

MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT



Information for professionals working with water issues.

VOL. 1, ISSUE 1

SPRING 2003

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:	Page
City of Plymouth	1
Gleason Lake Homeowner's Association	2
West Nile Virus	2
Wetland Functions & Values Assessment	2
MCWD/NPDES Rules & Permits	3
MCWD Board Members	3
Builder's Corner	4

Water Wise:

THE CITY OF PLYMOUTH



Dakota Native Americans were the first inhabitants of Plymouth back in 1400-1500 AD. Their residency was at the north end of Medicine Lake, whose name is derived from the

Native American word "Mdewakan" meaning "Lake of the Spirit" in honor of a warrior who overturned his canoe and his body was never recovered.

The Southwest part of Plymouth near Wayzata began modern development first around Medicine Lake. It became the "destination" area for recreational cabins. Today, the only remaining open space area is located in the northwest portion of the city.

With a population of more than 66,000, eight lakes, plentiful streams, wetlands and open space, and more than 1,000 acres of parkland with 80 miles of trails, the city is committed to protecting its natural environment. In 1995, voters passed a referendum to purchase and preserve 120 acres of environmentally significant open space. The city has also implemented wetland protection and tree preservation policies and put a Water Resource Management Plan into place. Most recently it's taken a leadership role in providing public education on environmental issues, too. One example is the environmentally-focused supplement to the city newsletter that goes out three times a year.

Shane Missaghi, Plymouth's Water Resource Engineer since 1995 says, "Plymouth is pro-active in natural resource protection. In 1993, a buffer ordinance was implemented first utilizing the Wisconsin Rapid Assessment Method, then the Minnesota method (MCRAM) and now we are incorporating the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District's Function and Values Assessment method (MNRAM) into our planning."

An Environmental Quality Committee has nine members, including two students as well as an ex-officio city council member and a student alternate. Developers are also encouraged to work with city staff to design projects that implement environmentally sensitive site design to protect natural resources. In doing so, the city can look at conservation easements, or through ownership by homeowners' associations or other appropriate parties on a case-by-case basis to protect Plymouth's natural features.

Currently there are over 25 sites around the city utilizing structural Best Management Practices, such as open swales or rain gardens to



Gleason Lake is located in the southern portion of Plymouth. Gleason drains into Wayzata Bay, then Gray's Bay and into Minnehaha Creek.

capture stormwater. Developers are responsible for the maintenance of these sites for the first two years. Residents receive periodic mailings telling them "plants are at work" on their property so they understand what is involved and the benefit of helping protect these areas.

The City Council also supports citizen education about stormwater issues. Five years ago, it started a landscaping grant program for residents, businesses, schools, non-profits and other community organizations to incorporate upland native landscaping and aquatic plant species for enhanced water quality. Activities that transform a portion of a lawn to native landscaping are eligible. The maximum grant is \$500 to help with the purchase of plants and erosion control materials. Attending a three-hour workshop about upland landscaping, rain gardens and native plants is required. Plants are ordered from the Ramsey County Corrections at a reduced cost.

The City of Plymouth has also incorporated three street cleanings a year using vacuum-assisted street sweepers, concentrating heavily in areas around water bodies. The materials collected are separated and re-cycled.

According to both Shane Missaghi and Margie Vigoren, Environmental Educator, because of the city's progressive Council, it has been able to set a positive course for water resource protection.

GLEASON LAKE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION IS RECOGNIZED FOR PROTECTING WATER RESOURCES

The Gleason Lake Improvement Association (GLIA), received "honorable mention" by the Minnesota Lakes Association at its annual Lake Association of the Year award program.

"The Gleason Lake Improvement Association does an excellent job in lake management." —Paula West, Executive Director of the Minnesota Lakes Association.

GLIA was nominated jointly by the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District and the City of Plymouth for its outstanding efforts in water quality protection through in-ground projects and community education. GLIA continues to ensure its lake's health by working closely with government agencies.

Congratulations!

WEST NILE VIRUS WILL RETURN

The Metropolitan Mosquito Control District (MMCD) predicts that West Nile virus (WNV) will be back this summer, and is taking steps to reduce risk to metro-area citizens.

West Nile virus is a mosquito-borne disease that affects birds, horses, and humans. Last year 284 people died of WNV in the U.S. The worst hit state was Illinois, with 64 deaths and more than 800 illnesses reported. In Minnesota, no humans died of WNV, but 48 people were sickened, and nearly a third of the 992 Minnesota horses affected by WNV died.

