
 - News articles:
 - [The Salty Doldrums of Minnesota Winter](#) – Feb. 15
“February starts to tease at spring, but also showcases the extent to which we’ve relied on salt to get us through the winter.”

- **March - Pet waste and stormwater reuse**
 - Partner resources to share: Pet waste articles and social media graphics
 - News articles:
 - [Using rain barrels to save water and money](#) - March 3
“Rain barrels are a simple and inexpensive way to capture rainwater from your rooftop that would otherwise go to waste.”
 - [Turning Stormwater into a Resource at Applewood Hills](#) – March 24
“Washington County worked with the Brown’s Creek Watershed District and Applewood Hills Golf Course to design a stormwater reuse system that will collect runoff from Hwy 36 and Manning Ave. and use it for golf course irrigation. The project will reduce groundwater pumping by 7 million gallons per year and provide 30% of the irrigation needs for Applewood Hills.”
 - TikTok videos:
 - [RWMWD Maplewood Mall stormwater project](#) (3/1/22) 10k views, 38 shares
 - [CLFLWD Golf course stormwater reuse](#) (3-2-22) 6k views, 5 shares
 - [Adopt a Drain](#) (3/16/22) 60k views, 128 shares
 - [De-listing lakes](#) (3/17/22) 20k views, 16 shares

- **April – Adopt a Drain**
 - Partner resources to share: [Adopt a Drain](#)
 - TikTok videos:
 - [Lily Lake de-listing](#) (4/14/22) 7k views, 14 shares
 - [No Mow May](#) (4/20/22) 30k views, 409 shares
 - Direct emails to Adopt-a-Drain volunteers, Adopt-a-Raingarden volunteers, and BMP project owners

- **May – Adopt a Drain**
 - Partner resources to share: 5 Easy ways to protect water in less than one hour (social media graphics)
 - News articles:
 - [10,000 Storm Drain Adopters in the Land of 10,000 Lakes](#) - May 3
“To date, nearly 10,000 Minnesotans have adopted 17,762 storm drains, and those volunteers have reported collecting 474,096 pounds of debris that would have otherwise ended up in our water.”
 - TikTok videos:
 - [No Mow May](#) (5/13/22) 15k views, 46 shares

- **June - SMART Irrigation controllers & Lawn care best practices**
 - Partner resources to share: social media graphics, municipal programs for SMART irrigation controllers
 - News articles:
 - [Who maintains raingardens after they are planted?](#): June 2
“As raingardens surged in popularity, local communities quickly realized how challenging it could be to keep these new gardens looking good and functioning properly.”

- **July – Small-scale construction & Lawn care best practices**
 - Partner resources to share: [Small-scale construction best practices](#)
 - News articles:
 - [Creating Water & Wildlife-Friendly Gardens with Native Plants](#) – July 7
“In our developed areas, however, yards and gardens can help to form critical habitat connections for birds, bees, fox, and even mustachioed rabbits.”
 - [They say the grass is always greener...but should it be?](#) – July 26, 2022
“I hear friends complain about the cost or the time it takes to care for and maintain their lawns, and I just want to be like “Then WHY have so much lawn?””
 - TikTok videos:
 - [Why is my lake green?](#) (7/19/22) 74k views, 175 shares
 - [Commercial landscaping](#) (7/12/22) 19k views, 37 shares

- **August – Pollutants and stressors**
 - Partner resources to share: [Pollutants and stressors](#)
 - News articles:
 - [Local lakes at risk of too much love](#) – Aug. 25
“As shorelines become increasingly more developed, we start to see shoreline erosion, fewer fish and wildlife, more algae in the water, and diminished water clarity.”

- **September – Preventing stormwater pollution**
 - Partner resources to share:
 - SMART Salting for Roads certification training – Sept. 13
 - Proper draining of swimming pools and hot tubs - graphic
 - TikTok/Instagram videos:
 - [Adopt a Drain](#) (9/12/22) 5600 views, 8 shares
 - [Why do leaves cause algae blooms?](#) (9-15-22) 8600 views, 22 shares
 - [Rain barrels](#) (9-20-22) 8500 views, 20 shares
 - [Lily Lake de-listing](#) (9-27-22) 407k views, 4600 shares

- **October – Fall leaves**
 - Partner resources to share: Social media graphics
 - News articles:
 - [La, la, la, leaves!](#) Sept. 29
“The science behind changing colors, where to go leaf-peeping, and what to do when leaves fall in your street and yard.”
 - TikTok/Instagram videos:
 - [Raingardens](#) (10-3-22), 4600 views, 9 shares
 - [Leaf raking](#) (10-5-22), 248k views, 2700 shares
 - [Where does phosphorus come from?](#) (10-25-22) 25k views, 49 shares

- **November - Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE)**
 - Partner resources to share:
 - Help stop illegal dumping to keep chemicals out of our water - short video for the general public in multiple languages
 - English: <https://youtu.be/AlhvFzNb2tA>
 - Spanish: <https://youtu.be/vp3PNWmPSbk>
 - Somali: <https://youtu.be/o9HyWlctQoo>
 - Hmong: <https://youtu.be/Vd9rU6Uqfpc>
 - MS4 Training Videos – for parks and public works staff
 - [Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination](#)
 - [Cleaning of Maintenance Equipment and Dumpsters](#)
 - [Waste Disposal](#)
 - [Use and Storage of Significant Materials](#)
 - Sample articles
 - [When Watershed Educators go Rogue](#) (5-20-21) Five common waste products and what you should do with them.
 - [Stormwater Detective](#) (2-23-15) History of stormwater regulatory programs and explanation of illicit discharge.
 - Fact Sheet: [Keep your junk out of the water](#)
 - Graphics for social media
 - [Map of adopted storm drains in Chisago and Washington Counties](#)
 - News articles:
 - [Chisago City residents sweep the streets for cleaner water](#) – Nov. 1
 - TikTok/Instagram videos:
 - [Raingardens at Colby Lake](#) (11-2-22) 8400 views, 64 shares
 - [SMART Salting](#) (11-29-22) 4600 views, 12 shares

- **December – SMART Salting**
 - Partner resources to share:
 - [Hold the salt](#) (video)
 - [Watershed – The Hypoxic Punks](#) (video)
 - Graphics for social media
 - News articles:
 - [Sweeping streets and clearing drains for a cleaner St. Croix River](#) Dec. 1
 - [A very hygge holiday?](#) Dec. 9

“Most often, you experience hygge with a small group of friends or family, possibly in front of a fireplace with warm wooly socks and a steaming drink in hand, but definitely not behind the wheel of a car, careening through rush hour traffic in the middle of an ice storm.”
 - [Envisioning a less salty future](#) Dec. 13

“Have you ever seen the intricate dance of a convoy of snow plows clearing a highway after a winter storm?”

Public Participation and Involvement

During 2022, EMWREP helped partners to engage the public through the following programs:

- Adopt a Drain www.Adopt-a-Drain.org - 961 storm drains adopted in Washington County, 59 adopted in Chisago County
- Workshops about residential landscaping – 739 residents participated in workshops and webinars and an additional 525 people watched the pre-recorded workshops on YouTube

In addition, EMWREP hosted or attended the following community events:

- Earth Day weekend (Sat., April 23)
 - Attended Earth Day clean-up event at Sally Manzara Nature Center in Lake Elmo
 - Sent education materials to display at St. Andrews Lutheran in Mahtomedi
- Grant Community Clean-up (Sat., April 30)
- Volunteer Planting Events (Sat., May 21) Marine on St. Croix and Lake Elmo Park Reserve
- Belwin Bison Release (Sat., May 21) – Afton
- RWMWD WaterFest (Sat., June 4) – Lake Phalen
- Twins Game – Adopt a Drain meet-up (Sun, May 15)
- Washington County Master Gardener Plant Sale (Sunday, May 22) Baytown Twp.
- Landscape Revival (Saturday, June 4) Oakdale
- Chisago Lakes Appreciation Night (Wed., July 6th) at Lion's Park in Lindstrom
- Washington County Master Gardener “Learn and Grow Garden Tour” (July 16) – Oakdale and Woodbury
- Forest Lake Arts in the Park - (Tue, Aug. 2) – Forest Lake
- Washington County Fair (Aug. 3-7) – Baytown Twp.
- Newport Pioneer Day (Aug. 14, 4-5pm) – Newport
- Minnesota State Fair (Aug. 25 – Sept. 5)
- River Rally, Stillwater – (Sat. Sept. 10) Barbara Heitkamp led a group of community volunteers in storm drain clean-up and promoting Adopt a Drain.
- Brown’s Creek Watershed District Community Event, Stillwater (Sat. Sept. 10)
- Nature Party at Allemansratt Park in Lindstrom (Sun, Sept 18th)
- CLFLWD State of the Watershed event (Tue., Sept 27)
- Lily Lake Clean Water Celebration, Stillwater (Fri, Sept 30)

2. Volunteer engagement:

Minnesota Water Stewards

23 Stewards certified in Washington County

EMWREP has participated in the [Minnesota Water Stewards](#) program since 2018, through a partnership with [Freshwater](#). Water stewards participate in 50-hours of in-person and on-line training and complete a capstone project to become certified. Once certified, they volunteer 50-hours during their first year of service and 25-hours per year afterwards to remain in the program.

Meet the stewards: Check out this virtual tour to meet the water steward volunteers in Washington County – [meet the stewards](#).

New grant projects: In 2022, we collaborated with North Woods and Waters of the St. Croix Heritage Area (NWW) and the St. Croix Watershed Stewards (SMWS) to secure grant funds from a Grinnell College Wall Award to support projects led by volunteer Water Stewards in our region.

- Anna Barker (RWMWD) is working with Master Gardeners to build a gravel bed tree nursery at the Washington County Fairground
- Cole Williams (SWWD) engaged volunteers to remove buckthorn and restore prairie at Wag Dog Park in Cottage Grove
- Tom Furey (CLFLWD) working with City of Scandia and Bone Lake Association to build a gravel bed tree nursery in Scandia
- Wally Wadd (SWWD) engaged church volunteers to restore oak savanna at The Grove, a church in Woodbury



Adopt a Drain

961 drains adopted in Washington County – **59 drains** adopted in Chisago County
19,315 drains adopted in Minnesota

The [Adopt-a-Drain](#) program engages community residents in helping to prevent stormwater pollution by cleaning leaves, litter and other debris off of storm drains near their homes. Volunteers get reminders via text or email and are asked to report their actions on-line so that cities can track the program's impact.

