

# Water Pro

Information for people working with water issues.

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...And More!

## MCWD ADDS VALUE TO YOUR EDUCATION PROGRAM

Need help fulfilling permit requirements for educating your citizens and local officials about stormwater? Want to do a better job with outreach? Looking for something specific? MCWD is here to help. We offer a variety of educational programs and tools that can add value to your efforts. Below is a sampling of what's available. For details and more, visit [www.minnehahacreek.org/education](http://www.minnehahacreek.org/education).

### For All Audiences

[www.minnehahacreek.org](http://www.minnehahacreek.org) is your one stop shop for all things MCWD. Watch for an overhaul of the site later this year.

### For Local Officials and Staff

NEMO (Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials) is an educational program for members of city councils, planning/park commissioners, other local officials, and city staff that addresses the relationship between land use decisions and water quality. We can come to city hall with workshops on:

- Linking Land Use to Water Quality (basics of stormwater)
- Linking Land Use to Lake Quality (lakeshore development)
- Natural Resource Based Planning/Open Space
- Low Impact Development

- Reducing Impervious Surfaces
- Local Ordinances for Water Quality
- Managing Stormwater in Urban Areas (redevelopment issues)

Water Pro Our Quarterly Newsletter for folks like you. 'Nuff said. Contact us to get on our mailing list, or pass this issue on to a friend or colleague.

Workshops We can put on a variety of regional educational workshops suited to your needs. For example, last year we sponsored "The Latest in Low Impact Development: Engineering and Landscape Design" featuring a nationally known expert on the topic. Let us know what you have in mind.

### For The General Public

Newsletter Articles NEW in 2007! MCWD will be offering short newsletter articles for placement in city newsletters. Use what we've written as is, or adapt it for your own purposes. Send us your ideas for water related articles!

The *Enviroscape* interactive watershed model is just one of several learning tools available for cities to teach people about watersheds, water quality, and polluted runoff.



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## EDUCATION RESOURCES FOR CITIES

**Interactive Displays and Exhibits** We have a number of displays and exhibits available for events or simply to have on display at city hall or your local library or community center.

- The *Enviroscape* interactive watershed model allows you to sprinkle ‘pollution’ (colored powder) and then see what happens when it ‘rains’ (spray bottle) on the watershed.
- The *Watershed Interactive Kiosk* is an electronic interactive tool where users can learn about stormwater from an urban frog singing a stormwater rap, a raindrop who journeys through the stormwater system, and other characters. Comes with a sound dome to keep the noise factor to a minimum.
- *40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Traveling Display* MCWD is turning 40 in 2007! This spring, we’ll have a display that interprets the history of

the area, featuring ‘Tools of Change’ – historical artifacts. Contact us now to reserve the display for your city.

**Festivals and Events** Contact us and we’ll do our best to attend your community festival or event. We’ll bring along our displays and exhibits, as well as giveaways, goodies, and a person to answer watershed questions.

**Printed Materials** Looking for a brochure or booklet? We’ve got a couple to offer and are open to working with you to meet your needs.

Want more information? Have an idea for something you don’t see listed? Contact Julie Westerlund, Education and Communications Coordinator at 952-471-0590.

Go to the web for more educational resources and programs:

### For the General Public

- [Press releases and guest columns](#)
- [Videos and television programs](#)
- [40th Anniversary Event Series](#)

### For Youth and Schools

- [Digital Watershed Atlas](#)
- [Cynthia Krieg Stewardship Fund](#)

### For Citizen Groups

- [Watershed Association Initiative](#)
- [Wetland Buffer Presentations](#)

### For Realtors and Other Businesses

- [Lake Minnetonka Yesterday and Today \(Map\)](#)
- [Buying and Selling Lakeshore Property Workshops](#)

### For Builders and Contractors

- [Training Workshops and Seminars](#)

## LID CORNER: Do Rain Gardens Work in Winter?

One of the commonly asked questions about rain gardens and other bioretention facilities is whether they work in the winter. The answer is YES! In fact, they work better than traditional stormwater ponds.

Gary Oberts of Emmons and Olivier Resources, Inc, has been studying winter function of bioretention facilities. He’s also been talking to researchers in New Hampshire, Norway, and Sweden, and everyone is finding the same thing: these systems are superior for capturing and infiltrating snowmelt runoff.

“These systems offer so many ways for water to flow into the ground,” says Oberts. The plant roots create cracks in the soil for the water to run into. Even if the bottom of the facility has frozen water in it, the banks, which do not have saturated soils, offer open spaces in the soil where meltwater can soak in. Even holes created by mice and other rodents offer pathways for water to get in the ground!

According to Oberts, if it’s warm enough to create runoff from snowmelt, that snowmelt will infiltrate in

a bioretention system. And once the water starts flowing, the pathways through the soil open up and the whole process accelerates.

Contrast that with frozen ponds, where the meltwater either runs across the top of the ice and is not treated, or it displaces the water that’s been there all winter. “That water is really nasty—it’s low in oxygen and high in concentrations of metals and nutrients that have come out of the bottom sediment in the low oxygen conditions of winter,” says Oberts.



A Washington Conservation District technician measures snowmelt infiltration in a bioretention basin. The work is part of a Water Environment Research Federation—funded study being carried out by Washington Conservation District, Emmons and Olivier Resources, and Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District.