Using an approach called Integrated Pest Management, MMCD is examining a wide range of mosquito breeding habitats, including both man-made water retention systems and natural wetlands. There are 50 unique mosquito species in Minnesota. Not all of them bite humans. Some prefer birds, while others aren't so picky. Choosing the right mosquito control measures and reducing WNV risk, depends on knowing how mosquitoes use our wetlands, the role that birds play in spreading and amplifying the virus, and how important each mosquito species is in spreading WNV from birds to other animals. Call the MMCD at 651-645-9149 for more information and for information about reporting dead crows, or visit www.mmcd.org

WETLAND FUNCTIONS AND VALUES ASSESSMENT (MCRAM) IS COMPLETED



After two years of work, the functional assessment and wetland inventory of all wetlands 1/4 acre in size or larger within the MCWD is finally complete.

The first stage of the process included developing an improved methodology for assessing wetland functions. This resulted in less personal judgment and a more scientific basis in determining wetland functional values. Known as the Minnehaha Creek Routine Assessment Method (MCRAM), it has become the prototype for the Board of Soil and Water Resources next generation assessment method for the State of Minnesota. The second stage was the actual field work, physically visiting each wetland and collecting the data. The final stage is implementation. The MCWD put the reports to work immediately in permit reviews and in answering wetland questions for landowners and developers. Cities are encouraged to include their specific city report (provided to them at no cost) on their wetlands into their municipal management plan.

Major reasons for the Functional Assessment of Wetlands (FAW):

- Improved protection of wetlands and other natural resources
- Resource for planning capital projects
- Guide for wetland restoration and land preservation efforts
- Assist in smart development—preserving natural features, promoting green spaces
- Improved understanding of how specific wetlands functions for water quality, flood prevention, wildlife habitat, education, etc. Vegetation, including species diversity, dominant species and exotic species
- Floodwater retention potential and stormwater management issues
- Water quality
- Land use
- Shoreline protection

If you are interested in more information, contact our office.

SCOTTS INTRODUCES "ZERO" PHOSPHORUS FERTILIZER

Scotts has introduced a phosphorus-free product! It is 29% nitrogen, 0% phosphorus, 4% potassium. The brand is a straight fertilizer product which means there is no herbicide or insecticide blended into the fertilizer mix. The following stores carry the fertilizer: Bachman's, Dundee, Menards, Home Depot and corner hardware stores. Congratulations to Scotts for delivering a zero-phosphorus fertilizer before the law goes into affect in 2004!

CONSTRUCTION SEASON STARTING—READ ABOUT MCWD & NEW NPDES RULES GOVERNING PCA PERMITS

As winter comes to a close, and we turn our thoughts to Minnesota's other season—construction—the MCWD and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) reminds the construction industry that projects disturbing 5,000 square feet of soil requires an MCWD permit. Disturbing more than one acre of land surface requires an MPCA permit before construction can begin. MPCA projects of less than an acre also need a permit if they are part of a larger plan of development or sale.

"We recommend that you apply for a permit first with us, then with the MPCA," says Mike Wyatt, MCWD District Technician in the Permitting Department. "In almost every instance, our rules are stricter than MPCA's, so when you receive a permit from us first, going through the MPCA permit process will be much easier."

MPCA Public Information Officer, Barbara Skoglund says, "The new National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) storm-water federal regulations that took effect March 10, 2003 require owners and operators of small construction projects (one acre or more and smaller sites that are part of a large plan) to obtain an NPDES permit as well."

The MPCA is developing a general storm-water permit that includes both large and small construction projects. The public notice period for the new permit ended in February and comments are under review. Although a new permit has not been issued, construction projects must still obtain NPDES storm-water permit coverage and must develop and implement storm-water pollution prevention plans (SWPPP) that include Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize polluted- and sediment-filled runoff.

For more information or for applications visit the following web sites: www.minnehahacreek.org/f-Permits.htm; www.pca.state.mn.us/water/stormwater/index.html

Or call: MCWD at 952-471-0590 and MPCA at 651-297-2274 or 1-800-646-6247

After serving a three-year term as Board Manager, Dr. Robert

SPEAKING OF PERMITS...

The MCWD has a permit brochure primer especially for homeowners (shown on the right). It outlines who may need to apply for a permit and how to access more information. "We want residents in the District to be able to experience a smooth, efficient permit process from beginning to end," says Renae Schubert, MCWD District Technician in the Permitting Department. "Whether you are near a water resource or not may not matter. You still may need a permit if your project would affect water resources, so it's best to check with our office". We encourage cities to stock these brochures next to city permit applications. If you need brochures, contact Joan Ellis at 952-471-0950. Visit www.minnehahacreek.org for permit information and applications.

What's "E-Splash"? It's the MCWD's electronic list serve. To subscribe, go to our web site Home Page at www.minnehahacreek.org.