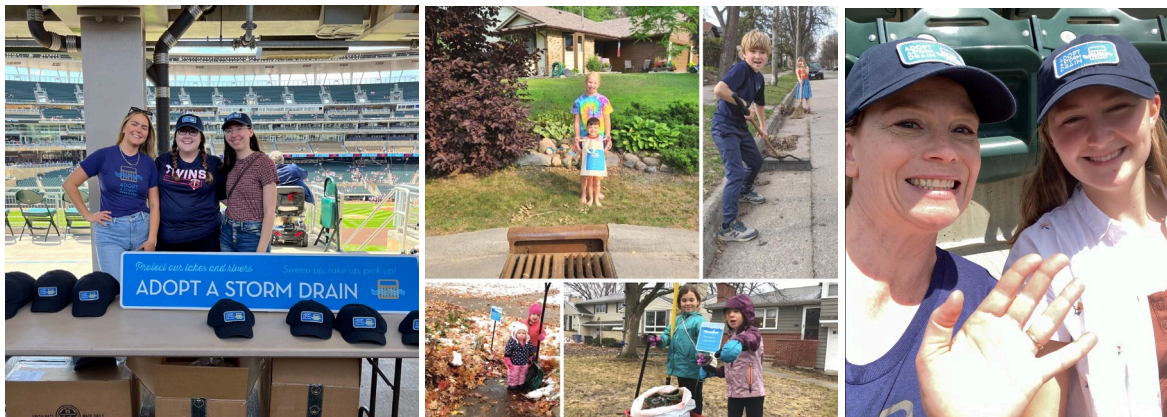
The Adopt-a-Drain program was created by Hamline University's Center for Global Environmental Education on behalf of Watershed Partners, a metro area collaborative with 60+ partners.

In 2022, EMWREP continued to promote the program through a variety of means, including:

- Participating in Watershed Partners and financially supporting the Adopt-a-Drain
- Publishing articles in local newspapers and city newsletters
- Volunteer promotion in Stillwater with Sustainable Stillwater
- Volunteer promotion in Chisago County with Center Lakes Association
- Social media promotions in April and May + volunteer meet-up event at Twins Game
- Emailing current storm drain adopters to provide info on grants and other resources

[Map of adopted storm drains in Chisago and Washington Counties](#)

In May, we celebrated the 10,000th storm drain adopter with a special Minnesota Twins event.



Adopt-a-Drain media communications: The articles and videos listed below were developed by EMWREP to promote Adopt-a-Drain in our area.

- News articles:
 - [10,000 Storm Drain Adopters in the Land of 10,000 Lakes](#) - May 3
“To date, nearly 10,000 Minnesotans have adopted 17,762 storm drains, and those volunteers have reported collecting 474,096 pounds of debris that would have otherwise ended up in our water.”
 - [Saving our water one storm drain at a time](#): May 10
“If you live in an area with storm drains and have been wondering if there’s a way to fit a small but measurable feat of conservation into your busy life, Adopt-a-Drain is great way to go.”
 - [Chisago City residents sweep the streets for cleaner water](#) – Nov. 1
“Meet the self-proclaimed “Walky-Talkys,” who aside from meeting six days a week to walk and chat with their neighbors, have also adopted 17 storm drains through the statewide Adopt-a-Drain program.”
 - [Sweeping streets and clearing drains for a cleaner St. Croix River](#) Dec. 1
“This winter, the Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership will allocate \$40,000 in state funding to help 16 local communities develop targeted, enhanced street sweeping programs in order to reduce stormwater runoff pollution to the St. Croix River and its tributary lakes and streams.”
- Videos
 - [Adopt a Drain](#) (3/16/22) 60k views, 128 shares
 - [Adopt a Drain](#) (9/12/22) 5600 views, 8 shares

Adopt a Raingarden
31 raingardens adopted in Stillwater and Oak Park Heights

The Adopt-a-Raingarden program engages community volunteers to care for raingardens in Stillwater and Oak Park Heights. Volunteers commit to removing weeds, litter, and built-up sediment during the growing season and reporting larger maintenance concerns to staff at Washington Conservation District.

In 2022, EMWREP continued to collaborate with Sustainable Stillwater MN to engage Adopt a Raingarden volunteers and ensure that gardens are well-maintained:

- April 4 – resource packet emailed to garden owners and volunteers
- May 12 – raingarden maintenance workshop in Stillwater

More info at: www.mnwcd.org/adoptaraingarden.

Nonprofit, citizen, and community groups

In addition to these larger volunteer programs, EMWREP works closely with nonprofit, citizen, and community groups in our area, including:

- Master Gardeners
- Lake associations
- Wild Rivers Conservancy of the St. Croix and Namekagon
- Pollinator Friendly Alliance
- Wild Ones
- Sustainable Stillwater MN

Additional volunteer engagement activities in 2022 included:

- Feb. 14 - Attended BCWD citizen advisory committee meetings to share “Booth in a Box”
- April 20 – Attended the Forest Lake Lake Association Meeting and shared info about AIS and native shoreline plantings
- May 1 – Attended the Green Lake Association meeting in Chisago City
- May 21 - Helped to promote volunteer planting events in Marine and Lake Elmo
- May 31 – Organized a half-day education retreat for EMWREP volunteers and staff at William O’Brien State Park
- Helped to recruit volunteers for the Lily Lake basin planting
- Sept. 10 – Led volunteers in storm drain stenciling and Adopt-a-Drain promotion for the St. Croix River Rally
- Secured a Climate Impact Corps member to support community forestry volunteer projects in 2022-23.
- Hosting a 3-week internship for Elizabeth Trevathan, a high school senior at St. Paul Academy

Lily Lake De-listed! A highlight of 2022 was the de-listing of Lily Lake in Stillwater, after more than 20 years of community organizing, watershed planning, and project implementation. EMWREP’s education and outreach from 2006 onward was critical to the success of this effort.

On Friday, Sept. 30, we worked with Friends of Lily Lake to throw a “De-Listing Party” with food, music, and an official commendation of Lily Lake’s removal from the impaired water’s list.



3. Education Partnerships

One of the most important strategies utilized by the EMWREP program is to build partnerships and work collaboratively with federal, state and local government; non-profit organizations; and community groups to educate and engage the public.

Two of our key partnerships include:

Watershed Partners
70 partners in the Twin Cities

Metro Watershed Partners is a coalition of more than seventy public, private and non-profit organizations in the Twin Cities metro area. Through collaborative education and outreach, the Metro Watershed Partners promote a public understanding that inspires people to act to protect water in their watershed. Since 1996, partners have cooperated through educational projects, networking, and resource sharing.

The mission of the Metro Watershed Partners is two-fold:

- To provide and promote collaborative watershed education programs with consistent messages to the general public, local government staff and elected officials; and
- To provide WSP members a place and means to share information, generate ideas, and coordinate and support collaborative watershed education programs.

Watershed Partners holds monthly meetings with special presentations and is host to the Adopt a Drain program.

Clean Water MN: Watershed Partners produces blog style stories highlighting local water stewardship on the www.cleanwatermn.org website. Photos and articles created for this site are also provided to members to use in their own communications. EMWREP makes frequent use of the professional photography for our print and online communications.

In 2022, EMWREP coordinator Angie Hong continued to serve on the Watershed Partners' steering committee and act as convener for large group meetings.

Presentation topics in 2022:

- February – [video recording](#)
 - Adopt-a-Drain admin tutorial - Jenni Abere, Hamline University
 - Legislative update - Trevor Russell, Friends of the Mississippi River
- March
 - Salt legislation - Aaron Klemz, MN Center for Environmental Advocacy
 - Adopt-a-Drain Challenge - Laruen Letsche, City of Columbia Heights
- April – [video recording](#)
 - Seattle's Community Liaisons program - Francesca Ty Abellera, City of Seattle
- May
 - Hennepin County Plastic-free challenge - Amy Maas, Hennepin County
- June
 - Field trip to St Anthony Falls Laboratory and Water Works Park
- September – [video recording](#)

- Smart Salting new initiatives - Kris Bennett, Hamline University, Stephanie Hatzenbihler, City of Rochester
- October – [video recording](#)
 - Art of Influential Communication - Greg Wukasch, San Antonio Water System
- November – [video recording](#)
 - Engaging Diverse Communities - Danny Lee, Hennepin County, Regine Kennedy, 106 Group
- December - Year-End Potluck
 - Watershed Partners and communication survey - Tracy Fredin and Ann Zawistoski, Hamline
 - Outdoor Media Summit - Angie Hong, EMWREP
 - Musical Collaboration - Nick Voss, VLAWMO

St. Croix Watershed Environmental Education Partnership (SWEEP)
78 partners in the Lower St. Croix Watershed

SWEEP (St. Croix Watershed Environmental Education Partnership) brings together staff from parks and nature centers, non-profit organizations, local government, and community groups in the Lower St. Croix watershed to inspire leadership in environmental education through networking, community engagement and collaborative events within the St. Croix River Watershed.

EMWREP coordinator Angie Hong continues to serve as a member of the SWEEP leadership team and helped to plan a half day workshop for SWEEP members that focused on how to work with interns - March 30.

4. Youth education

Though K-12 students are not a primary audience for our education programming, EMWREP provides support for partner-led youth education initiatives and teaches occasional watershed programs, on request.

In 2022, these included:

- **South Washington Watershed District (SWWD) Campus Greening projects:** In southern Washington County, South Washington Watershed District (SWWD) initiated a campus greening program with SoWashCo Schools in 2017. Through this program, the school district and watershed district work together to re-wild school campuses by replacing non-active use turf with prairies, woodlands, and outdoor classroom spaces. To date, campus greening projects are completed or underway at Cottage Grove Middle, Crestview, Lake, Grey Cloud, Middleton, Nuevas Fronteras, and Valley Crossing in Cottage Grove, Woodbury, and St. Paul Park. Students at these schools help to plant trees, spread seeds, and tend to bucktorn-eating goats.

In addition, the watershed district contracts with Carpenter Nature Center to provide environmental education programming through on-site programming and field trips to the nature center. This year’s programming took place at Grey Cloud Elementary and Cottage Grove Middle School.

The Campus Greening program was developed as a creative way for schools to meet the requirements of South Washington Watershed District’s stormwater permit program during re-development projects. Instead of merely installing a stormwater pond, these greening efforts create habitat, reduce irrigation needs, and engage students in hands-on learning. EMWREP staff have helped to develop the partnership with Carpenter Nature Center, and have brought in support from Washington County’s groundwater education program to allow for additional programming as well. Abbey Kuntz provided EMWREP staffing support for this programs in 2022.

Learn more about the Campus Greening program in this [story map](#), created by South Washington Watershed District.

- **Support for implementation of the Washington County Groundwater Plan:** In 2022, this included promoting the Children’s Water Festival and leading an activity using the groundwater model; supporting school education in South Washington School District; conducting public education programming with Washington County Libraries in Oakdale and Mahtomedi.
 - June 14 - Mitch Morris led a water quality demonstration at Oakdale Library
 - July 27 - Water Education at Wildwood Library, Mahtomedi. Mitch Morris led hands-on water programming for kids.