## 20 MILLION DOLLARS FOR CONSERVATION

Looking to jumpstart a water quality initiative already recognized as among the most proactive in the state, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) has entered into a \$20 million partnership with Hennepin County that promises to pay dividends for decades to come.

On Tuesday November 28th, the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners approved an agreement that will allow MCWD to borrow up to \$20 million over the next five to eight years to help the District purchase land or conservation agreements in priority areas around streams, lakes, and wetlands. The District will repay the money and any costs using its levy for its land conservation program, currently budgeted at \$2 million annually.

### **Protecting Critical Assets**

“Our lakes and streams are some of the most attractive and popular features in the area, providing a huge contribution to the county’s quality of life,” said Hennepin County Commissioner Penny Steele. “This partnership goes a long way towards assuring that these resources will continue to provide their benefits in the years to come, without any added cost to county taxpayers.”

Hennepin County Board of Commissioners Chair, Randy Johnson, noted that “we hope this partnership with the Watershed District will help stimulate ideas for opportunities to conserve critical natural resources in other parts of the County as well.”

### **Investing now will pay off in future**

Now in its third year, the District’s land conservation program



The MCWD recently acquired a conservation easement on this 23-acre property in Minnetrista. The easement allows 2-acres for the existing single family home and future improvements. The remaining 21 acres are designated as a conservation area which will be managed for natural resource protection and restoration. This property has extensive portions of and frontage on Six Mile Marsh, and conserving it will help protect the quality of water draining to the marsh and provide valuable habitat. Six Mile Marsh drains to Halsted’s Bay, which is routinely cited as among the most polluted bays on Lake Minnetonka.

aims to preserve water quality by protecting natural areas around streams, lakes, and wetlands. But with the area rapidly developing, many opportunities for conservation could be lost unless the District enhances its capacity to act quickly over the next five years. By partnering with the county to increase short-term funding capacity, the program also will head off rapidly escalating land prices.

“By working with the county to invest in water quality now, we’ll be able to have a much greater positive impact and save millions of dollars over the long term,” said District land conservation specialist Michael Pressman. “This is an en-

trepreneurial approach to water quality - one that maximizes benefits and minimizes costs.”

### **Program Success to Date**

So far the District has launched eight such land conservation projects at a net cost of about \$1.9 million and by leveraging more than \$6 million in other funds. The program relies primarily on the purchase of conservation easements from willing sellers in key natural resource areas. Conservation easements protect the natural resources on a property while keeping it in private ownership and on the tax rolls.

## AT MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED DISTRICT

### Nine New Watershed Stewardship Grants Awarded

Cynthia Krieg was a catalyst for change; a woman who inspired others to care about the people and issues within their communities. The MCWD Board of Managers recently awarded a total of \$110,976 in Cynthia Krieg Watershed Stewardship Fund Grants to nine groups:

**Cermak-Rhoades Architects and Twin Cities Green Roof Council:** \$30,000 to develop a printed guide and workshops for homeowners interested in installing green rooftops;

**Eisenhower Elementary:** \$15,945 for Phase II of their "We are Water" watershed-themed playground;

**Folwell Middle School:** \$7,320 to create sustainable science curriculum development for permanent rain and vegetable gardens;

**Friends of Edina Nature Center:** \$5,000 to plant trees to absorb carbon dioxide and filter stormwater runoff;

**In the Heart of the Beast Theatre:** \$5,000 to create an episodic production that will educate audiences about the city's drinking water source;

**Lake Minnetonka Garden Club:** \$4,267 to create a short video on shoreline restoration to be played at the Landscape Arboretum and a bookmark to be publicly distributed;

**Friends of CUE/Minneapolis Blooms Program:** \$25,894 to provide educational workshops, small-group coaching seminars, on-site rain garden consultations, and mini-grants;

**St. David's Child Development and Family Services:** \$15,000 to restore their School Forest Wetland and build environmental stewardship through curriculum, activities and service learning;

**TonkaBlue:** \$2,550 to create and distribute environmental 'propaganda', in the form of stickers and posters.

For more information about the Cynthia Krieg Watershed Stewardship Fund, please visit [www.minnehahacreek.org/ckrieg.php](http://www.minnehahacreek.org/ckrieg.php).

### District Seeks Rules Task Force Members

The MCWD Board of Managers will be appointing applicants to a Rule Making Task Force in March 2007. This task force will provide the Board of Managers with recommendations for new rule policies. To apply for a position on the task force, visit [www.minnehahacreek.org](http://www.minnehahacreek.org)

### Ten Year Plan Approved by MCWD Board

Following a public hearing on January 18, 2007, the MCWD Board of Managers authorized the release of the final Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan to state review agencies, Metropolitan Council, and the Board of Water and Soil Resources. Following the state agency review process, the Plan will be finalized and adopted by the MCWD Board of Managers in spring 2007.



**Minnehaha Creek Watershed District**



Postage

18202 Minnetonka Boulevard, Deephaven, MN 55391

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

E-mail: [admin@minnehahacreek.org](mailto:admin@minnehahacreek.org) Web Site and List Serve News Subscription: [www.minnehahacreek.org](http://www.minnehahacreek.org)

District Office: Eric Evenson, Administrator

Board of Managers

Pam Blixt, James Calkins, Jeff Casale, Lance Fisher, Lee Keeley, Dick Miller, Ethel Smith