DR. ROBERT SCHROEDER STEPS DOWN FROM THE MCWD BOARD; SUSAN GOETZ IS APPOINTED AND SCOTT THOMAS IS RE-APPOINTED

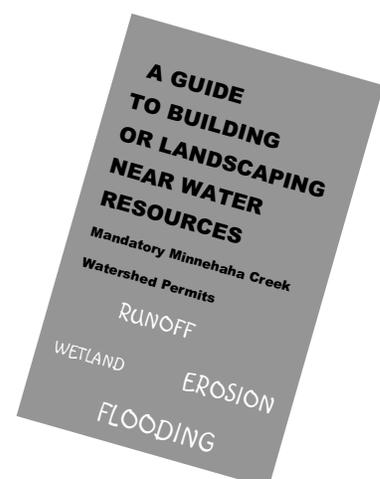
Schroeder has stepped down from the MCWD Board of Managers. A resident of South Minneapolis, Dr. Schroeder was a champion for protecting water resources. "Robert would often be found driving around looking for potential water pollution problem areas near Minneapolis lakes and the Minnehaha Creek. If he located something important, he would immediately call the MCWD offices for staff follow up," notes Pam Blixt, past President of the MCWD Board. "He was committed to protecting our water resources and we will miss his dedication and enthusiasm."



Dr. Susan Goetz, Ph.D., Deephaven resident, was appointed to the Board in March. Six managers are appointed by Hennepin County and one by Carver County.

"Susan Goetz's compelling educational background and personal interest in environmental issues and education make her an ideal choice for our Board," says Blixt. "Her experience with the Center for Global Environmental Education at Hamline University, combined with her professional training, educational policy and environmental sciences, make her a welcomed addition to the MCWD Board. We're honored to have her, and pleased to see Manager Thomas of Minnetrista, returning for another three-year term. His engineering expertise has been invaluable in working with MCWD projects."

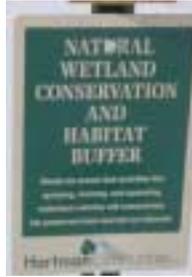
"I believe that the MCWD has an important role to play in the environmental management of our urban natural resources and in educating residents throughout the District about maintaining good public policy and personal responsibility for the quality of our lakes, streams and creeks," says Goetz, who holds a doctorate in Educational Foundations, Policy, and Administration from the University of Michigan. "As a Manager I look forward to pursuing sound water quality initiatives and tackling the tougher issues facing the MCWD."





IT'S TIME TO ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR EFFORTS...

- Hartman Communities is helping to protect wetlands through extensive buffer signage around a large wetland in the City of Victoria. The signage creates a significant aesthetic and educational benefit for the residents of the development, which should help them become better stewards of wetlands and water quality.
- Hans Hagen Homes and Pulte Holmes are working with Blaine-based Construction Waste Solutions (763) 780-0561 to do on-site grinding and recycling of construction waste at a cost competitive rate with landfill disposal. Home construction waste averages 5,500 pounds per unit. Wood grindings are used on-site as mulch.
- Construction Debris Management recycles approximately 50% of the construction waste stream with portable equipment, which makes it cost effective for small business and residential construction projects (715)-425-6669.



PROTECT OUR LAKES AND RIVERS

Storm drains take *anything* that enters them straight to a water body—not to a waste treatment facility! Here are some tips for everyone:

- Add one more city street sweeping per year and schedule the sweeping before spring rains.
- Practice good erosion control techniques at construction sites— sweep up dirt and debris daily from streets. Stake and maintain silt fences and establish a construction entrance that won't cause soil runoff for truck deliveries.
- Fertilize only the lawn, not hard surfaces. Choose a "0" phosphorus fertilizer (see pg. 2 for stores). The majority of Twin Cities' lawns are naturally high in phosphorus. For soil testing, call INFO-U at 612-624-2200.
- Sweep spilled fertilizers, leaves, grass seeds and grass clippings off all paved surfaces.
- Scoop the poop. Pet waste contains phosphorus as well as harmful bacteria.



Printed on recycled paper, 100% non-deinked pulp, using soy ink.



18202 Minnetonka Boulevard, Deephaven, MN 55391

Phone: 952-471-0590 Fax 952-471-0682

E-mail: admin@minnehahacreek.org Web Site and List Serve News Subscription: www.minnehahacreek.org

District Office: Eric Evenson, Administrator

Board of Managers

Pam Blixt, James Calkins, Lance Fisher, Susan Goetz, Monica Gross, Dick Miller, Scott Thomas

WaterPro Editor: Joan E. Ellis

Minnehaha Creek Watershed District
18202 Minnetonka Boulevard
Deephaven, MN 55391