- **Leading interactive programs at community events and schools, including:**
 - April 5 – Angie Hong taught groundwater lessons to kids at River Grove Elementary (May Twp.)
 - April 22 and 29 – Angie Hong led water education programming for students at Nuevas Fronteras (St. Paul Park) and Grey Cloud Elementary (Cottage Grove) during a field trip to Carpenter Nature Center
 - Angie created a video and judged student park planning projects at Cottage Grove Middle School in May
 - June 7 - Lake Critters at Big Marine Park Reserve (May Twp). Barbara Heitkamp led a hands-on learning event, including macroinvertebrate identification, in partnership with Hardwood Creek Library.
 - July 20 - Sally Manzara Nature Center: Water Play Summer Day Camp (Lake Elmo). Angie Hong led a hands-on learning activity
 - July 25 - Water Explorations at Ojibway Park (Woodbury). Amanda Herbrand led a hands-on learning activity
 - Aug. 2 - Forest Lake Arts in the Park. Barbara Heitkamp led a hands-on activity.

- Aug. 14 - Newport Pioneer Day. Mitch Moris led a hands-on presentation called “Love that dirty water: Protecting the Mississippi River.”
- Sept. 22 - Chisago County Children’s Water Festival – Barbara Heitkamp taught groundwater education lessons
- Sept. 28- Metro Children’s Water Festival – Angie Hong taught a station about groundwater.
- Sept. 10 - Crestview Elementary Tree and Shrub Planting (Cottage Grove) – EMWREP helped to recruit volunteers
- Oct. 4 – Angie Hong spoke to students at Nic Jalinski’s Environmental Studies course at University of Minnesota
- Oct. 14 – River Grove Elementary 5th grade (May Twp) - Angie Hong led a lesson about water conservation and prairie roots
- Nov. 9 – Woodbury High School Environmental Club – Angie Hong, Sage Passi, and volunteer Anna Barker met with the club to provide support on a pollinator garden project
- Nov. 11 – River Grove Elementary School 3rd grade (May Twp) – Angie Hong facilitated the K-12 Watershed Game and talked about local government roles in water protection

5. Groundwater education

Washington Conservation District staff provide support for implementation of the Washington County Groundwater Plan through a separate annual contract with Washington County.

Education support provided in 2022 included:

- Promoted the Children’s Water Festival and facilitated the groundwater model at the event
- Supported school education in South Washington School District (Abbey Kuntz)
- Conducted public education programming with Washington County Libraries in Oakdale and Mahtomedi (Mitch Morris)
- Developed narratives for case studies in the Washington County irrigation reuse [StoryMap](#) and shared the story map with EMWREP partners and Washington County cities
- Developed a series of short videos about stormwater capture and reuse
 - [Rain barrels](#)
 - [Maplewood Mall cistern](#)
 - [Forest Hills stormwater reuse](#)
 - [St. Paul Saints Stadium](#)
 - [Grey water reuse](#)
- Gave a presentation about groundwater issues and programs to the Afton Planning Commission on May 2
- Reached out to city staff and developers in Oakdale and Cottage Grove to discuss possible strategies for improving water-friendly landscaping. Unfortunately, we were unable to engage developers on this topic.

In addition, EMWREP conducted the following groundwater education activities in 2022:

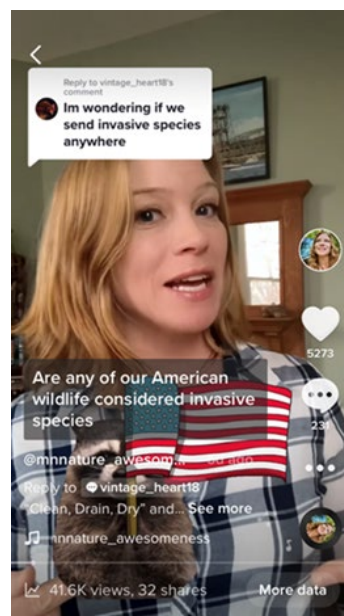
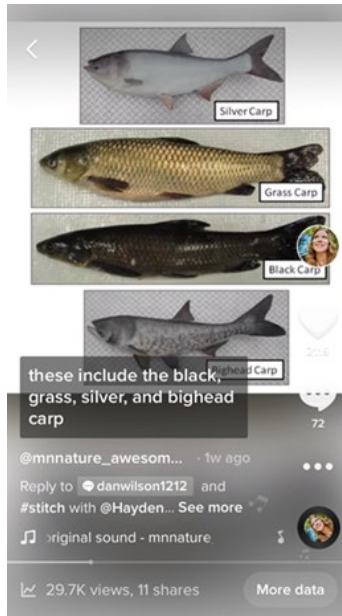
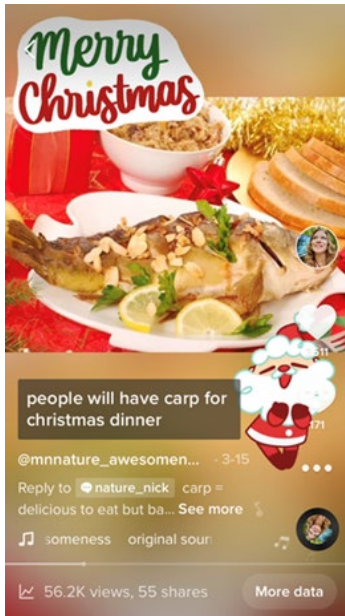
- Created an info flyer about reducing water softener salt
- Wrote articles to promote rain barrels in Washington County and highlighted Applewood Hills reuse project
- Distributed info about SMART irrigation controllers to EMWREP partners in June
- Helped to plan a Well Water Testing Clinic in Scandia on Aug. 18-19 and gave two presentations at the event.
- Nov.8 – Angie Hong presented at the Dakota County Groundwater-Source Water Collaborative to share info about the Washington County Water Consortium and EMWREP
- News articles:
 - Jan. 6 - [Adulting 101: Checking for water leaks in your home](#) – “According to the U.S. EPA, the average American household wastes 10,000 gallons of water per year, purely due to leaking toilets, sinks, and sprinkler systems.”
 - March 3 - [Using rain barrels to save water and money](#) “Rain barrels are a simple and inexpensive way to capture rainwater from your rooftop that would otherwise go to waste.”
 - March 8 - [Our ‘hidden’ and undervalued resource: groundwater](#) “For our area, groundwater is THE water source – not just A water source. Yet, for being so incredibly interwoven in our lives, groundwater is still an abstract concept for many.”
 - March 15 - [Drip, drip drip...the steady beat of the water leak](#) “While it’s not the most entertaining topic to cover, addressing water leaks in the home is one of the easiest things an individual can do to help with water conservation.”
 - March 24 - [Turning Stormwater into a Resource at Applewood Hills](#) “Washington County is working with the Brown’s Creek Watershed District and Applewood Hills Golf Course to design a stormwater reuse system that will collect runoff from Hwy 36 and Manning Ave. and use it for golf course irrigation. The project will reduce groundwater pumping by 7 million gallons per year and provide 30% of the irrigation needs for Applewood Hills.”
 - July 28 - [What’s in the water you drink?](#) “Free well water testing clinic at Scandia Community Center on Aug. 18-19.”
 - Nov. 12 - [New technology coming from Australia to fight PFAS “forever foam”](#)

6. Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)

Washington Conservation District also provides support for AIS education through a separate contract with Washington County. EMWREP media and communications help to support this work.

2022 AIS education support included:

- **East Metro Lakes e-newsletter:** delivered semi-monthly to 165 lake association liaisons, representing 35+ lakes in Chisago, Isanti, Anoka, Ramsey and Washington Counties.
- **Videos:** Developed a series of 4 videos about aquatic invasive species, focusing on carp
 - [Christmas carp](#) – 63.5K views, 64 shares
 - [Carp harvesting](#) – 17.6k views, 16 shares
 - [Invasive \(Asian\) carp](#) – 33.7k views, 13 shares
 - [American species, invasive in other places](#) – 49.3k views, 33 shares
- April 20 – Mitch Moris and Amanda Herbrand attended the Forest Lake Lake Association Meeting and shared info about AIS and native shoreline plantings
- July 14 article - [Volunteer to protect Minnesota lakes from aquatic invasive species](#)
- November - Met with staff from Wild Rivers Conservancy to discuss a new volunteer program to propagate beetles for purple loosestrife control



Media and Communications

In 2022, EMWREP continues to use a variety of platforms to share watershed and stormwater information, promote partner projects and programs, and publicize events and activities.

Print Communications

Newspaper articles: Angie Hong has published a weekly column for the Valley Life – Stillwater Gazette for 17 years. The articles are posted on-line at www.eastmetrowater.org and frequently appear in other local newspapers as well.

New in 2022, Barbara Heitkamp created the Knickpoints blog <https://knickpoints.blog/>, which shares stories of transition and change in the Lower St. Croix watershed.

EMWREP also provides content for city, watershed and WCD newsletters and developed a number of targeted mailings for partners in 2022. Local newspapers include:

- **Cottage Grove Journal**
- **Chisago Press** (Circulation - 3963)
- **Forest Lake Lowdown** (Circulation – 13,997)
- **Forest Lake Times** (Circulation - 13,029) – *Hong column featured monthly*
- **Hugo Citizen** (Circulation – 14,500)
- **Scandia Country Messenger** (Circulation - 1075)
- **St. Croix 360** (On-line: 25,647 followers)
- **St. Croix Lowdown** (Circulation – 5000)
- **Stillwater Gazette** (Circulation - 17,479) – *Hong column featured weekly*
- **White Bear Press** (Circulation – 19,331)

A full list of published articles from Angie and Barbara is listed at the end of this section.

Online Communications

EMWREP uses a variety of online communication platforms to educate and engage with the public, including websites, social media (TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube), webinars, and story maps, and our blogs.

Websites: EMWREP uses the following websites to share education and information and also creates content, including photos, events, articles, and videos, for partners to share on their own websites and social media platforms.

- Washington Conservation District: www.mnwcd.org
 - [/events](#) – event info and registration
 - [/emwrep](#) – annual reports and plans
 - [/planting-for-clean-water](#) – resources for planting projects
 - [/virtual-tour](#) – short videos highlighting outdoor destinations and activities
- East Metro Water: <https://eastmetrowater.org>
 - Tips and tales on keeping water clean

- Knickpoints blog: <https://knickpoints.blog/>
 - Stories of transition and change in the Lower St. Croix watershed
- Blue Thumb – Planting for Clean Water: www.bluethumb.org
 - Resources for raingardens, native plants, shoreline buffers, and Lawns to Legumes
- Clean Water Minnesota: www.cleanwatermn.org
 - Watershed Partners produces high quality photos and articles for partners to use in their communications. Blog stories highlight actions that Minnesotans are taking to protect water.

Social media accounts: Content is also shared on partner’s social media platforms.

- TikTok - [@mnnature_awesome](#) 82.1k followers – 3.1 million total views
- Facebook - [@mnwcd](#) – 1.2k followers – 26k total impressions
- Instagram - [@wcd_mn](#) – 677 followers; [@mnnature_awesome](#) 16.1k followers – 764k total impressions
- Twitter - [@angiehongwater](#) – 411 followers
- East Metro Water blog – www.eastmetrowater.org - 1,868 subscribers - 31k total readers
- Knickpoints blog - <https://knickpoints.blog>
- YouTube – [Washington Conservation District](#), [Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership](#) – 16k total impressions

Social media content created for partners can be accessed [here](#). Password: CleanH2Oforall!

Over the past three years, EMWREP has dramatically increased its social media outreach in response to changes in the media landscape. We recognize that different platforms reach different audiences and demographics and have also observed that fewer people are getting their news from traditional sources, such as the Star Tribune / Pioneer Press and broadcast television news programs.

We use social media as part of a comprehensive education and communications strategy that also includes community partnerships, articles in local newspapers and partner newsletters, email outreach, volunteer engagement, online and in-person workshops, community events, and more. Social media posts help us to reach a larger audience that is younger and more diverse and also help us to build longer term relationships with community members that support our work.

In particular, we have found TikTok to be a highly interactive platform for engaging the public. Our videos receive thousands of comments and questions from viewers, who in turn share our messages in their own social circles. These interactions also help us to gauge public understanding of local water resource issues and support for various programs and practices.

The popularity of our videos has also led to new opportunities for collaboration and speaking requests, as well as earned media with KARE 11 television, KSTP radio, MPR radio, and other media outlets.

More recently, within the past 4-5 months, Instagram has changed its algorithm to feature reels more prominently in users’ feeds. As a result, we’ve been able to double the total audience for many of our most recent videos.

During 2022, EMWREP reached 3.1 million people via TikTok and 764,000 via Instagram. The top ten best performing videos in 2021-22 are listed below. Note that Instagram (IG) views

greatly increased the audience for the videos on Indigenous land management, Lily Lake de-listing, and leaf raking.

	Topic	Views	Likes	Shares
1.	Poison Ivy	4.6M	726.3k	23.8k
2.	Drought	648.2k	129.4k	3.5k
3.	Indigenous land management	177.4k + 415k IG	41.2K + 45K	391 + 6658
4.	How to use a compass	486.4k	69.2k	121
5.	Wild parsnip	474.9k	57.1k	1.9k
6.	Lily Lake de-listed	201.4k + 198k IG	51.3k + 31k	582 + 3935
7.	PFOS in St. Croix River	391.5K	53.8k	7.9k
8.	Lawn to native conversion in HOA	322.5k	40.1k	593
9.	Skip raking this fall	216.7k + 29k IG	44.5k + 2k	1877 + 788
10.	Chloride pollution	174.4k	35.5k	997

Special Media Features in 2022



KARE-11 [News story](#) on de-listing Lily Lake – Sept. 26
 KARE-11 reporters interviewed Angie and members of Friends of Lily Lake for this 3:49min feature story about the work that went into de-listing Lily Lake.

[WCCO Radio – Why you need to bury underwear in your garden](#) - Sept. 27
 Learn about the “Soil your undies” soil health demonstration project in this fun interview with Angie, conducted by Vineeta Sawkar.

Grow with Jay and Donna: Hear Angie talk about how to get started gardening with native plants in this 25-min podcast - <https://anchor.fm/jayanddonna>

Outdoor Media Summit: In October, Angie Hong attended the [Outdoor Media Summit](#) in Lake Tahoe as a VIP guest, along with 180 representatives from outdoor brands, state and local tourism bureaus, and outdoor media writers, producers and content creators. Presentations highlighted strategies for engaging the public and building a following on social media and offered numerous opportunities for cross-sector collaboration.

Articles published in 2022

[Adulting 101: Checking for water leaks in your home](#) – Jan. 6, 2022

“According to the U.S. EPA, the average American household wastes 10,000 gallons of water per year, purely due to leaking toilets, sinks, and sprinkler systems.”

[After 100 years underground, Phalen Creek will finally see the light](#) – Jan. 13, 2022

“Lower Phalen Creek Project, a Native-Led, East Side environmental organization, has secured \$2.8 million in funding from the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council to begin daylighting Phalen Creek.”

[Salt continues to pollute Minnesota lakes and streams](#) – Jan. 20, 2022

“Once concentrations are high enough, the chloride becomes toxic to fish and invertebrates and can even prevent lakes from turning over the in spring and fall.”

[When the flowers bloom again](#) – Jan. 28, 2022

“The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is currently accepting applications for its Lawns to Legumes program. Apply online by February 15 for the opportunity to receive \$300 in grant support to install native pocket plantings, native trees and shrubs, pollinator lawns, and pollinator meadows in order to restore and enhance habitat for birds and pollinators.”



[A World Without Us or Solarpunk?](#) Feb. 3, 2022

“Is there a different pathway to the future in which we humans get to stay on earth but find new and better ways to live in harmony with nature?”

[Is it safe to eat the fish?](#) Feb. 10, 2022

“The short answer is, it depends.”

[Wandering out of winter into spring](#) Feb. 18, 2022

“Beginning next week, local conservation partners are offering a variety of online and in-person workshops to help you transition from winter into spring, and, hopefully, create a more environmentally sustainable landscape in the process.”

[Waiting for the birds](#) Feb. 24, 2022

“While a back-yard bird feeder is a great way to attract and enjoy watching birds in your yard, you can actually do far more for the birds by planting native flowers, shrubs, and trees.”

[Using rain barrels to save water and money](#) March 3, 2022

“Rain barrels are a simple and inexpensive way to capture rainwater from your rooftop that would otherwise go to waste.”

CLFLWD citizen water monitoring - March 3, 2022

[New expert support and funds available for farmers in the Lower St. Croix Watershed](#) – March 26, 2022

“The Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership has hired a Minnesota Extension agronomy outreach specialist – Jennifer Hahn – and has earmarked more than \$200,000 to support soil health practices and conservation plans for farmers in the local region.”

[Turning Stormwater into a Resource at Applewood Hills](#) – March 24, 2022

“Washington County is working with the Brown’s Creek Watershed District and Applewood Hills Golf Course to design a stormwater reuse system that will collect runoff from Hwy 36 and Manning Ave. and use it for golf course irrigation. The project will reduce groundwater pumping by 7 million gallons per year and provide 30% of the irrigation needs for Applewood Hills.”

[Tracking the health of Forest Lake area lakes and streams](#) – March 21, 2022

“Who tracks water quality in the Forest Lake area, and how do we nurse impaired lakes and streams back to good health?”



[10,000 Storm Drain Adopters in the Land of 10,000 Lakes](#)

- May 3, 2022

“To date, nearly 10,000 Minnesotans have adopted 17,762 storm drains, and those volunteers have reported collecting 474,096 pounds of debris that would have otherwise ended up in our water.”

[Using goats to control buckthorn and other invasive species](#) – April 21, 2022

“To learn more about managing invasive species with goats, join the East Metro Water Resource Education Program, Washington County Parks, and The Munch Bunch for an outdoor workshop on Tuesday, May 3, 6-7pm at Big Marine Park Reserve.”

[Help save monarch butterflies](#) – April 14, 2022

“USFWS estimates that there is a 96-100% probability that western monarch populations will collapse within 50 years and an 80% probability that eastern monarchs will as well. But, people can prevent that from happening by planting more milkweed.”

[Help create the new Glacial Valley Park in Woodbury-Cottage Grove](#) – April 8, 2022

“South Washington Watershed District’s conservation corridor is the result of two decades of work to create habitat connections and protect land-locked portions of Woodbury and Cottage Grove from flooding.”

[Saving our water one storm drain at a time](#): May 10, 2022

“If you live in an area with storm drains and have been wondering if there’s a way to fit a small but measurable feat of conservation into your busy life, Adopt-a-Drain is great way to go.”

Lily Lake alum treatment scheduled: May 12, 2022

“The alum will draw phosphorus out of the water column and also seal sediment on the lake bottom so that the nutrient can no longer feed algae.”



It takes a village: The journey of getting Martin Lake de-listed: May 17, 2022

“Fifteen years ago, I would go to the end of my dock and not be able to see more than 12 inches into the water,” says John Mattila, current president of the Martin Lakers. “Now, I can see at least 3 feet down – sometimes much more depending on the time of year. It’s night and day to how it used to be.”

Plant-a-palooza coming up!: May 19, 2022

“The next few weeks will offer numerous opportunities to enjoy all things plant-related, including two volunteer planting events, a bison release, two native plant sales, and two family nature events.”



The lure and reality of conservation tillage: May 25, 2022

“Changing tillage practices is no small decision, but there are a growing number of resources that are meant to help encourage farmers to take a second look at conservation tillage”

Community Forestry initiative will help Minnesota cities adapt to changing climate conditions: May 27, 2022

“AmeriCorps members will help help communities around the state increase their urban tree canopies and build resiliency within existing forests for changing climate conditions.”

Who maintains raingardens after they are planted?: June 2, 2022

“As raingardens surged in popularity, local communities quickly realized how challenging it could be to keep these new gardens looking good and functioning properly.”

Mississippi River – Take a drink, then pass it on – June 9, 2022

“It is no exaggeration to say that wastewater treatment is a feat of human ingenuity and one of our most important 20th Century success stories.”

Confessions of a timid gardener, part 3: Time to get real and PLANT. – June 14, 2022

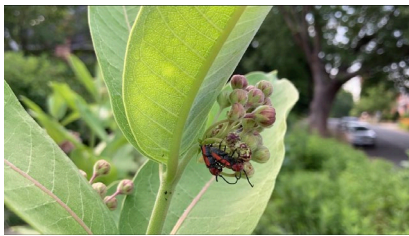
“One thing that I wish people would realize when they start conservation projects is that it doesn’t need to be perfect – it just needs to be a start.”

[**A window into the work of your local soil and water conservation districts.**](#) – June 21, 2022
Take the quiz to find out how much YOU know about the services, work, and expertise you can find at your soil and water conservation districts.

[**Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership ramps up support for local farmers**](#) – June 22, 2022
“In addition to hiring Jennifer Hahn as a Minnesota Extension agronomist to serve the region, the partnership is hosting workshops for large and small-scale farmers; offering incentive payments for cover crops, nutrient management, prescribed grazing and tillage management; and conducting listening sessions with beginning farmers at Big River Farms in May Twp.”

[**It’s a day for a field day!**](#) – June 28, 2022
Field days are an incredibly important outreach tool in the ag ecosystem. This past Friday, I had the opportunity to help support and participate in a field day in southern Washington county.

[**3 Moms + 3 Boys + 1,000,000 Mosquitoes: A Boundary Waters Adventure**](#) – June 30, 2022
“The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCA) encompasses more than one million acres of forest, 1175 lakes, and 1200 miles of canoe routes in northeastern Minnesota.”



[**Creating Water and Wildlife-Friendly Gardens with Native Plants**](#) – July 7, 2022
“In our developed areas, however, yards and gardens can help to form critical habitat connections for birds, bees, fox, and even mustachioed rabbits.”

[**This summer, find your moment of water zen**](#) – July 12th, 2022
Sometimes you just recognize that in that moment, everything feels right and you feel humbled and energized by the experience.

[**Volunteer to protect Minnesota lakes from aquatic invasive species**](#) - July 14, 2022
“During Starry Trek, scheduled this year for Aug. 20, volunteers gather at training sites to learn how to identify starry stonewort and then head out to local water accesses to search for signs of the invasive species.”

[**Exploring land-based living: Habitat restoration, hobby farms, and more**](#) – July 22, 2022
“On August 1, Brittany Wiitala and Matt Hardy will share their farming stories during a special workshop hosted by the Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership: You’ve got Land: Exploring farming and land management options for 10-40 acres.”

[**They say the grass is always greener...but should it be?**](#) – July 26, 2022
I hear friends complain about the cost or the time it takes to care for and maintain their lawns, and I just want to be like “Then WHY have so much lawn?”

[What's in the water you drink?](#) – July 28, 2022

“Free well water testing clinic at Scandia Community Center.”

[Mysterious creatures of the St. Croix River](#) – Aug. 4, 2022

“Bryozoans are just one of the many strange and unique animals that call the St. Croix River home.”



Forest Lake's enhanced street sweeping model inspires nearby communities to follow suit – Aug. 4, 2022

[Bring on the bees](#) – Aug. 11, 2022

“It is hard to say whether bee lawns are a hot new trend or a throw-back to the early 1900s.”

[Landowners are abuzz with helping pollinators](#) – August 16th, 2022

“It's so satisfying watching people go through this process and seeing them fall in love with their gardens. Plus, they recognize that they get so many more benefits out of their gardens than just helping pollinators.”

[A secret world beneath the surface of the soil](#) – Aug. 19, 2022

“When working with farmers to improve soil health, soil scientists will sometimes begin by digging a soil pit. It is somewhat like an archaeological dig, except the focus is on finding geological clues to the past, as opposed to pottery or dinosaur bones.”

[Local lakes at risk of too much love](#) – Aug. 25, 2022

“As shorelines become increasingly more developed, we start to see shoreline erosion, fewer fish and wildlife, more algae in the water, and diminished water clarity.”

[Conservation Potpourri: August Edition](#) – August 26, 2022

From caterpillar poop, to snail shell openings, and soiling my undies, here's a collection of fun education tidbits for the month.

[Going native? Fall is a great time to plant](#) – Sept. 1, 2022

“You can plant native plants from small packs or pots between September and mid-October or spread seed for bee-lawn and native plantings in early November to mid-December.”

[Opportunities for nature enjoyment and stewardship](#) – Sept. 8, 2022

“This Saturday, Sept. 10 serves up a wide array of activities for nature enthusiasts, including planting trees, stenciling storm drains, chowing down on tacos and ice cream, and enjoying bluegrass in the prairie.”

[Friends of Lily Lake invites community to celebrate lake's "de-listing"](#) – Sept. 19, 2022

“On Friday, September 30, 5-7:30pm, Friends of Lily Lake will celebrate this return to clean water with a family-friendly community event at Lily Lake Park.”

[La, la, la, leaves!](#) Sept. 29, 2022

“The science behind changing colors, where to go leaf-peeping, and what to do when leaves fall in your street and yard.”

[Undies in the Garden](#) – Sept. 30, 2022

“I feel embarrassed to admit how excited and nervous I was to dig up the underwear in my yard and see how much they had decomposed.”



[The Changing Landscape of Nature-Based Education in Minnesota](#)

Oct. 5, 2022

From nature centers, to campus greening projects, and even public charter schools - these Minnesota programs are working to connect kids with nature

[New Initiatives to Grow and Tend the Forests in Washington County](#) – Oct. 13, 2022

“This fall, the WCD is launching a new initiative to develop a countywide community forestry program, in partnership with cities, volunteers, and the AmeriCorps Climate Impact Program.”

CLFLWD Watershed Champion Awards Announced – Oct. 13, 2022

[‘You’ve been educated!’ Lessons learned from a summer of environmental education](#) – Oct. 19, 2022

“Stenciling and cleaning storm drains, interacting with public officials, organizing workshops, burying underwear in my garden, walking crop fields, wading out into lakes on macroinvertebrate hunts, filming butterflies and bees on lakeshores, talking groundwater with 4th graders, learning about and planting native plants, and meeting people – oh so many people – this was my summer 2022.”

[Mercury levels going down in Minnesota lakes](#) – Oct. 24, 2022

“In 2020, the MPCA removed Forest Lake, Tanners Lake (Oakdale), Owasso (Roseville/Shoreview), Johanna (Arden Hills) and eight lakes in northern Minnesota from the state’s impaired waters list. This was the first time in Minnesota history that any lake or river recovered from a mercury impairment.”

[For there was the tree](#) Oct. 25, 2022

“Oak savannas – with their open grassland understory and tall towering oaks that can be hundreds of years old – used to cover up to 10% of Minnesota, with the majority of that area just south of the Twin Cities extending down to Iowa.”

[Kristina Smitten and Jackson Meadow recognized as 2022 Community Conservationist](#) – Oct. 27, 2022

“Over the past decade, Smitten has acted as a connector and motivator within her community and has led stewardship efforts not only on the protected natural areas within Jackson Meadows, but also on adjacent properties that are owned by the City of Marine.”

[Chisago City residents sweep the streets for cleaner water](#) – Nov. 1, 2022

“Meet the self-proclaimed “Walky-Talkys,” who aside from meeting six days a week to walk and chat with their neighbors, have also adopted 17 storm drains through the statewide Adopt-a-Drain program.”



[**New study finds that plastic pollution is pervasive in National Parks across the US**](#) – Nov. 4, 2022

“Plastic makes up 81% of all trash collected in National Parks and federal lands.”

[**New technology coming from Australia to fight PFAS “forever foam”**](#) - Nov. 12, 2022

“Funds from the \$850 million settlement between 3M and the State of Minnesota will be used to purchase, import, and operate the two systems.”

[**What happens when landscapes go dormant?**](#) - Nov. 22, 2022

“After a successful planting of some native plants in my garden earlier this summer, I decided to take another plunge this fall.”

[**Strange facts about two of Minnesota’s favorite comeback animals**](#) Nov. 24, 2022

“Deer and turkeys are two of the most common charismatic megafauna that we see in the east metro and lower St. Croix Valley, but that wasn’t always the case.”

[**Sweeping streets and clearing drains for a cleaner St. Croix River**](#) Dec. 1, 2022

“This winter, the Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership will allocate \$40,000 in state funding to help 16 local communities develop targeted, enhanced street sweeping programs in order to reduce stormwater runoff pollution to the St. Croix River and its tributary lakes and streams.”

[**Indigenous Perspectives on Land Management**](#) Dec. 6, 2022

“Oak savanna is one example of an ecosystem that has co-evolved with humans in several different locations in North America. In this transitional zone between forest and prairie, people used fire to maintain open areas as a way to attract large game animals such as bison and elk.”

[**A very hygge holiday?**](#) – Dec. 9, 2022

“Most often, you experience hygge with a small group of friends or family, possibly in front of a fireplace with warm wooly socks and a steaming drink in hand, but definitely not behind the wheel of a car, careening through rush hour traffic in the middle of an ice storm.”

[**Envisioning a less salty future**](#) – Dec. 13, 2022

“Have you ever seen the intricate dance of a convoy of snow plows?”

[**Jim Pechacek and Caroline Mecklin - 2022 Outstanding Conservationists**](#) Dec. 14, 2022

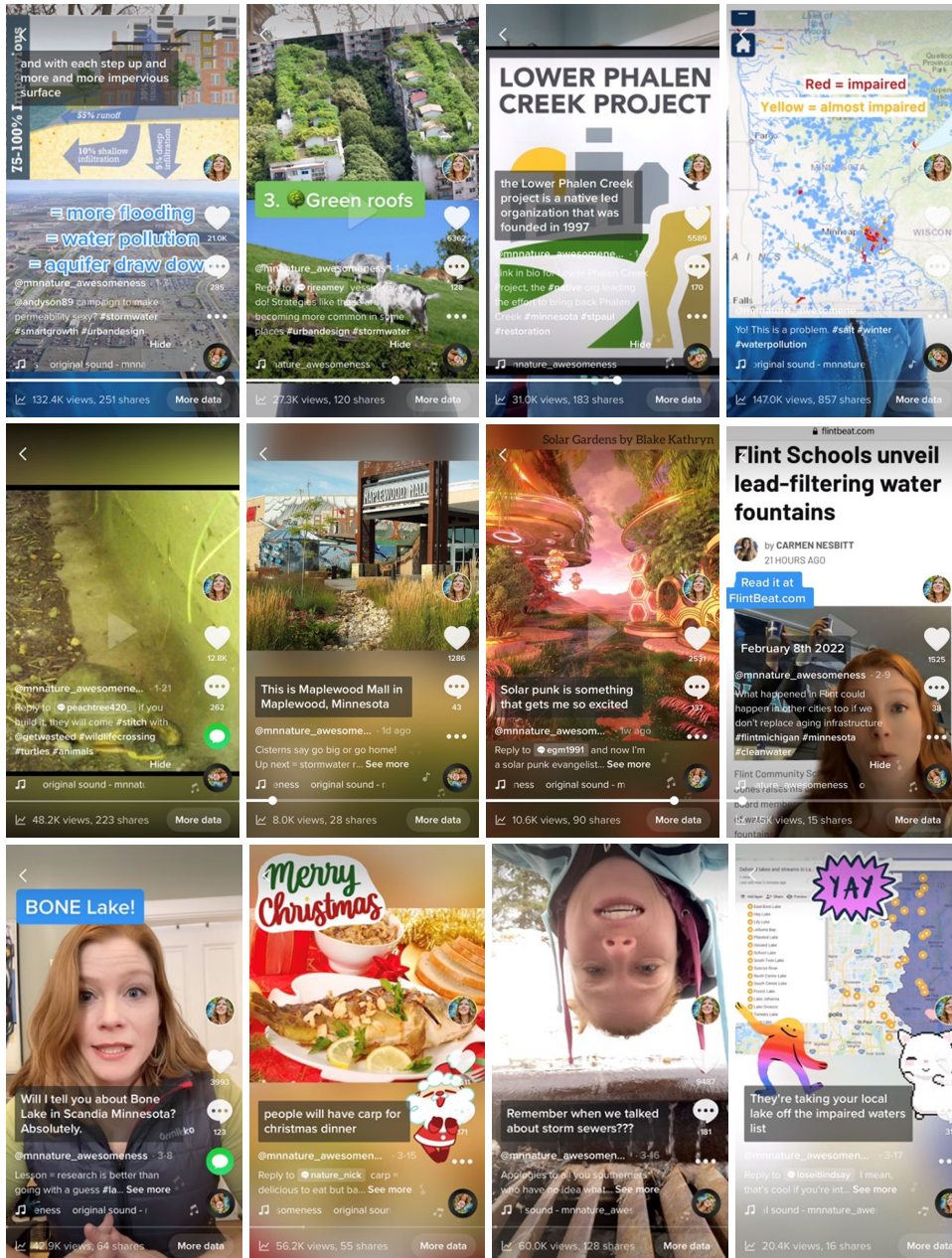
“Jim and Caroline are stewarding farmland in the St. Croix Valley that has been in the family for more than 140 years.”

[**Numbers for the New Year**](#) Dec. 29, 2022

“Since 2009, Washington County landowners have completed 5325 conservation projects ranging in scale from tiny front-yard pollinator gardens to large-scale conversions of cropland to native prairie.”

Videos in 2022

The EMWREP program created 179 videos for the @mnnature_awesome TikTok and Instagram channels in 2022. An abbreviated list of high performing videos is included below. (Click the photos to link to videos on TikTok)



these include the black, grass, silver, and bighead carp

@mnnature_awesome... · 1w ago
Reply to @damwilson212 and #stitch with @Hayden · See more

29.7K views, 11 shares

im wondering if we send invasive species anywhere

Are any of our American wildlife considered invasive species

@mnnature_awesome... · 1w ago
Reply to @vintage_hearts / @mnnature_awesome... · See more

41.6K views, 32 shares

to provide habitat for monarch butterflies

17.0K views, 46 shares

The first is called joe-pye weed.

@mnnature_awesome... · 1w ago
Reply to @SSASAS / @mnnature_awesome... · See more

15.9K views, 81 shares

BRavo BRavo

it is getting taken off of the impaired waters list!

@mnnature_awesome... · 4-14
How a small town rallied to save a lake #minnesota #lake · See more

7.1K views, 14 shares

No Mow May
Help to preserve and protect pollinators during this crucial spring period.

The idea is that numerous cities in Minnesota and Wisconsin have passed resolutions

@mnnature_awesome... · 4-20
I am firmly in favor of making my life and yours easier thi... · See more

30.5K views, 405 shares

greenwashing, it's not sustainable.

I volunteered one night with this organization called Food Not Bombs

@mnnature_awesome... · 4-24
Reply to @bologymology | I find that small steps get pe... · See more

14.6K views, 6 shares

Wow!

native plants, veggies, herbs, fruit at extremely affordable prices.

@mnnature_awesome... · 5-18
Reply to @mishibeg | info about all of these events can be found at... · See more

11.0K views, 239 shares

and then when you look really closely

@mnnature_awesome... · 5-17
Where to buy native plants? Try BlueThumb.org for locations! · See more

36.3K views, 131 shares

a good reason to not mow for a whole month?? done!

My 85 year old neighbor Barbara has let the violets grow up in her yard

@mnnature_awesome... · 5-13
Reply to @kissmeandkissme / @mnnature_awesome... · See more

14.2K views, 45 shares

So, if you are in Saint Cloud, MN

@mnnature_awesome... · 5-13
Reply to @mishibeg | mind to the... · See more

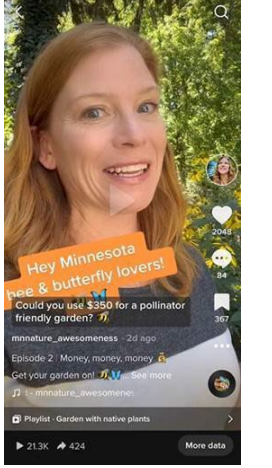
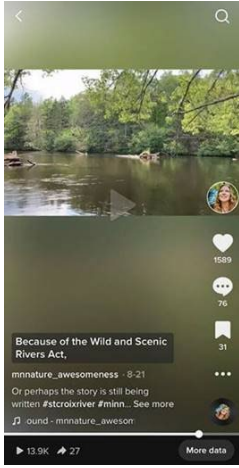
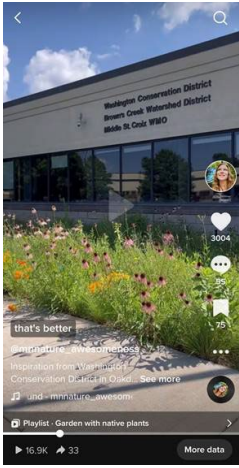
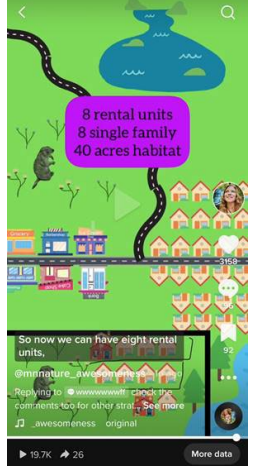
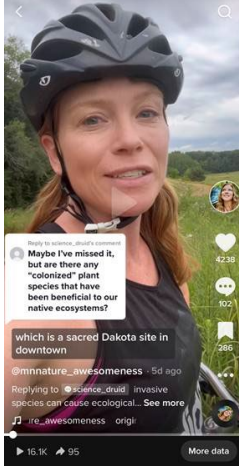
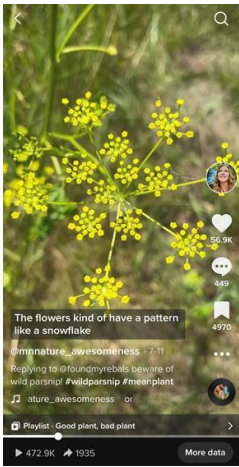
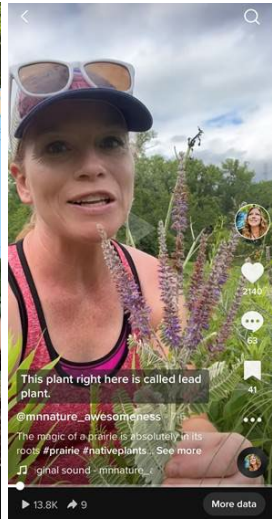
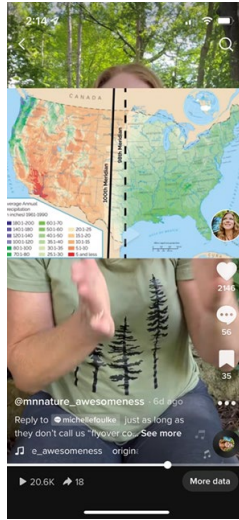
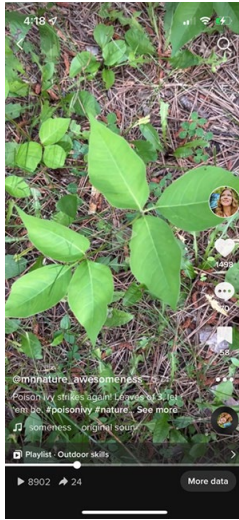
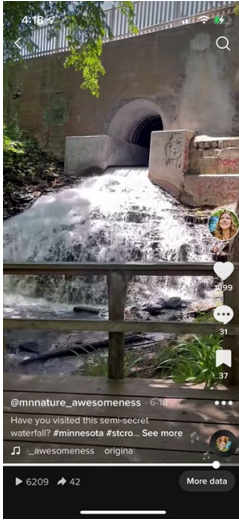
47.3K views, 63 shares

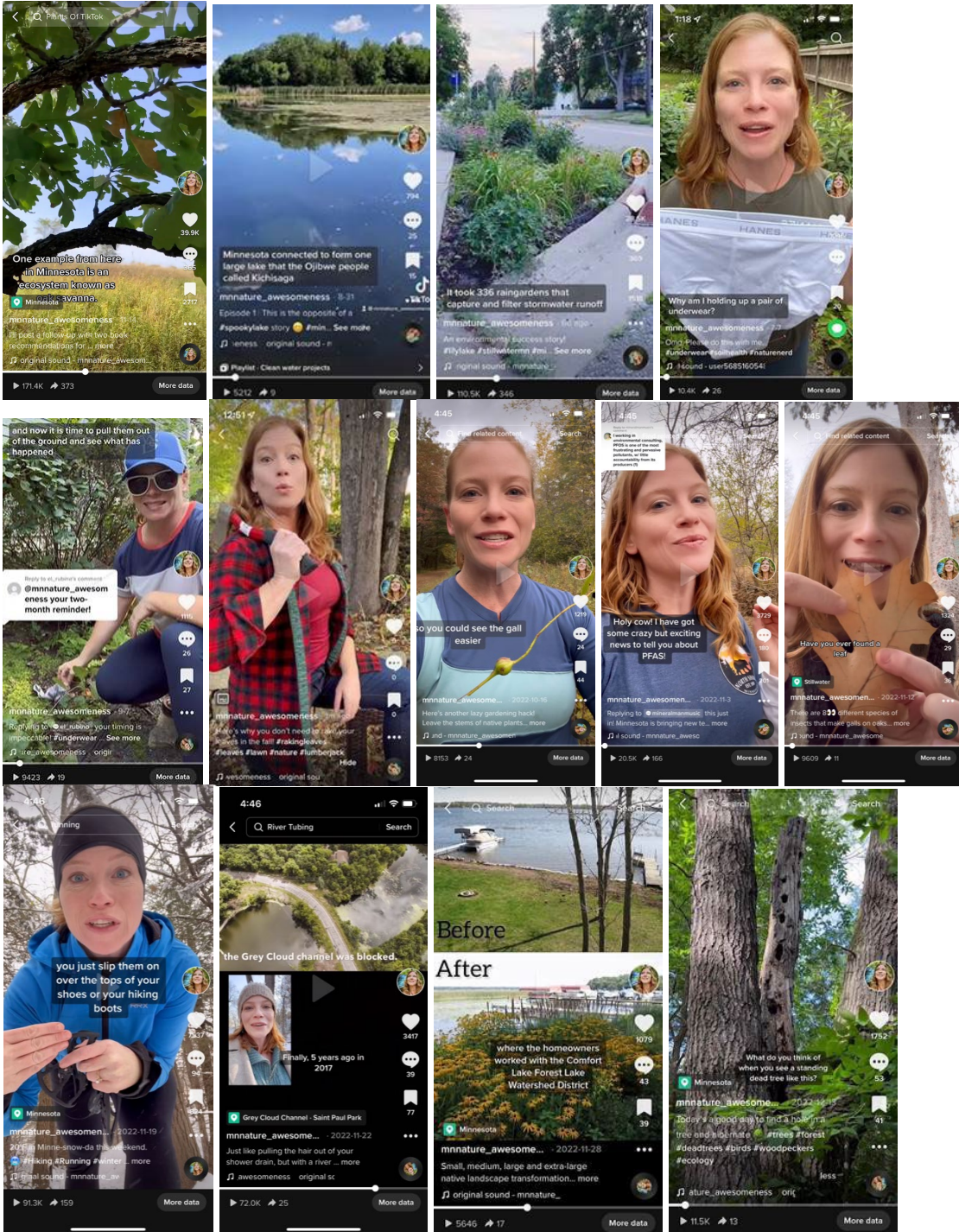
5 +

What to plant if you want butterflies. #LearnOnAToy #NativePlants · See more

@mnnature_awesome... · 6-2
original sound · mnnature_awesome

6214 views, 18 shares





OUTREACH SUPPORT FOR PROGRAM AND PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Audience: General public, landowners and land managers

Program Goals:

1. Publicize EMWREP partner programs and projects.
2. Engage public and private land owners to complete habitat and water quality improvement projects on their land.
3. Promote partners' BMP (Best Management Practices) and cost-share incentive programs and connect landowners with state and federal grants for water quality improvement projects.
4. Engage community members and other stakeholders to help meet water quality goals identified through local water plans, TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) studies, WRAP (Water Restoration and Protection) strategies, and regulatory programs.
5. Educate the public and engage community members to support implementation of the Lower St. Croix Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.

Educational Objectives:

1. Community members will be aware of partner projects and programs happening in their communities and understand the benefits of these activities.
2. Landowners will develop the knowledge and skills to complete habitat and water quality improvement projects on their land, including: native plantings, raingardens, and native shoreline buffers.
3. Landowners will be aware of and utilize BMP, cost-share and other incentive programs to complete projects.
4. Community members will participate in public meetings, provide input for plans, and take action to support the goals outlined in local and regional plans.

OUTREACH SUPPORT: ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1) Blue Thumb – Planting for Clean Water

The Blue Thumb – Planting for Clean Water Program is a Minnesota partnership hosted by Metro Blooms. Public, private and nonprofit partners work together to educate the public about native plants, raingardens and shoreline plantings and encourage homeowners to complete projects on their land. The program operates the www.BlueThumb.org website, hosts workshops and other events, delivers educational messaging through several media platforms, and has produced numerous print resources, including the Blue Thumb Guide to Year Round Yard Care.

Blue Thumb is affiliated with the Minnesota Lawns to Legumes program and offers web resources and workshops to help landowners develop pollinator-friendly gardens and plantings.

EMWREP helped to launch the Blue Thumb partnership in 2007 and developed many of the original education materials for the program. Currently, we use the website as a resource for the public and collaborate with Blue Thumb to promote and conduct workshops in our region. Workshops help residents to connect with local resources including, incentive grants, free site visits, garden designs, plant lists, and conservation plans for larger properties.

In 2022, EMWREP held workshops via webinar on the following topics (# attendees):

		Zoom In-person	YouTube	Total
Feb. 15	Tamarack Nature Preserve, with Wild Ones and Dr. Mohlenbrock	406	405	811
Feb. 22	Sustainable lawns and gardens, a workshop for area churches	78	64	142
March 16	Spring Gardening for a Healthy Yard and Watershed, with Wild Rivers Conservancy	100	56	156
April 26	Glacial Valley Park – info webinar	45	-	45
May 3	Buckthorn and Goats Workshop – in person at Big Marine Regional Park	75	N/A	75
May 24	Glacial Valley Park – walking tour	35	N/A	35
		739	525	1264

Shoreline Education: In 2022, EMWREP staff spent a fair amount of time coordinating with Minnesota Lakes and Rivers Advocates and Blue Thumb on outreach to shoreline owners. We shared our Shoreline Buffer and Shoreline Restoration workshop materials with Blue Thumb to create a statewide workshop module.

We also adapted a Shoreline Landowners’ Guide, originally from Itasca County, to be used in other parts of the state. This guide is now being offered online for purchase by MN Lakes and Rivers Advocates. Toward the end of the year, EMWREP staff helped CMSCWD to create a new 4-pg mailer for lakeshore owners, which can be adapted and used by other watershed districts as well.

BMP PROJECT MAINTENANCE

EMWREP has a project maintenance calendar for Google and Outlook to provide landowners with raingardens monthly reminders for common maintenance activities (ie. cleaning inlets or weeding): www.mnwcd.org/maintenance-guide.

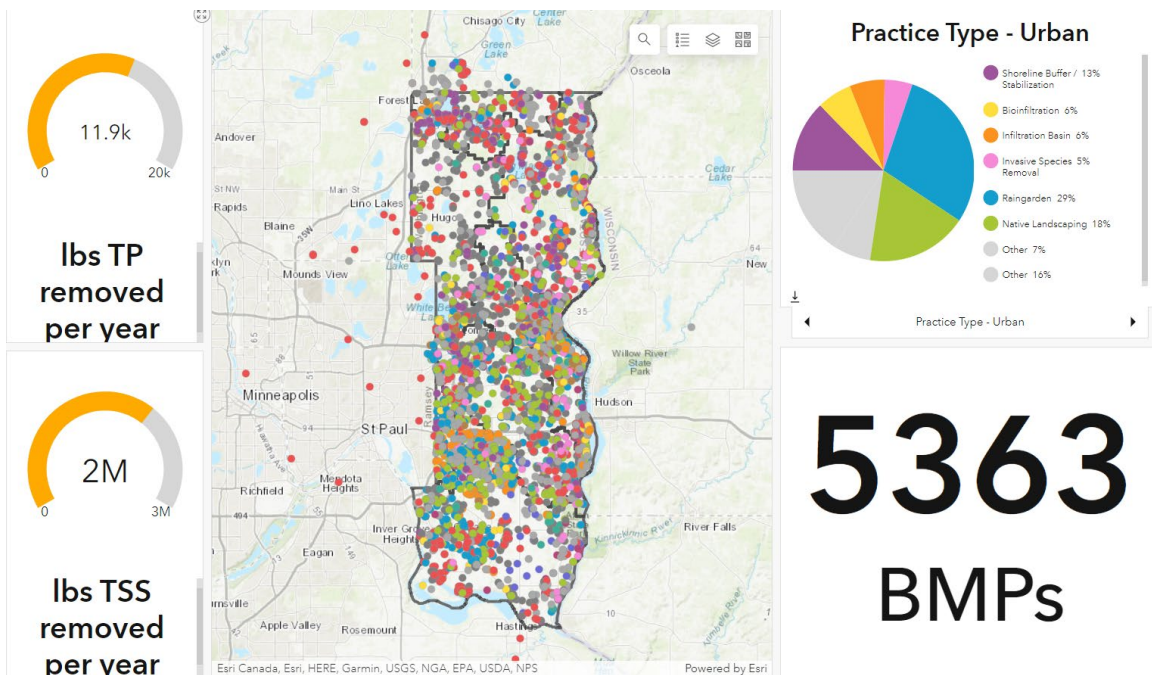


Additional resources for raingarden maintenance are also available at www.mnwcd.org/adoptaraingarden.

2) Promotion of BMP and cost-share incentive programs

EMWREP workshops and media drive people toward partner BMP and cost-share programs. In Chisago, Isanti, Ramsey, and Washington Counties, each of the respective SWCDs conduct site visits and provide technical support. Watershed Districts and WMOs also provide cost-share and plant grants to landowners.

During 2022, EMWREP outreach and education led to **300** site visit requests for Washington Conservation District staff. Site visits were not tracking on other counties. A map showing all conservation projects completed in Washington County during the duration of the EMWREP partnership can be found at: www.mnwcd.org/project-map. Long-term, there are hopes to eventually expand the project tracking map to include other counties in the Lower St. Croix Watershed as well.



3) Homeowners Associations

Construction of stormwater BMPs, including stormwater ponds, infiltration basins, stormwater reuse systems, and vegetated buffers has been standard practice in Minnesota for more than 20 years. Long-term maintenance of these practices to ensure that they continue functioning properly, however, can be a challenge, especially for practices that are privately owned and located within homeowners' associations and commercial properties. Additionally, HOAs and commercial properties can negatively impact water resources and reduce the longevity and effectiveness of stormwater BMPs through their irrigation, lawn care, and winter maintenance practices.

Previous work with HOAs:

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. As part of this project, the WCD conducted three focus group sessions with HOA board members, property managers, and lawn care companies to identify opportunities for and barriers to implementing clean water projects.

Barriers identified by focus group participants included: lack of interest; member turnover and generational tension; limited funding; unwillingness to deviate from conventional landscape aesthetics; and concerns about maintenance and liability.

In 2018, Washington Conservation District conducted a survey of 62 stormwater professionals in Minnesota to gather input for development of new MS4 education materials.

In this survey, 76% of respondents indicated that HOAs are a priority audience that they are currently working with or would like to work with in the future. Forty-eight percent of respondents listed large and small businesses as a priority audience. In addition, several survey respondents listed HOAs and commercial properties as audiences that they struggle to reach. "Each [HOA] is different and most are not well-organized, they have their set way of doing things, limited contact information." "[Commercial properties are] on a completely different wavelength, it is difficult to find the right people to speak with that make decisions on lawn maintenance and snow removal."

As part of the MS4 Toolkit project, WCD staff also gathered input from approximately 30 stormwater professionals during a facilitated Watershed Partners meeting on 10/10/18. At this meeting, participants identified stormwater ponds and their maintenance as a priority topic for education, and also listed renters and residents in multi-family housing as audiences they would like to better reach.

New work in 2022:

In January, EMWREP developed a grant request to support new social research and develop educational materials for HOAs and commercial property owners. Though we were unsuccessful in obtaining this grant, we are continuing conversations with partners including UMN and metro area watershed districts to develop outreach strategies and materials for HOAs.

Professional Trainings for Business and Local Government

Audience: Water resource professionals, municipal staff, consultants and contractors, local elected and appointed officials, business owners, lawn care providers, winter maintenance providers

Program Goals:

1. Provide technical training to help EMWREP partners meet MS4 Permit requirements and reduce stormwater pollution.
2. Work in partnership with University of Minnesota to provide high-quality professional education at a local level.
3. Provide local decision makers (city councils, planning commissions, watershed boards, county commissioners, etc.) with information and training needed to implement policies, programs, and practices that protect and restore water resources. This includes, but is not limited to, Minimal Impact Development Standards (MIDS) and Shoreland/Buffer rules.
4. Offer professional trainings for area business owners, lawn care providers, and winter maintenance contractors to share information about local water issues and encourage business practices that protect surface and groundwater resources.

Educational Objectives:

1. Municipal employees will understand that stormwater runoff, erosion, and illicit discharge contaminate surface and groundwater resources and, also, that there are best management practices to reduce these causes of water pollution.
2. Local decision makers will understand that land use impacts water quality and that there are a variety of policies, programs and practices cities, counties, and watershed management organizations can implement to protect their water resources, including MIDS and shoreland/buffer rules.
3. Area business owners, lawn care providers, and winter maintenance contractors will learn how to conserve groundwater resources and reduce surface and groundwater pollution through a variety of practices, including:
 - a. Completing water efficiency audits;
 - b. Mowing higher and using fewer lawn chemicals; and
 - c. Reducing road salt application by using new technology, calibrating equipment, and adjusting anti-icing and deicing methods based on weather forecasts; and storing salt properly to reduce leaching.
 - d. Using and storing pesticides and fertilizers safely.

PROFESSIONAL TRAININGS FOR BUSINESS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1) Stormwater U Training for Municipal Staff and Businesses

EMWREP collaborates with partners including UMN and MPCA to provide professional training for municipal staff, contractors, and businesses. Training in 2022 included:

SMART Salting Certification: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency offers SMART Salting certification for plow drivers, contractors, and property managers.

- Sept. 13 – helped to organize a SMART Salting training, co-hosted by Dakota and Washington Counties. 70 attendees
- Promoted SMART Salting training opportunities in monthly email updates to partners
- Created a list of the 760+ public and private employees that are SMART Salt Certified in the EMWREP region.

Barbara Heitkamp also provided IDDE training for Oakdale Public Works staff in November.

MS4 Municipal Training Resources

MS4 Permittees are required to provide training for staff on a variety of topics related to stormwater and pollution prevention. Below are links to eleven short videos developed by EMWREP that partners are encouraged to share via email or incorporate into staff meetings and training workshops.

- [Stockpile Management](#)
- [Use and Storage of Significant Materials](#)
- [Routine Street and Parking Lot Sweeping](#)
- [Pesticides and Fertilizers](#)
- [Right of Way Maintenance](#)
- [Vehicle Maintenance](#)
- [Road Maintenance](#)
- [Waste Disposal](#)
- [Emergency Response](#)
- [Cleaning of maintenance equipment, building exteriors, and dumpsters](#)
- [Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination](#)
- [Raingarden Maintenance](#)
- [Parks Maintenance](#)

EMWREP has also developed print resources to help partners explain MS4 permit requirements to the public, and understand requirements related to stormwater inspections and maintenance.

- [Stormwater pollution and the MS4 permit program](#)
- [Stormwater systems mapping and inspections](#)

In addition to the videos listed above, EMWREP staff are able to speak at staff trainings on request.

2) Education for local decision-makers

EMWREP provides education support to help community leaders implement policies, programs, and practices that minimize stormwater runoff pollution and preserve habitat corridors for pollinators, birds and wildlife.



ST. CROIX RIVER WORKSHOP ON THE WATER 2022

A workshop for local decision-makers

JULY 20, 2022 | 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM
ABOARD THE GRAND DUCHESS
HUDSON, WI

Hosted by Wild Rivers Conservancy of the St. Croix and Namekagon,
National Park Service, Minnesota DNR, Wisconsin DNR,
East Metro Water Resource Education Program,
Washington County, Polk County, St. Croix County

Workshops on the Water – July 20: EMWREP collaborated with Wild Rivers Conservancy, Minnesota and Wisconsin DNR, National Park Service, and Wisconsin counties to host a St. Croix River Workshop on the Water. 100 people attended.

Speakers and activities included:

- Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway – Craig Hansen, NPS Superintendent for the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
- Living on the shoreline & protecting your waterfront investment - Lynn Markham, Wisconsin Extension, Land Use Specialist
- Building climate resiliency and meeting riverway regulations - Kenny Blumenfeld & Dan Scollan – Minnesota DNR
- Connecting land use to water quality (The Watershed Game)

Workshop at the Winery – Aug. 24: EMWREP staff also provided support for a Workshop at the Winery in Chisago County, organized by the Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership. 40 people attended.

Planning for new development: In the late fall, EMWREP staff developed the outline for a short animated video that can be shared with community leaders to introduce concepts related to conservation development. In 2023, we'll work with videographer Jill Zimmerman to produce the video.

3) Other education opportunities for local staff and decision-makers

In addition to recruiting speakers for Watershed Partners and the Washington County Water Consortium, education staff are frequently invited to share their expertise at local, state and national conferences. In 2022, these included:

- **EMWREP education retreat – May 31:** Conducted a day-long retreat for education staff from EMWREP partner organizations on May 31 at William O'Brien State Park. Participants practiced education activities, including collecting and identifying macroinvertebrates, facilitating the Watershed Game, and using the groundwater model.

- **Soil Health Nexus – Aug. 9-10:** Angie and Barbara taught practitioners how to create short-form education videos for YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram.
- **North American Lake Management Society Conference – Nov. 16:** Barbara Heitkamp attended and presented on EMWREP and Lower St. Croix equity efforts.
- **BWSR Academy – Oct. 27:** Angie Hong co-led a workshop on media and communications that focused on outreach and communication strategies used to engage the community in de-listing Lily Lake.

Educational opportunities offered by other organizations were also shared with partners via email on a monthly basis.

EQUITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

EMWREP partners recognize the importance of fully engaging communities in order to protect and restore water resources. Equity is one of the ten guiding principles in the Washington Conservation District [2022-27 Comprehensive Plan](#) and education staff has taken a multi-pronged approach to improving equity and accessibility for our programs.

Over the past ten years, EMWREP staff have participated in and helped to plan diversity and equity workshops, in conjunction with Watershed Partners, and also conducted a series of internal, staff-led trainings and conversations about racial and gender equity in 2020-22. Staff also participate in Watershed Partners' CARE (Culturally Aware and Relevant Education) subcommittee, which meets monthly.

In 2022, WCD secured grant funding for projects in Landfall and Big River Farms that will engage low-income and culturally diverse residents in Washington County.

EMWREP also worked with language interpreters in 2019 to create stormwater education videos and print materials in Spanish, Somali, and Hmong.

In 2022, Washington Conservation District began working with equity consultant Barbara Raye to develop 5-year equity goals. These include:

1. Developing an internal/external equity-focused mentorship program
 - Implementing more inclusive hiring processes to reach new applicants – both seasonal and full-time positions
 - Asking for and prioritizing bilingual applicants
 - Developing a mentorship program for interns, seasonals, and new staff.
 - Considering a mentorship program for high school students
2. Incorporating equity into prioritization processes for water quality and natural resources restoration work
3. Developing an urban agriculture program that engages emerging farmers from diverse economic and cultural backgrounds

This work will continue in 2023, beginning with an equity workshop on Feb. 16 for WCD staff, board and organizational partners that will focus on developing strategies for achieving the equity goals.

Activities related to equity in 2022 included:

- **Big River Farms:** Securing \$10,000 in grant funds from National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) to support relationship-building with Big River Farms, an organization in Washington County that offers land access and education in organic agriculture for immigrants, refugees, people of color, and others who have historically faced discrimination in accessing farmland, markets, education and other farming support.

As part of this project, Angie attended the Emerging Farmers Conference in St. Paul in November and participated in several small-group conversations with farmers to learn about their goals and barriers.

- **Landfall:** Securing grant funds to support community engagement and creation of pollinator habitat in Landfall, a manufactured home park community near Tanner’s Lake in Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District (Total grant = \$40,000). Landfall is one of three pilot communities the WCD will be working with.

As part of this project, community forestry member Tim Foss has been meeting with staff, volunteers, and residents at Landfall to discuss opportunities for collaboration related to ash removal and tree replanting. Angie also participated in a Washington County HOPE project meeting in the spring to learn more about working with Latinx residents in the mobile home park.
- **Gender equity:** Worked with BWSR staff to conduct a gender equity training for WCD board and staff. Identified a Gender and Power Dynamics training opportunity for leadership to attend. Participated in semi-monthly equity committee meetings at WCD.
- **Learning from others:** Angie conducted interviews with the following people to learn more about their equity initiatives and identify collaboration opportunities.
 - Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission - James Rasmussen
 - Belwin Conservancy – Katie Bloome and Susan Haugh
 - Sharon Day - Nibi Water Walks
 - Welcome Water Protectors – multiple people
 - RWMWD – Sage Passi
 - Washington County – Rebecca Leighton and Maria Bonilla

Appendix A: EMWREP Program Budget 2022-24

Each PARTNER is suggested to contribute annually in accordance with the following funding structure.

- County or SWCD (Population > 100,000): \$13,583.48/year
- County or SWCD (Population < 100,000): \$6,685.62/year
- County or SWCD partially within the Lower St. Croix watershed: \$1337.12/year
- Small Watershed Districts (Taxable Market Value < \$1 Billion): \$13,477.35/year
- Medium Watershed Districts (TMV \$1-5 Billion): \$20,481.33/year
- Large Watershed Districts (TMV >\$5 Billion): \$26,530.23/year
- Watershed Management Organizations and Lake Improvement Districts: \$6685.62/year
- Large MS4 Cities (Population > 5,000): \$2,865.26/year
- Small MS4 Cities (Population > 5,000): \$742.85/year

In-kind matches from existing educational staff from within partner organizations are also encouraged. The WCD shall provide \$13,477.35 of in-kind match to the program per year. As shown in Exhibit B, PARTNER contributions will be reviewed and adjusted on an annual basis, as needed.

Staff Support and Overhead Expenses	Materials	Total
\$174,112.37	\$13,000	\$187,112.37
MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE AND FUNDING CONTRIBUTIONS		
South Washington Watershed District	\$26,530.23	
Valley Branch Watershed District	\$20,481.33	
Browns Creek Watershed District	\$20,481.33	
Comfort Lake – Forest Lake Watershed District	\$20,481.33	
Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District	\$13,477.35	
Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District	\$13,477.35	
Rice Creek Watershed District	\$3,183.63	
Washington County	\$13,583.48	
Middle St. Croix Watershed Management	\$6,685.62	
Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District	\$6,685.62	
Chisago Lakes Improvement District	\$6,685.62	
Chisago County	\$6,685.62	
City of Cottage Grove	\$2,865.26	
City of Forest Lake	\$2,865.26	
City of Lake Elmo	\$2,865.26	
City of Hugo	\$2,865.26	
City of Oakdale	\$2,865.26	
City of Stillwater	\$2,865.26	
City of Woodbury	\$2,865.26	
Isanti County	\$1,337.12	
Isanti Soil and Water Conservation District	\$1,337.12	
City of Bayport	\$742.85	
City of Dellwood	\$742.85	
City of Grant	\$742.85	
City of Newport	\$742.85	
City of Oak Park Heights	\$742.85	
City of St. Paul Park	\$742.85	
West Lakeland Township	\$742.85	
City of Willernie	\$742.85	
TOTAL	\$187,112.37	